

Look, in 527s last year, in the 2004 campaign cycle, there is \$370 million. \$370 million, Mr. Speaker, that flowed through these groups outside of campaign disclosure. These groups can come in and do all sorts of campaigning, but yet they do not have to disclose like a campaign would. So the voters do not know who is working, who is out there putting this information out. \$370 million, Mr. Speaker, flowed through 527s. That is more than both the Kerry and Bush campaigns combined spent on the Presidential election. This was done outside of campaign disclosure.

Over one-fifth of the \$370 million funded through 527s came from four individuals; one-fifth of the \$370 million, four individuals. So much for taking big money out of politics, which is what my colleagues on the left wanted to do through campaign finance reform and many active in politics wanted to do. So much for taking big money out.

We created a loophole that 527s are allowed to use, or have taken advantage of, I should say. Over 80 percent of 527 donors gave at least a quarter of a million dollars. Think about that. That is truly big money in politics, Mr. Speaker. Forty-six individuals gave at least a million dollars to 527 groups. That is even bigger money. So we have created a two-tier system in campaign finance: one where people have to disclose; another where they shadow a group's act.

Look, the biggest big daddy of them all for 527s was a billionaire, what I like to call the Daddy Warbucks of the Democrat Party, George Soros, the Daddy Warbucks of the Democrat Party. He is pumping wads of cash into 527s to influence elections for his left wing agenda. Soros is one of the richest men in the world. He spent \$18 million on campaign finance reform to root out big money in politics. How hypocritical is that? He spent all that money for campaign finance reform, yet once campaign finance reform is passed, what does he do? He pumps wads of cash, millions, tens of millions of dollars to those shadowy 527 groups.

Fortune Magazine called him the world's angriest billionaire. He is without a doubt the most powerful Democrat in the country right now. He has a far left agenda and you cannot move any farther left to him until you go down south to Havana, to be honest with you.

Soros is an example of liberal lunacy, and it goes to the heart of what my colleagues on the left have been articulating, which is a culture of hypocrisy. A culture of hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, that we need to take on as the majority in the House. As a Republican and as a conservative, I am going to point out the culture of hypocrisy that the 527 groups that the left wing in this body are taking advantage of.

That is why I think we need to come forward with true campaign finance reform, make the 527 groups accountable and disclose to the American people

who their donors are and abide by the same rules and regulations that all campaign groups must abide by.

The original intent from the Democrats was to root out big money in politics. They said not just a few years ago, not but just a few years ago, "... money that threatens to drown out the voice of the average voter of average means, money that creates the appearance that a wealthy few have a disproportionate say over public policy." Yet today, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats and the left in this body are more beholden than ever to big money politics and 527 groups and we will reform this liberal lunacy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. VAN HOLLEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is once again an honor to come before the House. As you know, those of us that are in the 30-something Working Group, we come to the floor to share not only with the Members but the American people about what is happening under the Capitol dome here, or what is not happening.

We want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to come to the floor again: Leader PELOSI and Mr. STENY HOYER, our whip, and also the chairman, Mr. JIM CLYBURN, and our vice chairman in assisting us in moving towards a stronger message to the American people.

I am so glad to be here with my good friend and colleague in the struggle for the truth and to make sure that we move America forward in many areas, even though we are serving in the minority here in the Congress. I think our constituents and also the American people, Mr. Speaker, look for us to use every avenue possible to be able to make their lives more secure, to be able to make sure we stand up on behalf of their health care, that we make sure that future generations have a better environment than what they have right now.

So with that, Mr. RYAN, it is so good to come back to the floor with you again, sir. We usually come to the floor and it is dark outside. It happens the sun is out; and as you know, the Congress is recessed for the week, but we are still here working, sir.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you, my friend. One quick piece of business that has been mentioned several times here today is the countdown to the Bush prescription drug tax.

Now, for those Members who do not remember, the Republican Congress voted this boondoggle a few months back, told us it was \$400 billion before we cast a vote on it, and it ended up being \$700 billion. The real number was actually hidden from Members of the United States Congress before they voted.

What happens is through this bill seniors have until May 15 to sign up for the prescription drug plan, and if they do not sign up by May 15, they are going to be penalized with the Bush prescription drug tax, which means that there will be an increase in monthly premiums by 1 percent for every month they do not sign up. So if they do not sign up by May 15, they will not be eligible to sign up, I think, until January of 2007 to begin again. That means there will be a 7 percent increase if seniors do not sign up by May 15.

This is a complex plan, a complicated plan; and we are rushing and forcing our seniors to make a decision. So we just want to put a little X here on Thursday, March 30, a couple days before the Final Four begins, so our seniors know that the countdown is on and

they have several weeks before this President will levy a tax on them.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, many Members of the House had an opportunity to witness a strong message again of commitment towards security; and those of us that are in the minority party have been working very, very hard to increase security here in the United States, especially homeland security. We are going to talk a little bit about that today. And I think when we were here, I know when we were here the night before last, we talked about the fact that just because the majority side says that we have security does not really mean we have security.

