

ECONOMY CONTINUES TO GROW

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the economy continues to grow as a direct result of the President's economic policies and those of the Republican Congress. Here are a few facts to illustrate this.

In January, we saw 146,000 new jobs and witnessed the twentieth consecutive month of job gains in the United States.

The national unemployment rate is down to 5.2 percent, the lowest since September 2001.

Job creation was up in 48 of the 50 States last year, and unemployment was down in all regions of the country.

Mr. Speaker, opposing tax increases and endorsing pro-growth policies has led to job creation. We are increasing consumer confidence and ensuring that the American working families no longer bear the burdens that impede economic growth.

We will continue here in Congress the hard work so that this progress continues.

WAITING FOR DEMOCRAT PLAN TO FIX SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, well, the month of January went by and nothing happened. The month of February went by and nothing happened. Here we are, it is March, as a matter of fact, it is March 3rd. It looks like nothing is going to happen from the Democrat side to address Social Security.

One more day has gone, one more day of rhetoric and denouncing what the President is going to do and denouncing what the Republicans are doing and scaring senior citizens. But, still, no plan from the Democrat party to save and protect Social Security.

Now, it is interesting, up until last week they were saying there is no problem, we like it how it is. And yet in a major policy shift for the Democrat party, the Democrat Committee Chairman, Howard Dean, also known as "Screaming Dean," pointed out in a quote at Cornell University, which, as you know, is not exactly a sanctuary for conservative thought in America, Dean pointed out that if Social Security were left alone for 30 years, its benefits would be reduced to 80 percent of what it is now. He acknowledged there were problems.

Thank goodness, hallelujah, we have a Democrat who admits there is a Social Security problem. That means maybe the month of March will not go by. Maybe by the end of March the Democrats will join us and come up with a plan. We welcome their ideas. We solicit their ideas. We want their support.

WAITING FOR REPUBLICANS TO PUT SOMETHING ON THE TABLE

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, my good friend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) motivated me to come to the floor when he suggests that the Democrats do not have a plan for Social Security.

I would say to my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), it is the President of the United States that proposed that Social Security should be privatized. During the last recess, the President's Day recess, Democrats went home, and almost every one of the House Democrats, except 40, held town meetings. I want the gentleman to know that most of his colleagues did not hold town meetings on Social Security at all for the reason that you really do not want to put your plan on the table.

The Democrats are ready when you bring your plan. The last time I looked over there, you all were in charge. I do not recall that we have to do anything at all in that regard.

But we are going to fix Social Security. The question is, are you going to fix Medicare and Medicaid? Are you going to do something about prescription drugs? Are you going to do something about inadequate education, inadequate housing and inadequate jobs in this country? I think that is what we need to be looking at.

We will fix Social Security, if you put something on the table.

REPUBLICANS SEEKING BIPARTISANSHIP IN FIXING SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and want to say to my good friend from Florida that I have always enjoyed working with my distinguished colleague from the south tip of the peninsula of Florida, the great State. But I want to say, even though we are the majority, we still want your ideas. We want the Democrat party to put a plan on the table.

On the subject of town meetings, I personally held nine town meetings. There is a lot of division out there as to what we should do, and that is why it should be done in a bipartisan way, and that is why I think everybody needs to come together.

And Mr. Speaker, I want to say this: I have not introduced the plan. If the gentleman would like to work with me on a plan, I would love to have the

Hastings-Kingston bill, or the Kingston-Hastings bill, if we could do that, because I think it is important.

I know the gentleman's fondness for seniors. I have heard the gentleman speak fondly about his mom, and he has heard me speak fondly about my mom, and we owe it to both of them, and that is what we should be doing.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, let us do it.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I am ready to work with the gentleman.

CONTINUITY IN REPRESENTATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 125 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 125

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 841) to require States to hold special elections to fill vacancies in the House of Representatives not later than 45 days after the vacancy is announced by the Speaker of the House of Representatives in extraordinary circumstances, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 60 minutes, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on House Administration now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous