

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are amazing examples. But what I think is even more amazing is that the Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the examples of the enormous amounts of waste that the Federal Government generates every single year, but these are only the tip of the iceberg when compared to the total amount of waste in Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, as long as the Democrats continue to define the value of programs by how much we spend rather than how well or how effectively we spend, the taxpayers will continue to suffer.

□ 2045

Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats still want to raise our taxes for more of this.

#### ASSURING FISCAL HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, good evening and aloha.

Tonight, I rise to address again the single most important issue facing our country, now, next year, and well into the next generation, and that is our crushing budget deficit and the fiscal corruption of our Nation's finances; and yes, I do not use that word "corruption" lightly because that is what is happening.

I do so in solidarity with my fellow Blue Dog Members, people of sincerity who I respect and who have stood here for years and decades and argued for fiscal responsibility and with whom I today reintroduced the Assuring Fiscal Honesty and Accountability Act of 2004. That is the subject that I want to address briefly here tonight because I can assure my fellow citizens, beyond any semblance of doubt, that fiscal honesty and accountability have no place at today's seat of power here in Washington.

Perhaps I am overly simplistic, but on any issue I like to ask: First, is there a problem? Second, what exactly is it? Third, what is the solution? Fourth, how do we accomplish it?

The act that we introduced today addresses the fourth question: How do we accomplish it? And it starts with the fourth question because I do not know how anybody can doubt that we have a problem. We know we have one, and we know exactly what it is, the systematic pillaging of our Nation's fiscal and budgetary integrity and resources for short-term political gain. We know the general parameters of the solution, and today we have had a good interchange on that.

We know we have to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse, wherever it is. We know we have to balance revenues and

spending, but the reality is that we have lost our way on just how to get there.

We learned once in the eighties and the nineties that for us to have a realistic discussion and to make realistic decisions on the incredibly tough issues that go with the fiscal discipline territory, whether to raise or lower taxes and on whom, who and what to spend taxpayers hard-earned money on, and who not to spend it on, we had to set the rules of engagement and institute some basic checks and balances on natural political tendencies arising out of our reluctance, our abhorrence, of saying no. These rules were necessary, even though we had already placed limits on the amount of total national debt and required a separate vote to breach that national debt.

Those votes had become, as they are today and as we proved again today in the Committee on the Budget, a superfluous pro forma exercise as we now break through the \$7.5 trillion total debt barrier. These rules had fancy names like discretionary spending caps and pay-go or pay-as-you-go, but they all stood for the same basic concept, a concept we are all familiar with in our personal and business finances: Set the ground rules, the overall boundary of the finances as a responsible, achievable, sustainable level before making individual decisions, and then match those decisions to those rules. The caps were just that, overhaul caps or limits. We could move around under caps, but we could not breach the caps, and pay-go just said if we break the rules in one area, if we exceed in one area, we have to make it up somewhere else, a pay-as-you-go. It all has to balance one way or the other. And these rules worked up until 3 years ago.

We had reversed a fiscal decline and were heading towards surpluses, but then what happened was something inexcusable, and it was on the watch of the current administration because that is when people around here in the majority and downtown decided they did not like those rules, because those rules got in the way of radically reducing revenues, while at the same time busting spending up to record highs. Yes, let us not talk about whose responsibility the spending increases were. The rest is history; record deficits as far as the eye can see, record total debt, material risk to our very fiscal foundations.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) again said tonight a saying that I am fond of: In order to get out of the hole, you have to stop digging. That is what this bill says: Let us stop digging right now by using techniques that worked in the past and let us start climbing.

One would think the majority and the administration would be falling all over themselves to get out in front on this issue. After all, I hear tell they are the party of fiscal responsibility. What an incredible surprise here in Washington to discover that that is anywhere but the truth.

So, lo and behold, they are not. They do not mind discretionary spending caps, as long as it is only the programs that they do not like. They do not mind putting caps on them. But, by the way, the programs that they want to raise, the programs that are busting our budget, no, we cannot afford discretionary spending caps. They do not mind pay-go, sounds good, as long as it does not apply to those programs, as long as it does not apply to evaluations of revenues and taxes.

Well, any fool can see that when you set the rules, they have to apply to everyone. When you balance a budget, you cannot leave it with so many outs, so many holes, that it is dead on arrival. And that is what the absence of this discretionary spending caps and pay-go rules has done.

So our bill says to everybody, hey, simply, you say you stand for fiscal responsibility, prove it. Set some rules that work and then live with them.

I urge this bill's prompt passage. And to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who have stood here today talking about fiscal responsibility, I invite their cosponsorship. I think we can form a good team to provide some realistic budget rules.

#### SALUTING OUR SOLDIERS

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

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, one of the world's most brutal dictators still sat on his throne and boasted that he would defy the world with impunity, protected by massive armies, and threatened terror through weapons of mass destruction. We sent brave young men and women into harm's way to contest that point.

Where it is appropriate, we pause today and review the progress we made, not against the monstrosity and Saddam Hussein's regime but the total war on terror. Our troops have registered a string of unbroken victories. They have won every battle and every campaign. They have destroyed the staging areas and the hiding holes of those who attacked this Nation on September 11, 2001, and they have helped to restore the security of their fellow Americans.

They have driven the Taliban from control of Afghanistan and are restoring the government of that country to its people. They have destroyed the Iraqi war machine and captured Saddam Hussein and are restoring the government of that country to its people. They have liberated a nation that has endured the darkness of tyranny and brutality ever since Saddam's Baath party seized control of that unfortunate nation some three decades ago.

Coalition soldiers have purchased with their blood, their sweat, and their tears, the best and brightest chance for freedom and democracy that this Nation and these nations in the Middle