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The majority side has said that we are going to make sure that we are fiscally responsible, but we found out later and we know now that the Republican majority has put us into record-breaking deficits.

If I can, just to start this off, Mr. Speaker, because I like to use visual aids and I know we are going to talk about security, but I think it is important because folks just feel we may come to the floor, the 30-Something Working Group comes to the floor, we go in the back room, we just dream up things to say, and this is not the case because, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, there is so much bad news overwhelming the good news as it relates to future generations and this generation on how we are going to function as Americans and as a country.

No other time, I must add, before I bring this chart up, has the country been in the fiscal situation that it is in right now as it relates to foreign countries owning our debt.

Now I want to put this up, and I think it is important. You have seen this chart before. We have said that this chart may very well be in the National Archives one day because it will document that there were Members on the floor identifying to other Members on the majority side because they voted for this to happen. No other time in the history of the country have we borrowed \$1.05 trillion from foreign Nations in just 4 years. Matter of fact, we were not able to do it in 224 years, Mr. Speaker. We were not able to do it in 224 years; \$1.05 trillion just for President Bush and the Republican Congress, it says right here below this picture because we cannot leave the Congress out because he could not do it all by himself. You have 42 Presidents here going back to the First Continental Congress, 224 years, and there they were only able to borrow \$1.01 trillion.

Well, folks may say, well, Congressman, we are at war; Congress, 9/11. Guess what, these 42 other Presidents had the Great Depression, World War I, World War II, a number of other wars in between. They had all of these issues that were challenging America, but they never sold America off to foreign nations.

Let us talk about who those foreign nations are, and I think it is important again. This chart here has nothing to do with the weather. It is a silhouette, Mr. Speaker, as you can see of the United States of America. Who are we selling our debt off to? Who are we indebted to now? Because before this President and this Republican majority took over, we were talking about surpluses.

I am speaking here as a Democrat from the party that, guess what, we balanced the budget. We told folks that we would balance the budget and that we would cut down on spending, and guess what, we did it. But, you know, once again you have the other side, the Republican majority, saying: Trust us, we are fiscally responsible. Some folks may say the folks on the Democratic side, they like to spend money. Well, who is spending now?

China, Red China, many people in your district in Ohio are training people to go to China to do their jobs. Meanwhile, they are trying to make ends meet, and they are a part of the millions of Americans without health care, and Red China, we owe them \$249.8 billion. They bought our debt to that point, and we owe them.

Japan, the little small island of Japan. They own \$680.8 billion of our debt. Those are the big numbers.

UK, they own \$223.2 billion of our debt.

This is not by the Democrats now I must add, and I challenge any Republican that wants to come down here right here, right now. This is not the WWF cage match. I want them to come here right now and explain to us, how is this positive for Americans in the future and right now?

Korea, \$66.5 billion that they own of the American apple pie.

Canada, \$53.8 billion of the American apple pie.

Germany, some of our veterans, \$65.7 trillion.

Taiwan, the small island of Taiwan, \$71.3 billion.

And OPEC nations, now Mr. Speaker, this is very interesting because OPEC nations, we are talking about Saudi Arabia, we are talking about Iraq, we are talking about Iran, who we have real issues with, OPEC Nations, they are a part of the American apple pie; \$67.8 billion of our debt we owe them.

Now, anyone, Mr. Speaker, who has been in a financial situation before and has made youthful indiscretions on spending knows when a creditor calls you and they call in the tab for this payment, they disrespect you from the beginning. They do not call up and say, Mr. RYAN, I am calling from whoever the lender may be, when do you think that you can return payment? No, they call you TIM, because they disrespect you from the beginning.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to find ourselves in a situation where these countries are going to start disrespecting the United States of America, not because of something

they did. It is because we have had a Republican Congress that has been the rubber stamp Congress for the President of the United States and not doing what they should be doing in Article I, section 1 of the Constitution, and that is a fact. They have been rubber stamping everything that the President has wanted.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is President Bush's Congress.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. This is President Bush's Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is his Congress. They toe his line.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And the bottom line is, it is like having, Mr. Speaker, a board of directors of a bunch of people like bobble heads going up and down like this: What do you want, Mr. President? You want to make tax cuts permanent for millionaires and billionaires? We are with you. You want to give subsidies to oil companies that are making record profits while the American people are paying through the nose for oil and for gas prices? We are with you all the way. All the way, Mr. President, you can count on this Republican Congress because we are going to do it.

Hey, guess what, we are going to put it on the credit card. And folks used to say future generations. This is dealing with right now, and so just because you see a majority stands up there and they have this big chart behind them saying fiscal responsibility, we want to cut the budget in half, the deficit in half; that is not true.

