

do not exist anymore. There is no one to hold hearings to make sure that the taxpayers' money is being well spent. Those are the key points in the 12-point Blue Dog reform plan.

We have bipartisan support for this. Many of the elements are shared with the Republican Study Committee Plan. Many of us have also supported their reform efforts. We need to work together to form a bipartisan majority, much as our Senate colleagues did to avert the nuclear showdown on judicial nominations, get the sensible center of this Congress to come together and do the right thing for the American taxpayer.

We are so close because if just 10 or 20 of the Republicans would break from their leadership, they could do as the CATO Institute report suggests, start reforming the budget process in this House. All it takes is 10 or 20 renegades on their side to stand up for the American taxpayer. We can get budget reform. It may be the Republican Study Committee that does it. It may be the Mainstream Republicans, or the Tuesday Group that does it, but I believe the Blue Dog Democrats will be there to make sure that sensible fiscal policy is restored to this Nation.

I appreciate the gentleman holding this special order.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I would thank the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. Speaker, one of the 12 points is to ensure that the Congress reads the bills we are voting on. We cannot pass a law to make Members of Congress read a bill, but several examples have been given this evening of what we are talking about here.

Last year, before the election, there were 13 spending bills that had to pass to fund our government. Two were passed before the election. They brought us back up here after the election, saying that they could roll all 11 into one and call it the omnibus spending bill and pass it in 3 or 4 days, and they did.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority leader, did. It was over 1,000 pages, over 12,000 local spending projects. We had just a few hours to read it. Sure enough, it was full of errors, including allowing congressional staffers to look at people's tax returns. And so all 435 Members had to fly back up here to fix that, among other things.

That is just one of 12 common-sense budget reform steps that we think have to happen before Democrats or Republicans can provide a truthful, meaningful budget again.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, just one concluding point. This Blue Dog 12-point plan is not radical or inventive. It is what every American family has to abide by every single day. All this plan says is, we will play by the same rules that our businesses are supposed to play by and our families are supposed to play by. I do not know of a single American family that can just decide to go beyond their means and

tell their bank, I want to borrow more. We should play by the same rules.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) for their stalwart leadership on fiscal responsibility and common sense.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, in the hour that we have discussed the debt and the deficit, our Nation has borrowed \$48 million. On top of that, our Nation has paid \$18 million in interest on the national debt. That is \$66 million that our Nation has spent during the 60 minutes we have been here.

It is about priorities. That money could have gone for better education, better roads, and better veterans' benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I raise these issues because my grandparents left this Nation better than they found it for my parents. And my parents left this Nation better than they found it for our generation, and I believe we have a duty and an obligation to try and leave this country just a little bit better than we found it for our children and grandchildren.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. EMERSON (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and May 26 on account of the death of Marie Hahn, mother of the late Representative Bill Emerson.

Mr. GINGREY (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today through 2:30 p.m. on account of his accompanying the BRAC commissioners on a site visit of NAS Atlanta.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.  
Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.  
Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.  
Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.  
Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BEAN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GIBBONS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. NORWOOD, for 5 minutes, May 26.  
Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, May 26.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, May 26.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.  
Mr. MANZULLO, for 5 minutes, today.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 26, 2005, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

2143. A letter from the Inspector General, Department of Defense, transmitting the annual report of the results of the assessment of voting assistance programs, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1566 Public Law 107-107, section 1602; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2144. A letter from the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Commissioners, Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure, transmitting a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the Commission, together with its recommendations for such legislation and administrative actions as it considers appropriate, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 111 note, Pub. L. 108-132, Section 128(b)(3)(A) (117 Stat. 1383); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2145. A letter from the Director, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, transmitting a letter updating the May 9, 2003 notification that the DFAS planned to start an A-76 competition of the Marine Corps accounting function in which DFAS has decided not to conduct a competition at this time, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2461; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2146. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, Department of Defense, transmitting the annual status report of the U.S. Chemical Demilitarization Program (CDP) as of September 30, 2004, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1521(g); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2147. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Comptroller of the Currency, transmitting four issues of the Quarterly Journal for CY 2003 and one issue for CY 2004, the annual reports for FY 2003 and 2004, and a review of the actions the Office has taken during CY 2003 and 2004 with regard to the applicability of state law to national banks, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 14 12 U.S.C. 36(f)(1)(C); to the Committee on Financial Services.

2148. A letter from the President and Chairman, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to the Republic of Korea pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 635(b)(3)(i); to the Committee on Financial Services.

2149. A letter from the Vice Chairperson, Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, transmitting the Committee's final report of the special study of simplification of need analysis and application for Title IV aid, entitled "The Student Aid Gauntlet: Making Access to College Simple and Certain," pursuant to the FY 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

2150. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

2151. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of