

Mr. COOPER. That much damage was done to our Nation's future just in 1 hour.

Mr. ROSS. In the last hour.

Mr. COOPER. And that will continue every hour, every night.

Mr. ROSS. Again, we have got to be good stewards of our tax money. We have got to be good stewards of this country. We have got to get our Nation's fiscal house back in order. We must restore fiscal responsibility to our government. It affects every one of us in a lot of different ways.

For example, our Nation is spending a half a billion dollars a day with a "B," 500 million, a half a billion every day, simply paying interest on the national debt.

We could finish I-69 in Arkansas, creating all kinds of jobs and economic opportunities, just with 3 days' interest on the national debt, or I-49, again with 3 days' interest on the national debt.

Many of America's priorities are going to continue to go unmet. Many of America's needs are going to go unmet, from health care to education to veterans to infrastructure, until we get our Nation's fiscal house back in order.

The Blue Dog Coalition has a way to do that. It is a 12-point plan, and the first and foremost of all of those 12 points is require a balanced budget. Forty-nine States do. My wife requires one in our household in Prescott, Arkansas.

The family business my wife and I own, our banker requires us to have a balanced budget. And it is time for this Nation, it is time for the politicians in Washington to have a balanced budget for our Nation.

I yield to the gentlemen from Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is very important to point out, and you touched upon it, that just the interest, just the interest alone, is nearly \$200 billion.

Now just think about that. This money that we are borrowing, we have to pay for. You got to add in the \$200 billion in interest on top of that, which is more than five times the amount that we spend on education, the environment, and veterans care put together.

I submit to you, my friends in the Blue Dog Coalition, I just hope that the American people have been listening to us tonight, and I believe that they have. I hope that we have awakened a sleeping giant. Because, like I say, we are here and we are gone tomorrow.

The President does not have to run anymore. He does not have to go out and face the people. I believe, quite honestly, if he had to go out and face the people, I do not think he would have made that deal with the Arab immigrants. I do not think he would have done that.

But the fundamental question we have to go back to is from this star-

ting information that you have brought to us, the question has to be, why? Why are we just discovering it and why is this great discrepancy there?

There are some serious questions that have to be answered by this administration. But you know what? They are not going to answer these questions unless and until we in Congress stand up and represent the interests of the American people and put their feet to the fire. Once we do that, then we are truly standing up for America, and America deserves that.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Georgia, and I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for joining me this evening as we try to hold this Congress accountable and urge a good dose of common sense and fiscal responsibility.

For folks with questions or comments or concerns, I encourage them to e-mail us at bluedogs@mail.house.gov, we are members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, bluedogs@mail.house.gov. That is bluedogs@mail.house.gov.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are here this evening for a simple reason and a simple cause; that is, to try and be good stewards for this Nation of the tax money and the trust that has been placed in us for the people.

We think this Congress is letting the American people down. I yield back.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to persons outside the Chamber.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, you know, last week I was sitting in the Chair when some of this same material was being presented here on the floor. And I jotted down some notes, thinking, well, one of these days I hope I am going to have a chance to make some comments about some of those things that are being said, not knowing I was going to be asked tonight to come over here and use some of the Special Order, because a couple of my colleagues were called away who had planned to be here tonight. So I am doing this at sort of the last minute.

But I found my notes from last week, and I wanted to talk a little bit about some of the comments that were made last week, again on this issue, and some of the comments that are being made tonight. I am astonished again at the hypocrisy that is evident here on the floor of this House every day.

We have our Democratic colleagues standing up all of the time talking

about how we need to cut spending, cut spending, cut spending, and how we have got a debt. But when we bring in bills and give them the opportunity to cut spending, they vote against them.

Much of the spending that is occurring now is the result of Democratic programs that were begun in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, that have been put on automatic pilot.

One of the first meetings I came to when I was elected to Congress last year, I heard people talking about mandatory spending and discretionary spending, and entitlements. And I got up and I said, you know, I have read the Constitution, and nowhere in the Constitution do I see the words mandatory spending, discretionary spending, or entitlements.

A large part of the problem that we have in this Congress is that we have people who think in those terms. They think in terms of entitlement, and they have helped create in this society an entitlement mentality.

And when the President proposes, and the Republicans propose to try to change that mentality, the Democrats vote against it. The President said last year, "We have got a terrible problem with Social Security. The problem is that we are going to run out of money. There is not enough money in Social Security."

And when the Social Security program was established back in the 1930s, nobody ever thought that anybody would get any money from it to begin with. The average age in those days was 59 years old. So they set Social Security up to be collected when people became 65, assuming nobody would collect from Social Security.

But lo and behold, this country has prospered and people are living a lot longer.

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The average age now is about 78 years. People are thinking that they can retire at 65 and live on their Social Security, and that is just not possible. So the process makes a proposal, let us do something about Social Security.

Let us explain to the American people that the Congress controlled by the Democrats for over 40 years, as they admitted tonight, spent that money as it came in, did not put it aside for Social Security. I am ashamed to say that Republicans have done the same thing. They came in and they spent the money on Social Security. But people are waking up to the problem and the President says, let us do something about it. Let us create personal Social Security accounts. Let us put people's Social Security money into an account with their name on it, give them some options about where that money is going to be invested, and let them know what they are going to get when they retire. No more of this fooling the American people into thinking that they have paid in a certain amount of money and it is going to let them live in the style to which they have become accustomed while they worked.