So that is the reason why we are here on this floor today. That is the reason why we are sharing with the American people, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I would be concerned if I was a Republican Member of Congress because I can tell you right now, as a Democrat who represents Republicans, Democrats, Independents, I represent Americans. They are all coming to me. They are not coming up to me and saying, hey, I am a Republican and I have got to stick with Republicans because I am Republican. No, they are saying I am an American and I am concerned about what is happening in Washington, D.C.; I am concerned about the fact that I am going to have to pay more for my grandchild's education because we have not done what we are supposed to do in the fiscal way to make sure that we are there; we do not cut student opportunities so they can train themselves for the next generation. I am concerned, Congressman, that the Congress is not investing in innovation so that we can have engineers, we can have scientists, so that we do not have to raise the visa rate to be able to bring folks in from another country to take U.S. jobs because we have CEOs that are begging us for the opportunity to have an educated and ready-to-go workforce, and we cannot provide it because these kids cannot get into schools, but meanwhile, we are standing up for the billionaires in this country, and we are standing up for bad policy in this country.

No one is questioning the whole issue as it relates to Iraq. You heard one of our Members just got back, said this is what we need on the ground in Iraq. We go to Iraq. We fought for our troops to get them what they need. The bottom line is we have to govern, and the reason why you see all of these scandals and all of the wasted money, Mr. Speaker, is that the Congress is over here doing this.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Bobble heads.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Bobble heads on the other side of the aisle saying, we are with you all the way.

So when they say we stand up to the President every now and then, that is not what the Constitution says, Mr. Speaker. The Constitution says that we are the House that represents the people of the United States of America. If they are in a wheelchair, walking upright, if they are white, they are black, Hispanic, whatever the case may be, we are charged to represent them, and when we are making history in all the wrong areas, borrowing from foreign nations in 4 years more than in the 224 years of 42 Presidents, and folks are not alarmed? We are far beyond politics right now, Mr. Speaker. We are in a situation to where either we have some folks on this floor that are willing to lead on behalf of the American people, no longer sell our debt off to foreign nations that we have issues with, or we are just going to continue to go down this fiscal track, slippery slope, until we get to a situation to where we are not going to be the superpower that we have been in the past of the work that these the other Presidents and other Congresses have done.

I will be doggone if I am a Member of a Congress where we are not trying to bring about the paradigm shift to get us back on the fiscal track and make sure that we do the things the way the American people elected us to do it when we come up here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You are exactly right. Article I, section 1, of the United States Constitution creates this House of Representatives. It does not say we are going to have a king. It does not say we are going to have a President. That all comes later. Article I, section 1, of the Constitution creates this body, and when things get so turned around that this body is rubber stamping everything, this is President Bush's Congress. They have done every single thing that he has asked and everything that is supposed to be up is down statistically, and everything that is supposed to be down is up.

Now, since President Bush has been in and President Bush's Congress, they have raised the debt limit by \$3 trillion. Basically what happens is the CEO, the President, the Treasury Secretary, they come to Congress; they come to the board of directors and say, hey, we need to go out and borrow more money for the business. So the Congress time and time and time again says, sure, keep going, we will not even ask any questions as to where you are spending it.

They raised the debt in June of 2002 by \$450 billion; May of 2003 by \$984 billion; November of 2004, \$800 billion; and just 2 weeks ago, we did it again by several hundreds of billions of dollars. Almost \$9 trillion is the limit the United States can go and borrow.

As the gentleman from Florida said, we are borrowing it from the Chinese, the Japanese, OPEC countries. Can you imagine, we are going to the oil producing countries to borrow money? Are they not getting enough of our money right now? I think they get plenty of our money, Mr. Speaker.

Now, what did the Democrats try to do to stop the insanity? We have a little provision here that was implemented in the early 1990s, and it basically said if you want to spend money, you have got to go find it somewhere. You have either got to raise revenue or you have got to cut spending from another program in order to bring it into balance. It is called pay-as-you-go, just kind of like you do at home.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If a family had this kind of situation where they had debt and they were trying to catch up on that debt, the first thing when you get out of that or you get a second mortgage or you get some sort of loan to consolidate your debt, the first thing that lending officer says is, to do what? Cut your credit cards up.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Because from this point on, you can only buy what you can afford, not just continue to put it on the credit card because you are going to continue to go into the hole.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is a great point, and I thank the gentleman.

So, in this Congress, the Democrats have tried to reimplement this pay-as-you-go system because Bush's Congress, Bush's House, Bush's Senate, President Bush, they got rid of the PAYGO requirements. They said we did not need them anymore, and the Democrats, time and time, you know, we hear a lot about, well, what is the Democrats' plan? This is the Democratic plan: We want to implement PAYGO rules back into the United States Congress to rein in this spending. JOHN SPRATT from South Carolina, our ranking Democratic member on the Budget Committee, tried to put a substitute amendment in on the 2006 budget resolution, and that amendment failed. Zero Republicans voted to reimplement the PAYGO rules.

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We tried again with another Spratt substitute amendment, H. Con. Res. 393. I am not making this up. This happened. It is in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Mr. Speaker. The Members can go and look and check it out. It failed 194-232. Zero Republicans voted to reimplement the PAYGO rules.

Mr. THOMPSON from California tried; Mr. Stenholm, a former Member from Texas, he tried. Mr. MOORE from Kansas, he tried. We have been trying to implement fiscal restraint on Bush's

Congress, and they refuse to accept it time and time again.

