

referendum, beginning with an initial drawdown.

This is not a requirement I propose lightly. As many in this Chamber and in my home State know, I have been an outspoken critic of the Bush administration's policies in Iraq, and I voted against giving the President authority to invade Iraq, regarding it as an abdication of congressional responsibility.

I have supported funding for troops in the field and for Iraqi reconstruction, while calling for an exit strategy, including benchmarks to which the administration should be held accountable, and major policy changes that would increase the probability of achieving at least some of our goals.

But there is no evidence that President Bush has heeded anyone who does not accept his glib assurances and his stay-the-course rhetoric. As a result, the mistakes that have marred this effort from the beginning, poor or non-existent planning, for example, and weak international participation, have been compounded.

Such failures must not become a rationale for extending our occupation of Iraq. In fact, our presence itself is a target of the insurgents and a magnet for international terrorists. And it may be encouraging some elements of the Iraqi leadership to defer essential decisions and compromises that are necessary if their country is to assume responsibility for its own future.

So we must leave. How we leave does matter: in a way that spares the lives of American troops and Iraqi non-combatants, in a way that minimizes the chance that Iraq will descend into massacres, ethnic cleansing or civil war, and in a way that maximizes the chances for Iraqi self-defense and self-government.

But we must end the occupation, and the approval of the Constitution offers us an opportunity to begin that process. It is an opportunity we must seize. There are no guarantees in this enterprise. Iraq could rise to this challenge with the Kurds and the Shia more fully accommodating the essential interests of Sunnis in changes to the Constitution early next year, based on input from a newly elected Sunni Parliament after December, or Iraq could further descend into sectarian violence.

Our country cannot absolve ourselves of responsibility for creating this quagmire, or for helping avoid the worst-case possibilities going forward, but we must understand, and the President must tell the world we understand, that a sustained American military presence is not part of the solution. It is not feasible. In some ways it exacerbates the difficulties, and it must be ended.

Our resolution draws in concept and content on one introduced in the Senate by Mr. FEINGOLD on June 14. It updates that resolution by taking explicit account of the constitutional referendum and proposing an initial immediate drawdown of troops.

Mr. Speaker, we should never have started this war. We should have and

could have utilized other means of containing and controlling whatever threat Saddam Hussein represented. No ideal option is available to us now in ending it, but the October 15 vote offers the best opportunity we are likely to have to begin the process of withdrawal credibly, and hopefully to turn the responsibility for Iraq's future over to the Iraqis themselves, and to repair the diplomacy and foreign policy from which the invasion of Iraq has been such a tragic departure for our country.

PRICE-MILLER RESOLUTION ON IRAQ

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

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of the Price-Miller resolution.

Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans feel increasing frustration with the contrived reasons given for invading Iraq, with the lack of any realistic plan for the aftermath of our invasion, and with the administration's failure to state clearly what has to happen for our military to come home.

And I feel the same frustration. This administration has said simply that we should stay the course, but has failed to declare our port of destination. It is hard to believe that there is a course, that we are not simply drifting rudderless.

Mr. Speaker, it has become painfully clear that most Iraqis now see our military, who has served admirably, as an occupying army. Iraqis believe the United States intends to occupy Iraq on a long-term basis, and they believe that our government intends to dominate the elected Iraqi Government, rather than respect that government as the legitimate government of a fully sovereign nation with control of its own natural resources, security and public safety.

Iraqi suspicions about our intentions undermine the legitimacy of the Iraqi Government and fuel the insurgency that continues unabated. Mr. Speaker, if our presence in Iraq is truly not for Iraq's oil or for a permanent staging area for our military operations in that part of the world, we need to say so. We need to state clearly that we do not intend a long-term occupation of Iraq, and the Iraqis will determine their own future. We need to say out loud that we will transfer to Iraq security forces the bases now used by our military, and that we will maintain no permanent bases or long-term military presence in Iraq.

