

rampant waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government.

Despite a major economic recovery underway, rising employment, new jobs and historic rates of home ownership, Democrats keep demanding that we take away the tax relief, take away the tax relief that is responsible for this unparalleled growth in our economy, the tax relief that is bringing down the unemployment.

The tax relief, if it were a line item in the budget, amounts to 1 percent, 1 percent of the \$28.3 trillion 10-year spending plan approved last year. In other words, 99 percent of our fiscal challenges are on the spending side. And, Mr. Speaker, that is where we need to focus our attention, and by any measure, spending is out of control in Washington.

For only the fourth time in the history of our Nation, the Federal Government is now spending \$20,000 per household. Mr. Speaker, it is up from just \$16,000 just 5 years ago, representing the largest expansion of the Federal Government in 50 years.

We have a spending problem, not a taxing problem, and now is not the time to raise taxes again on American families and small businesses, as Democrats seek to do. Instead, it is time to take the trash out in Washington. Let me give my colleagues just a few examples of typical waste, fraud, and abuse in government that we found just this week.

The Interior Department's Inspector General discovered that the Bureau of Indian Affairs accepted inflated school enrollment estimates that resulted in the construction of schools that were larger than required. The Bureau spent \$37 million for unneeded school space and has future plans to spend an additional \$74 million for even more excess school space. This wasteful use of our tax dollars occurred because the Bureau had not developed or implemented simple policies to count students. And yet Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for even more of this? One hundred and eleven million dollars of the American people's hard-earned money down the drain. That is enough money to outfit 3,700 Humvees in Iraq with armor plating.

Additionally, the Department of Transportation's Inspector General stated that if the Department simply imposed better oversight on projects from start to finish and aggressively fought gas-tax evasion, the Department could save billions of dollars. In fact, if the efficiency with which the Federal Government and the States invested \$700 billion in highway projects was improved by only 1 percent, an additional \$7 billion would be available, and that could fund 8 out of the 15 active major highway projects today.

This is especially relevant because the House voted recently to approve a \$284 billion highway bill that will force Congress to either increase the deficit or raise gas taxes to pay for it.

Next, Mr. Speaker, just this week the GAO announced that the government

paid \$169,000 in fees to unaccredited schools for bogus graduate degrees for Federal employees. I mean, that is a blatant violation of Federal law. The General Accounting Office said this amount was actually an understatement and that it is impossible to verify the true cost of this fraud because the Federal agencies do not have systems to verify academic degrees and because they do not accurately account for these expenses. In fact, the Department of Health and Human Services, when asked by the General Accounting Office to verify expenses on degrees, said they could not produce them because they maintain such large volumes of information in five different accounting systems.

One hundred sixty-nine thousand dollars on bogus degrees. That is enough money to protect over 100 of our American soldiers in Iraq with Kevlar vests.

Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on; so does the waste, the fraud, the abuse and the duplication, and this has been going on for decades.

The problem is, we now have over 10,000 Federal programs spread across 5- to 600 agencies with little accountability to anyone, and when you just scratch the surface a little bit, what you discover is that so many of these programs routinely waste 5, 10, even 20, 25 percent of their taxpayer-funded budgets, and have for decades.

Republicans are working hard to root out this senseless waste of American tax dollars, but too many of our Democrat colleagues keep fighting us every step of the way. Last year, our Committee on the Budget approved a budget asking for authorizing committees to identify 1 percent of waste, fraud and abuse, just 1 percent. Yet the Democrat leaders ridiculed and reviled our efforts. One Democrat leader termed it "a senseless and irresponsible exercise."

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that most Americans disagree. With the Nation at war and with a large budget deficit, there is no better time to root out this waste, fraud and abuse than now, because when it comes to Federal programs it is not how much money Washington spends that counts, it is how Washington spends the money.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to replace the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

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

There was no objection.

RESPONSE TO THE WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, that was interesting. Now if only the Republicans controlled the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate, they would take care of this waste, fraud and abuse at the agencies.

Many of the things the gentleman talked about are due to administrative mismanagement. If only George Bush was a Republican and they controlled the White House. Whoops. He is and they do. If only they controlled the House of Representatives. Well, they do; and the Senate. They control the entire Federal Government, and he comes up here and talks about the waste, fraud and abuse that he would eliminate if only they were in charge. Well, they are in charge. Why do they not eliminate it?

They never bring bills to the floor to deal with waste, fraud and abuse. He talked about a few things that could provide a little bit of help for the troops. Let me talk about things that could provide a lot for the troops.

Comanche helicopters, a scandal that has been going on starting with the Democratic administration and Republican Congress but continued under the Republican administration; \$9 billion wasted. Finally canceled. No products. How many Humvees and sets of armor could we buy for that? Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of sets of armor and armored Humvees which, guess what, Donald Rumsfeld did not order. That is why we do not have them, not because there is not enough money in the Pentagon budget.

They did not order what we needed to protect our troops because they did not predict what would happen because Rumsfeld would not read the reports from the State Department intelligence folks and from the CIA. He had Ahmed Chalabi, his favorite convicted felon from Jordan, who was feeding him information that he was paid to give, that he admitted was false.

Then there is the \$2 billion Crusader cannon, canceled. No product. How many sets of armored Humvees could we buy for \$2 billion?

Then, of course, the \$100 billion Star Wars fantasy. The Republican majority and the President want to spend \$10 billion this year to deploy a missile defense system that does not work, according to the Pentagon itself; is untested, cannot even intercept a missile on a trajectory without decoys; \$10 billion. Twice what we will spend defending all the borders and all the ports of the United States of America against the real threats, the new threats, the terrorist threats that these people are ignoring because they are worried that some suicidal maniac is going to shoot one missile at the United States, like Kim Jong Il who does not have any