Now, the funny part about it, and not really funny ha-ha, just funny peculiar, is that this is the same outfit that campaigned in 1994, Mr. Speaker, that they were going to pass a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. They wanted to enshrine balanced budgets into the U.S. Constitution and make a constitutional amendment. Now, 12 years later, they are the most fiscally irresponsible group that has run the show in the United States Congress.

Time and time again, when Democrats have tried to rein in spending, we keep butting our heads up against the Republican majority, President Bush's bobblehead Congress that just continues to say "yes" to every single thing that they do.

I remember, too, my good friend from Florida, time and time again we heard about how government needs to be run like a business. And you know what, put me in. Sign me up. I agree. I think it should be run like a business. But when you apply this scenario to a business model, we are the board of directors, the United States Congress, and the majority in particular. The President is the CEO. So if the CEO keeps going back to the board to say, hey, we want to go borrow more money, the board should at least ask some questions, like, Where are you spending it?

And when you hear where they are spending it, in Iraq a \$1.5 billion a week, and then Halliburton, who is getting the contracts in Iraq, is inflating prices and has been fined already for inflating prices, basically bilking the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker, is what that is called in laymen's terms; yet there is no oversight. Where is the \$9 billion dollars in Iraq. Where is it? You got it. No, I don't. You don't have it? He's got it. Wait a minute, I don't have it. Nobody knows where it is, \$9 billion.

This is not an operation that is being run like a business, especially in Iraq. Then we look at what happened when Katrina hit. That operation, FEMA, was certainly not run like a business, because you don't put a horse lawyer in charge of an emergency management operation. That is the bottom line. You put people in who will respect the operation and respect what needs to be done.

So if all this is happening, we've got to make some changes. And if it is General Motors, the American people do not have a vote as to who is on the board or who is the CEO of the company. But, fortunately, my friend, in the United States of America, the American people have the opportunity to pick a new board, and in November of 2006 the American people are going to have an opportunity to pick a new board.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, when you start talking about our stakeholders here, and who is a stockholder in the United States of America or a stakeholder that has stock, you

know, I am a Member of Congress and I guess I put on a suit and a tie this morning and a shirt, and I am wearing a decent pair of shoes here today, but that doesn't make me a stockholder in America, just the way I dress. This voter registration card here does. That is the bottom line.

Anyone that is carrying one of these, Mr. Speaker, are the folks that will be able to speak to us in a way versus another person who is not registered to vote. And the real issue comes down to this: Are we going to be accountable to the American people? That is one question. Are we going to be accountable to those that are not old enough to vote yet and carry one of these voter registration cards? That is another question. Are we going to be accountable to those Americans that do have a voter registration card and know what it means to have a responsible government?

People want governance, Mr. RYAN. They could care less about the Republicans did this and the Democrats did that. They want governance, they want security, they want to make sure their children are educated and they want to be sure we are responsible, being the overseers of the Government of the United States of America. And the bottom line is this: we have some folks that have gotten confused, Mr. Speaker, on the majority side.

There are some votes that have taken place on this floor, this education bill that just passed today that did very little to address the issues of innovation in education, even though the majority side says we are for innovation; even though we are for education, just a little tiny increase here and there, and this is the best bill since bills have been passed.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to just step back for a minute and say the reason why we are here. We are not appointed here in this House of Representatives. In the other body across the Hall, in the Senate, if a Senator was to say, hey, you know, I can't do this any more, I am gone. That is it. Hey, it was great serving for 20-something years, or even 5 years in some cases, but I am not going to do this any more. I have to go take care of my grandkids, my mother is ill, or whatever case, and they go on. In that particular case, a Governor can appoint a U.S. Senator.

But if a Member of the House, as we all know, Mr. Speaker, says, you know, family issues, personal issues, I can no longer come back to Washington every week to represent my district, I am gone, there has to be a special election set. And that is what holds us to a higher power as it relates to representing the people of the United States of America.

It is important that Members realize that folks early one Tuesday morning in some given community woke up one day and stood in line to vote for some representation. And I can tell you right now, the bills that are passing on this

floor that are benefiting folks that are very powerful in this capital city, that I feel are not really benefiting the folks back home, I am concerned about. I know my card happens to say Democrat, but there are some cards that say Independent, and there are some voting cards that say Republican, and there are some voting cards that say Green Party and other parties. And guess what, they feel the way we feel.

I share with some Members sometimes that we have to act as though it was our first night being elected, all the things we wanted to do before we hit Washington, D.C., until someone started telling us how we should vote and how we shouldn't vote. We should have those feelings of representing the group of people that have sent us up here. And by the fact they have sent us here, Mr. Speaker, many times we have to look on behalf of the greater country. We have been federalized once we have been sent here to serve in this body.

So, Mr. RYAN, when we talk about stakeholders and stockholders, the stakeholders and stockholders in the United States of America are the people we serve. And folks are getting confused about that, or we wouldn't see this out-of-control borrowing and spending.

Folks are coming before the people of the United States of America and saying, you know, the President is asked, what about Iraq? Well, we are going to be there as long as we have to be there. That is not an answer.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is the next President's issue.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, that is the next President's issue.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about the other night, Mr. RYAN and I were talking, and the next thing you know, it is like Mr. RYAN or my constituents walking up to me in Miami and saying, hey, Congressman, you really need to do something about economic development. Well, that is for the next Member of Congress. It is not for me.

