

with close family and friends, and it is a comfort to know that they are well cared for in my absence. My mom has always been a special source of comfort in difficult times. I speak with her often and just today received a box of her homemade cookies.

"Thanks for taking the time to offer your support. I believe our task here is a difficult one. I hope we will stay the course."

To this young man, I say, we will.

ARE YOU BETTER OFF?

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Yes, it was a famous American who once asked, "Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago?" To most Americans, the answer is "no." That is not just me saying it. A Gallup poll found that 62 percent of Americans are dissatisfied with the way things are going here at home.

There is a reason why a majority of Americans believe that our country is headed in the wrong direction under the leadership of President Bush. Median income has dropped 3.3 percent since President Bush was elected.

Two million Americans have lost their jobs since President Bush got his.

Three-and-a-half million people have moved onto the poverty rolls since President Bush moved into the White House.

Four million more people are uninsured since President Bush was sworn in.

Our constituents are being gouged at the gas pump while President Bush fills his campaign coffers with checks from big oil and big gas.

Consumer confidence, which was at 115.7 in January 2001, was at 92.9 last month.

College tuition, up 14 percent in 1 year.

We are not better off.

ARE YOU BETTER OFF?

(Mr. NUSSLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NUSSLE. It is hard to believe that the Democrats are coming to the floor today and trying to spread fear and make sure that people feel that they are not better off. They ask the question, Are you better off than 4 years ago? They hope you are not. Republicans not only hope you are, but will work to make sure you are.

The Democrats have no plan to balance the budget. All they offer from their nominee is higher taxes and bigger government. The seniors, for the first time since the Medicare plan was put into place in 1965, have choices as a result of a Republican Congress and President Bush.

Students have received two times the increase of education funding since Re-

publicans took office, three times for special education alone.

We have more workers working in this country than at any time in American history.

We had the strongest growth in the last 6 months. In the last 20 years we have not seen this kind of growth.

Interest rates are at the lowest ever.

The other side has stopped an energy plan going on now 6 years, and now they stand at the gas pump and wring their hands and wonder why gas prices are as high as they are.

Democrats hope you are not better off. Republicans will work to make sure you are better off.

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THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, a description of the Bush administration record of the last 3¼ years is something like this:

Not fully funding No Child Left Behind, unintelligent. Not providing a real benefit to seniors for prescription drug purposes, shameful. Not putting forth a real solution to significantly decrease the 44 million uninsured, bad medicine. Weapons of mass destruction, a lie. No-bid contracts for the Vice President's former company Halliburton, scandalous. Revealing the name of a covert CIA operative, traitorous. The Abu Ghraib fiasco, passing the buck. The management of the Iraq War, bumbling. The promise of no nation-building, forgotten. Being a uniter as opposed to a divider, hilarious.

The promise of a less arrogant foreign policy, you have got to be kidding me.

H.R. 3722, THE UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AMENDMENTS OF 2004

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, Congress has consistently approved the eligibility of undocumented immigrants to receive emergency services, and I firmly believe that providing emergency health care is not inconsistent with curbing illegal immigration, which continues to be a high priority for me and others here.

H.R. 3722, which we discussed yesterday and will be voting on today, would require hospitals to gather information on patients in emergency care situations, including a biometric indicator to be retained in hospital records for a minimum of 5 years. This data would be transmitted to the Department of Homeland Security to initiate the removal proceedings for undocumented immigrants.

Hospitals oppose H.R. 3722 because it will, in fact, compromise public safety. The American Hospital Association states: "H.R. 3722 could pose a significant public health threat for entire communities because the fear of deportation would inevitably preclude undocumented immigrants from seeking care for communicable diseases until these individuals are extremely ill."

Mr. Speaker, we need to do everything we can to ensure that we do not pass H.R. 3722.

THE STATE OF THE U.S. ECONOMY

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the declining state of the economy. When President Bush took office, we had a \$236 billion budget surplus and the Nation had created 22 million jobs in the previous 8 years. The country was experiencing the biggest drop in child poverty in a generation and the lowest poverty rate in 20 years.

Today, 8.2 million Americans are looking for work and the unemployment rate is 30 percent higher. 2.2 million private sector jobs and 2.7 million manufacturing jobs have been lost. Household income has decreased by almost \$1,500 per family. The number of the uninsured has increased by 3.8 million. College tuition is up 28 percent.

As busy as we are and as important as the effort on foreign policy is, I hope this administration would dedicate some of its time to economic security as well. The American people have suffered much from terrorism. They do not need to suffer any more from President Bush's faltering and failed economic policies.

HONORING SISTER JEANNE O'LAUGHLIN

(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. Mr. Speaker, Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin is a name synonymous with compassion, love, and energy.

As the President of Barry University for the past 23 years in my hometown of Miami, Sister Jeanne has brought hope not only to our South Florida community but also to the international community. Sister Jeanne is known and loved by all of our South Florida residents. She is a dynamic and energetic champion for education and has worked tirelessly to ensure that Barry University far exceeded its goals. She has dedicated her entire life to education and to the improvement of the human condition. Sister Jeanne's concern for others and her willingness to fight for justice makes her an irreplaceable part of our South Florida family.

We have been blessed to have Sister Jeanne in our community. We love her,