The Price-Miller resolution calls for more than the platitudes that we stay the course or finish the job. We demand that the President state clearly the remaining mission of our military in Iraq, and to state the time period that the President believes will be required to accomplish that mission, what needs

to happen for our men and women to come home, and when does the Bush administration think that it will happen.

Mr. Speaker, there is no better way to persuade the Iraqi people that we really intend to withdraw than to begin withdrawing. The Price-Miller resolution calls for a partial withdrawal as soon as possible. There is still work to be done to help the new Iraqi Government achieve stability and an enduring democracy, and we need to give new urgency to those efforts. We need to train Iraq security forces and engage other nations in that effort. We need to help reconstruction efforts and provide diplomatic support to the new government. But the referendum approving the new Constitution gives us an opportunity, an opportunity we must seize, to change fundamentally what we are fighting for, and what the Iraqi insurgents are fighting against.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot do that unless we say credibly out loud that our military is not there to stay.

THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET IS BAD FOR LATINOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the proposed Republican budget cuts and the impact it will have on the Latino community. There are nearly 40 million Latinos in the United States, and more than 19 million are in the labor force making contributions to our Nation's prosperity and economic growth. These families have strengthened the fabric of our society through their commitment to family and community.

The Republican budget, in my opinion, ignores the challenges that American families are facing, particularly Latino families. Republicans have proposed cuts to essential programs to our Nation's Latino families in order to pay for the \$106 billion tax break for the wealthy few. These tax cuts are reckless, in my opinion, and unfair to the middle- and lower-income families, and reflect this Republican-led Congress's double standard.

The Republican proposal includes a cut of more than \$10 billion of Medicaid over the next 5 years. Today, as you know, Medicaid is the largest health insurance program in our country, and Medicaid is a very important program for the Latino families in America. It currently provides health insurance to about 58 million people, including 28 million who are children. Medicaid helps 41 percent of people who live in poverty, many of whom work full time and still do not earn enough to rise out of poverty.

Over 10 million Medicaid recipients are Latinos, and Medicaid covers more than one in three Latino children. Latinos have the highest uninsured rate in America. One out of every three

Latinos, or 34 percent of those Latinos, are without any form of health insurance, and as a result, Latinos depend on Medicaid as their only means of health care access. By making preventive and primary care more readily available, and by protecting against and providing care for serious diseases, Medicaid has improved the health of millions of low-income Latinos and their families.

Despite Medicaid's enormous importance in providing access to health care services for millions of Latinos, Medicaid remains under assault by the Republican Congress and its administration. When the Republicans took control of Congress back in 1995, the first thing they did was propose slashing Medicaid by \$128 billion to pay for the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

Once again, Medicaid is under assault, and the Republicans are at it again. The Republican proposal would shift the cost to States and beneficiaries, undermine the ability to provide health care services, and ultimately increase the number of uninsured.

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Medicaid cuts would shut the neediest individuals out of public health programs. Latinos represent nearly one-fifth of the Medicaid beneficiaries. They would be disproportionately affected by these cuts. Latinos are already marginalized in this country. At a time when Latinos lack proper health insurance and are facing rising health care costs, cuts in Medicaid funding will ultimately deny care and treatment to the most vulnerable. Many of these cuts for Medicaid will be forced to rely on emergency medical services and, as you know, will cost the taxpayers more money.

The administration has allowed 5.4 million Americans to slip into poverty. Under the proposal in my State of California, it is estimated to lose over \$174 million in Federal funds annually, and current enrollment would drop by 3 million people. In my county alone, in L.A., the loss would be close to \$74.5 million, affecting over one million beneficiaries.

A recent study shows the combination of stagnant income and staggering increases, important items like health care, housing, education, transportation, all affecting our families. These cuts do nothing to relieve America's working families.

Let us do the right thing. Let us make sure we fully fund Medicaid so that American families and Latino families have full access to affordable quality health care for themselves and their children.