So the real issue is this: Do we want to represent the people that have fought that are veterans, and the American people that are paying taxes for us to be able to salute one flag here today? Or do we want to represent someone that is publicly on the stock market that has an issue that wants to use the U.S. taxpayer dollar to carry on their business when they are making record profits, when they are doing very little as it relates to investment?

So we have to make sure that the rubber hits the road and that everyone understands. Because we know there is going to be a big marketing campaign going on later on this year about who is doing the best job up here in Congress. And what I am seeing of the polling numbers and what people are saying and how they are concerned, the party has nothing to do with it. It has everything to do with governance.

And, Mr. RYAN, if they want accountability in Iraq, and if they want ac-

countability as it relates to paying as we go, and if they want accountability as it relates to us following up and saying what we are going to do, and we have all these scandals going on under this situation, what will happen? And what would happen if we had real oversight? If we had oversight, would Halliburton be able to get a blank check?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Here is the choice, my friend. The American people will have a decision to make. We can either go and keep following President Bush down this unknown path, that I don't even know sometimes if the President knows where we are going as a country, or we can change course and we can go in a different direction than President Bush's direction. Because that direction, as you have seen, has led to more borrowing from foreign interests than the previous 42 Presidents.

We are not making this up. That is from the United States Department of the Treasury. And when you look at the interest payments that we have to pay just on the interest, and here is a great example, Mr. Speaker: for the 2007 budget, we will spend about \$230 billion just paying the interest on the money that we owe all these other countries.

So if China loans us money, they loan us the money and then we send them the interest. So China takes the interest and invests it back into their state-owned companies and wipes out the manufacturing base in the United States. That doesn't seem too smart. That is President Bush's direction. The Democrats want to take the country in another direction.

So \$230 billion out of the 2007 budget is going to go just for interest. Wasted money. Flush it right down the toilet, 'cause it is done. Then what are we going to spend on education? Fifty billion. We have \$230 billion on the interest and \$50 billion on education. You know, 10 or 15 on homeland security, and a pittance, just a little more than that, on veterans.

You know, President Kennedy said: "To govern is to choose," and this is the choice that this President makes. The Bush Congress continues to reaffirm with their rubber stamp time and time and time again. So all we are saying is what we want to do is we want to change direction.

I personally would like to stop following the President, because I have seen his track record, and I don't want to follow him. It is just like any leader. You are with them, you want to be with them, but over time they build a record, and this Republican Congress refuses to break free from what the President is doing here. And this is President Bush's Congress, my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I just want to also share the fact that we both serve on the Armed Services Committee, and we feel very passionate about what our men and women are doing. And we know that in Iraq, Mr. Speaker, you watch the Secretary of

Defense and you watch the press conference with the President and you would think that it is another beautiful day in Iraq, and it is not.

First question: Is there a civil war in Iraq? That answer usually comes back "no." There is a civil war going on right now. As sure as today is Thursday, there is a civil war going on in Iraq right now. Will it get worse? It probably will get worse. Is the coalition getting bigger or smaller? Well, you know, we are talking to people, and the indicators of the indicators are saying. And they are not making any sense whatsoever.

And the reason they get away with this, Mr. Speaker, is we are not nailing them down as a Congress on the tough questions so they can answer in a truthful way and guide them in the right direction. It is not the Congress's responsibility for the day-to-day operations of war. The President would say it is not his responsibility either, that it is the commanders on the ground.

Well, we found from past commanders and some present that have slipped and said a few things every now and then that we did not have all that we needed to go into Iraq; that we did not have the body armor and equipment and a mission and a plan; we did not have a real coalition when we went into Iraq. We had a number of main countries, but when you look at it, you had the U.S., you had contractors, and then the Brits. And that was a huge deficit as it relates to numbers.

The Brits have said they are leaving this year, and a number of the other countries that were sending 50 to 100 troops there, or technical advisers that were part of our so-called coalition are leaving. Because they are willing to take the training wheels off the Iraqi Government. They are willing not to get into a situation, Mr. Speaker, of a continued borrowing from other countries. You know why they are doing it? Because they know they cannot weaken their country.

The U.K., I am going to snatch them off this map here, \$223.2 billion of our debt. I mean, they have it so good they can buy our debt and still operate their country and continue to do what they are doing.

□ 1615

But they have better sense to know they have to take care of home first.

The President can boldly say, because he has the bobble-head Republican majority here that says whatever you say, Mr. President, we are with you.

For a minute there, I was concerned that maybe we could move in a bipartisan way. But, of course, when it came down to the whole Dubai Ports World issue, we had folks that said we stopped that from happening. But the environment was set up for it to happen, that the under secretaries in each department could make a unilateral decision that we will sell our ports off to a foreign nation. Somebody ob-

jected, and all of a sudden it became a situation where we had to do something about this after the whole country was in an uproar over the issue.

The Democrats, we were the first ones on the floor saying, what do we need 45 days for? What is there to think about, that we are going to outsource our ports to a foreign nation that there is a question mark concerning where the financing for the 9/11 attack came from. We are going to give them six of our ports on the east coast? What is to think about? 45 days for what? What does the President of the United States say? "We gave them a handshake. We have to move on with this. You can have your 45 days, I am still going to do what I want to do."

The Republican Congress was pushed with their back against the wall. But does the Republican Congress have to be pushed to the wall before they stand up and say, excuse me, Mr. President, we don't agree with you, and we are not going to do it.

The same thing happened, Mr. RYAN, when we came to this floor night after night, in some instances 2 hours a day on this floor, talking about the President's Social Security plan. He was going to privatize Social Security. Many of the Members on the majority side were with him. Ho-hum, private accounts, big press conference.

It took the American people to rise up in over 1,000 town hall meetings on this side of the aisle to bring to the attention of the American people that they were going to lose under private accounts, and then the President finally said okay. He flew all over the country and burned all kinds of jet fuel at taxpayers' expense and kind of did the Potomac two-step kind of thing.

Why can't we, as a bipartisan body, because people want leadership, and we are here sharing with the American people that we are ready to lead. We have plans to lead. We have led before in the past, be it war, be it making sure, and I want you to talk about Bosnia a little bit, be it planning to move into an area. I think it is important because yesterday we not only unveiled but said for a second time in many cases our security plan, our real security plan that people can get. They can read it online. They can get it on HouseDemocrats.gov. They can get a copy of this plan.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, you have to be tough, there is no doubt about it, but you have to be smart. What we are doing now is not smart. We talked earlier about the debt and deficit and everything else we have now. In 1993, a Democratic House, Democratic Senate and a Democratic President balanced the budget in the United States. It led to the creation of 20 million new jobs. The Democrats know how to govern.

We had an incident in the late 1990s with Bosnia. General Clarke, a Democrat; Madeleine Albright, a Democrat; President Clinton, a Democrat; we went into Bosnia with a coalition of

countries around the world to help us stop basically what we said was happening in Iraq. We went in there, and we did not lose one American soldier. The Democrats know how to administer governments, and the Republicans, quite frankly, do not because the numbers do not bear it out. The budget is ballooning. They have raised the debt ceiling by \$3 trillion. They are borrowing money from Japan, China and the OPEC countries, and whoever else will loan them money. The deficit next year is projected to be about \$500 billion. Tuition costs have doubled in the past 4 or 5 years. The gap between the wealthiest people in our society and the poorest people in our society has grown to a point we have not seen since pre-World War II, and Iraq is a mess. \$1.5 billion a week. We are losing soldiers every day, and there is absolutely no end in sight. We did not go in with enough troops, and whether you supported the war or not, you want to make sure that you succeed, for God's sake.

Mr. Speaker, we have not seen the rebuilding effort in Iraq that we need to see in order to get out of there.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Mr. RYAN and I were both in Iraq. We were in Iraq together. We were in these meetings with the commanders and the troops. You ask a question, sometimes folks lose eye contact with you because they are trying to do what the commander in chief said that we need to do. And there are a lot of stump speeches going on, and the President is flying and folks are standing behind him and clapping and all. And we are all supportive of the commander in chief, but when you are riding down the railroad tracks and you are saying, is that the light at the end of the tunnel or is that the train? Is that a train or is that the sun? When you start getting indicators, when you hear a horn and the rails start shaking on the train track, I think you start saying, I think that is a train.

Tough talk: The President throws out statements, talking about folks, we are going to get them and track them down and all this kind of stuff, it makes things even worse. So when we talk to these commanders, and some of them lose eye contact because they know we do not have what we need. And as long as this Republican majority is here bobble heading with the President saying, Mr. President, we are with you. And they have special breakfasts over at the White House. And, of course, Mr. RYAN, we are not invited because we may say something to the President he does not want to hear. We all know that the President does not take good to those who disagree with him, and I guess that rule applies to some of our Republican friends on the other side of the aisle because, obviously, we do not have the kind of uprising we need in the majority to be able to say, Mr. President, we are really going to have to start talking about this Iraq thing. We have to do something about it.

The Iraqi government, you go over there and you have some of the Members of their government, be it elected or appointed, they are sitting up there like they have 10 years to do whatever they have to do, they have 20 years to do whatever they have to do. And guess what, it is at the U.S. taxpayers' expense.

Meanwhile, Mr. RYAN, we have schools that do not have what they need. Meanwhile, we are here on this floor talking about cutting lunches for poor children just because they so happened to be born into a poor family. I have mayors coming to me saying, Congressman, these unfunded mandates for homeland security, I am having to spend all of this money. I have to take money out of parks and rec and decrease the quality of life in my city. The Federal Government just cut the COPS program, but meanwhile, we are building schools and roads and water treatment plants and the President said we were not going to be into nation-building over in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to mold the clay and to be able to let the American people know if you are walking down a tunnel, which they know, it is just commonsense, if you are walking down a tunnel and you are walking on some train tracks and you are stepping on those wood slates and you are saying, is that the sunlight or a train, and then you hear a horn and the tracks are shaking, I do not think that is the sun, I know it is a train.