On this eve where we are paying tribute to a former Member of Congress, Congressman Ed Roybal from Los Angeles, who was a pioneer advocating for the elderly and health care and Medicaid, I would ask that we remember at this time his strength and his tenacity

in this House and how he fought so hard for the coverage of services through Medicaid for our seniors and especially those in East Los Angeles and across the country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SODREL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEFICIT DANGERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, last week I came to the well of this House to express my concern along with the concern of others in the Committee on the Budget who joined us that night about the direction that a process we call reconciliation was taking.

This week my concerns have not been allayed. They have been aggravated because I see the course that reconciliation has taken, and it is coming home closer and closer to programs that matter to those that can least afford to take the hits that they are about to receive. As we speak, our colleagues, our Republican colleagues from across the aisle, are debating and considering and moving toward big cuts in Medicaid, student loans, child support enforcement, child foster care, and supplemental security income, farm conservation, the list goes on. About \$50 billion in spending cuts spread over about a 5-year period of time.

They have offered up these spending cuts as a way to offset, partially at least, the spending increases that the responses to hurricanes Katrina and Rita will require; but in actuality, these spending cuts will not go to offset the costs of Hurricane Katrina because the Republican budget calls for \$106 billion in additional tax cuts. And when these additional tax cuts are passed, the spending cuts that are also being proposed will simply go to make up for the revenue losses to some extent caused by the tax cuts they are proposing.

Since the spending cuts are \$50 billion, as this chart here shows, and the tax cuts are \$106 billion, none of the spending cuts will ever make it to the bottom line where they might otherwise be available and applied to the offset of the cost of Katrina and Rita.

So the first problem that we as Democrats have, with what our Republican colleagues are pushing and pushing hard this week, is that it is not what it purports to be. It is not what it claims to be. It is not a plan to pay for Hurricane Katrina. It is

a plan to facilitate \$106 billion in additional tax cuts, notwithstanding the fact that we have last year, just a few weeks ago, we closed the books, and the deficit for the preceding fiscal year was the third largest in history, \$320 billion; \$106 billion in additional tax cuts at a time when we have a \$320 billion deficit that is only likely to get worse this year because of the cost of the hurricane.

The second problem that we as Democrats have with the plan that our colleagues are pushing is that we believe the cost to help one State sustain the catastrophic costs of a natural disaster, a disaster like Hurricane Katrina, should be borne by all the States and spread over the entire population, the whole country, but spread equitably, spread equitably. We do not believe that those least able to bear the costs should be burdened with the lion's share of the load, and yet that is exactly what is taking shape.

That is exactly what they are doing, pushing a plan to pay for the cost of Hurricane Katrina, at least under that pretext that will come down on the backs of college students borrowing to pay for their education; on the backs of the sick whose only access to care is Medicaid; and on the backs of the very poor who depend on food stamps and foster care and child support enforcement, all of these things. These are the programs and the bore sights of the plan that are about to be brought to the floor.

These are just some, a sampling of those on whom these cuts are going to fall.

So what we have coming before the House this week, if it does indeed come forth, is a plan for spending cuts that does not serve its stated purpose because it does not go to pay for the cost of Hurricane Katrina, not a dime of it. And the spending cuts it selects, whether to offset more tax cuts or to pay for Katrina, come down on those, as I have said, who are least able to bear them.

On our side we think it is fair to ask, Why this sudden interest in offsets? Why insist on offsets to pay for building or rebuilding Biloxi, but not insist on offsets for building or rebuilding or building back Baghdad for which we have appropriated so far more than \$20 billion?

One reason that our colleagues have suddenly seized on this issue is that the evidence of bad budgeting, of fiscal failure, of endless deficits is mounting and spreading and becoming undeniable is too much to sweep under the rug. On their watch, the Federal budget has descended from a surplus of \$236 billion in the year 2000, the last full fiscal year of the Clinton administration, to a deficit of \$320 billion last year and \$412 billion the year before.

The deficit will only be worse this year, as I have said, this fiscal year, 2006, because this year is when most of the spending to fix up and respond to Katrina is going to be paid out. Here is