What this majority has to do, and if the American people want us to be able to bring this President into accountability and bring the Department of Defense back into accountability and oversight, you are going to have to have a Congress, in this case a Democratic Congress, that asks the tough questions.

When you sit down for a job interview, you have to have a good resume. You cannot say, in my last job, I agreed with everything that the other guy who was sitting next to me said because I was told to say yes. No. People elected us to lead. People elected us to have plans. People elected us to have plans in all areas to make sure we have accountability for our government. People do not care if it is a "D" or "R" behind the name; they want leadership. We talk about real security. Real security is making sure that we protect America before something happens.

I do not want a 9/11 or an 8/11 or a 7/11, I do not want those dates to come up and say, oh well, now an event has happened and let's legislate to make sure that we move from 5 percent container checks at ports to 100 percent. Why do we need an event for that to happen?

The reason it is not happening, to be brutally honest, is we have the bobblehead Republican majority Congress that is saying "yes" to the President at every turn. Not all Republicans because I do not want to generalize, but enough to allow the President to con-

tinue doing what he is doing. And the only way we switch and have the change that you are talking about, Mr. RYAN, is if we have a Congress that is dedicated and bonded, ready to work in a bipartisan way, unlike what we have today, and bringing in the very few Republicans on the other side of the aisle that think the way we do, and say we are willing to represent. We do not care what your party affiliation is, we are willing to represent on behalf of the American people.

We are willing to tell the special interests that we notice you have issues, but we have something at hand. We have other issues such as innovation, such as homeland security, such as making sure that our troops have a clear plan in Iraq. The tough questions need to be asked, and we need to act on them. Some of them are being asked in some places, but they are not being acted upon.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. From a security perspective, we need to be tough; we need to be smart. We need to have our act together, and we have a comprehensive plan. You know, these bumper-sticker solutions to complex world problems do not work. They just do not work. They have gotten us into the situation we are in now.

If you look at the plan that the Democrats have, we talk about 100 percent of the ports. Right now, we are only inspecting 5 percent of the ports here. The Democrats have tried. Let us get those charts out about all of the amendments we have offered to try to increase funding for port security.

We only check 5 percent of the cargo coming into the United States ports. That means 95 percent is not checked at all because of the failed leadership on behalf of President Bush's Congress.

What have the Democrats tried to do? Some people ask: What are the Democrats doing? Here is what we are doing.

In June of 2004, Mr. OBEY tried to put on an amendment right here in Congress to increase port and container security by \$400 million; Republicans refused to even allow a vote. That was for \$400 million, and we need \$6 billion worth to actually do the job. That is what the Coast Guard says we need. We only asked for \$400 million, and could not even get a vote on it.

October 7 of 2004, another amendment by Mr. OBEY, Mr. SABO and Senator BYRD to increase funding by \$150 million. That was shot down.

We kept trying, we kept going. On September 29, 2005, Mr. OBEY, Mr. SABO, increase funding for port and container security by \$300 million. The House conferees defeated this amendment along party lines. Democrats for, Republicans against.

Again, March of 2006, Republicans blocked an effort by the Democrats to bring the King-Thompson port deal bill to the floor.

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Again, Republicans voted against the bill. Time and time and time again, the

Democratic minority tried to get President Bush's Congress to support these deals, to support increases in funding so we can get it from 5 percent to 100 percent. We should check all of the cargo that comes into the country. So that is one issue. We need to check the ports. Okay? But there is not one little bumper sticker we could say we are going to have, we are going to put it on all our cars, then the problem is going to be solved. That is just one component.

We believe, in the Democratic Party, that if we do not have a long-term alternative energy proposal where we are going to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, we will continue to be in these squabbles and these entanglements in the Middle East, time and time and time again. So the Democrats want to fund the ports. We have made efforts to do that. We want an alternative energy program. We need to get the oil man out of the White House in order to do that. And not only are we trying to take on the oil companies, the Republican majority in the energy bill gave the, check this out, gave the oil companies \$12 billion in corporate welfare. So not only are your gas prices going up; your public tax dollars that you send to Washington, D.C., the Republican majority is also giving that to the oil companies on top of what you are already giving them.

The first day we take over, next January, we will implement the 9/11 Commission's report, make sure we put that thing front and center and we do what the bipartisan commission has told this country that we need to do.

The COPS program that you mentioned, our first responders, that program is gone. It is gone. President Clinton had a goal of putting 100,000 cops on the street. And the Republican Congress has almost nearly eliminated that program, if it is not all gone already.

So what we are saying is, real security is an opportunity for all of us to have a comprehensive plan, implement the 9/11 Commission's report, make sure that we secure the ports and fund the funding level that the Coast Guard recommends, not KENDRICK MEEK and TIM RYAN, what the Coast Guard recommends. Let's develop an alternative energy policy in this country so that we are not reliant on oil from the Middle East that gets us entangled in all of this stuff. And let's make sure we fund our police and fire and our first responders, the first line of defense here.

So be tough, but be smart and make proper investments that are going to yield value and protect the country, not where did the \$9 billion go that we are spending in Iraq that no one knows where it is.

Be happy to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, you know, Mr. RYAN, I believe that America is protected best and freedom is protected in advance. We look at homeland security.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Prevention.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Prevention. When you talk about prevention, you are talking about before. When you are talking about reactionary, we are talking about after.

So dealing with this container thing, I don't want the Members to take it lightly, Mr. Speaker. You may say, well, you know, I am in the middle of America. I live in Sioux City, Iowa, and we don't have ports so I don't need to worry; that is not my issue. Well, it is your issue because those containers that are coming in from overseas and from countries that are in question, some may say suspect as it relates to their commitment to the United States of America, they get on those little trucks and trains that I was talking about a little earlier, and they go right down into your community. And if there is a dirty bomb or some sort of substance that will hurt your community and your family, now it is your problem. And I think it is important that we point that out, because I don't want folks to get confused and say, well, I am not from a coastal area; Members who say, you know, well that is not my issue.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just like you get your food, just like you get the toys that shipped to the local store that you are going to buy, same thing. Those all come in through the ports.

Now, here is what is interesting, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is something that really makes your ears perk up when you hear about this. On March 28, just a day or so ago, Senators said that a report, this is from Bloomberg News, Senators said a report that investigators smuggled enough radioactive material to build two dirty bombs into the United States called into question the Bush administration's efforts to secure the borders.

Now, check this out. A sting operation that was described in one of three Government Accountability Office reports, now this is the GAO, this is not a partisan deal, said, they released a report. The report accused the Bush administration of being slow to deploy equipment that would detect radioactive materials, and they say corrupt foreign border officials and poor maintenance of detection devices have left the U.S. vulnerable to terror plots.

Enough material for two dirty bombs to go off in the United States was snuck in by, you know, through a sting operation that we were trying to figure out what is going on. We are not doing enough.

Now, third-party validator, which the 30-somethings like to promote. We don't want this to be all our opinion here. This is from a retired Coast Guard commander who is now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He says: "Both the opportunity for terrorists to target legitimate global supply chains remain plentiful, and the motivation for doing so is only growing. We are living on borrowed time."

We are not here to scare anybody, but the reality is, when you only check

5 percent of the cargo coming into the country, and your own folks are sneaking in enough nuclear material to set off two dirty bombs, and we are giving tax cuts to billionaires and not funding port security, when we are giving \$12 billion in corporate welfare to the oil companies, when we are giving billions in corporate welfare to the health care industry, and we are not funding our national security priorities, when we are spending a billion and a half in Iraq a week, and \$9 billion of it no one can find, and we have these kinds of situations, we have an obligation. When we come here the first part of every second year and we swear our allegiance to the United States and the Constitution and everything else, we have an obligation to oversee what is going on. So we have an obligation to come down here and be critical of things like this and provide solutions, which we have time and time again.

Now, President Bush's Congress has not taken any of our recommendations, and they are up for a job review in November; and I hope that the American people, Mr. Speaker, take a good look at what has happened over the past 4 or 5 years and hope that our plan on real security, which you can find on our Web page, housedemocrats.gov, you can get the whole deal and you can see our comprehensive plan to try to do this.

You can also check out our plan on innovation, how to get the country moving economically again. Periodically, we will have unveilings of different ideas that we have. But we have tried on port security. We have tried on PAYGO. We have tried on school funding and we continue to get shot down by President Bush's Congress. So we have got the plan; we just need the opportunity to implement it. For Members who are in their offices and would like to send us e-mails or anyone else, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something. All the charts that were here that we used will all be on the Web site so you can go back and reference them all.

Yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. I just want to let you know that it was a pleasure coming down to the floor with you again. We got out a lot of good information.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Before we go, I know you have a Florida team in the Final Four this weekend, and I want to wish you the best of luck.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, we need it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I hope you guys pull it off. Since there is no Ohio team, with a good conscience I can root for Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you. With that we want to thank the Democratic leader. We want to also encourage everyone to go to our Web site, housedemocrats.gov. We want the majority to go on our Web site, housedemocrats.gov.

These are our plans. As it stands right now, in the state of homeland se-

curity is the majority's plan. It is already there, already being carried out. We have a plan to make things better, more secure here in the United States of America, not only here in the House but also in the Senate.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it was an honor addressing the House once again. I yield back the balance of my time.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL AIDE OF HON. WILLIAM JEFFERSON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania) laid before the House the following communication from Joyce G. Davis, Congressional Aide of the Hon. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 27, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a grand jury subpoena for testimony issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

JOYCE G. DAVIS,
Congressional Aide.

COMMUNICATION FROM CONGRESSIONAL AIDE OF HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Loretta Mahony, Congressional Aide of the Hon. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON, Member of Congress:

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Washington, DC, March 27, 2006.

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Speaker, House of Representatives,
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After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

LORETTA MAHONY,
Congressional Aide.

COMMUNICATION FROM DISTRICT MANAGER OF HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Stephanie Butler, District Manager of the Hon. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON, Member of Congress: