

This place is about choices. Give a tax cut to the wealthiest 800 families in Ohio and, in order to pay for that, you eliminate a tax credit for 100,000 working, middle-class families to send their kids to college.

That tells you a whole lot about family values. It tells you that this Congress has betrayed our values by helping the wealthiest taxpayers at the expense of middle-class, working families who simply want the opportunity to send their children to college to reach the American dream.

MOVING THE ECONOMY

(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, in 2003, our country was in a very tough recession. George Bush took a bold step to reduce taxes. Now, the Democrats did not like to have tax cuts, because they like to spend your money, because they actually believe that the wisdom in Washington is better than the wisdom on Main Street, America. But as a result of tax reduction, we now have five million new jobs since 2003 that have been created.

The unemployment rate is at 4.6 percent, 4.6 percent. That is lower than the unemployment rate was on average in the 1990s, the 1980s, the 1970s, and the 1960s. Sixty-nine percent of Americans own their own house now. It is a historic high not just for the United States of America, but for any country. Fifty-two percent of Americans are invested in the stock market, creating wealth for their themselves. The interest rates are down and the mortgage rates have remained competitive.

The economy is moving because of Bush economic policies. The last thing we need to do right now is increase taxes and throw these great economic policies out the door.

RECOGNIZING MORGAN D. SWEERE

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

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, the winner in my district of "What Rosa Parks Means To Me" essay contest at the elementary school level was Morgan Sweere in the fourth grade, age 9, at Ida Burns Elementary School in Conway, Arkansas. This is her essay:

"Rosa Parks means incredible courage to me. She had the courage to stay in her seat even though society demanded that she give it up to a white person. She was tired and worn out from working. She also knew the consequences of her actions, but she refused to give up her seat on the bus. I can't even imagine the taunts, rude comments, and hostile behavior that she had to go through. She had the courage to stand up to society and the discrimination that was against her.

She knew and felt that her having to give up her seat was wrong, and she made a decision that changed her life and the world. Her one decision made the fight for equal rights more powerful. She had the courage to make that decision and then face the consequences for making that decision even though it made her life very hard.

"Courage is a hard thing to teach. You may think that you have courage only to realize you don't when faced with a tough situation or a situation that goes against your family and friends. Courage means taking a stand and treating people fairly no matter how they are different from you. Courage means standing up for your beliefs."

Mr. Speaker, that is the winner of the "What Rosa Parks Means To Me" essay contest at the elementary school level, Morgan Sweere from Ida Burns Elementary School in Conway, Arkansas.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 5230

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask to have my name removed from H.R. 5230. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

SAVINGS GROW WITH SIMPLIFIED USA TAX

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

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced a new version of legislation that I have introduced in the past, the Simplified USA Tax, or SUSAT, which reforms individual and business taxation while promoting economic growth, investment and personal savings, all tenets of a strong and sustainable economy.

Tonight I would like to focus my remarks on a critical component of SUSAT, which in my view provides a powerful antidote to the national savings crisis that we are combating today.

Mr. Speaker, clearly our Tax Code is too complicated, and it is riddled with obvious inequities. Its current structure punishes savings and investment, which reduces economic and job growth and burdens domestic industry struggling to remain competitive. If Congress is going to succeed in reforming the American tax system, and I believe we must, we need to create a stable

Tax Code that gives Americans a fair opportunity to save part of their earnings.

Thrift has helped provide Americans the security and independence that are the foundation of freedom. Savings buys tools to make Americans more productive. Productivity raises our living standards to the highest in the world. But in recent years America has gone into debt, and it seems like we have stopped saving altogether.

In 2005, stunningly, our national savings rate was in the negative for the first time since the Great Depression. America is facing a quiet crisis, the fact that our economy is now more dependent on foreign capital than on foreign oil.

As you can see in this chart, whether Americans save or not simply does not affect them personally; it impacts on our national economy. As the savings rate has declined, our trade deficit has gone further into the red. Apart from the short-term market gains in the late 1990s, the trade deficit has closely tracked the savings rate. Taking the punitive taxes off of savings and encouraging the practice must be an essential element of reforming the Tax Code because it not only translates into personal savings for working families, but it also has a job creating progrowth macroeconomic impact.

In my tax reform proposal everyone is allowed an unlimited Roth-like savings account in which they can put a portion of each year's income they save after paying taxes and living expenses; and after 5 years all money in the account can be withdrawn for any purpose and all withdrawals, including accumulated interest and other earnings or principal are tax free. Nothing can be simpler and nothing can give the people a better opportunity to save.

While Congress has taken some powerful measures in the past few years to improve the Tax Code, particularly for individual taxpayers, clearly we need to do more. We need fundamental tax reform. For too long the Tax Code has been a needless drag on the economy. That is bad public policy and certainly not fair to Americans whose living standards are lower because of it. It is time that we made some fundamental changes.

I firmly believe that faster economic growth must be the key goal of tax reform, and encouraging Americans to save is one way of achieving that goal. Roth IRAs have a proven track record of increasing savings, and removing red tape, and expanding their impact will go the distance in altering the course of our national savings rate. SUSAT has the potential to serve as part of the groundwork for this kind of reform and ensure that Americans can keep more of their hardworking tax dollars, establish financial security, and invest in their future.

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

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

TURNING HIS BACK ON OHIO

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to claim the gentlewoman's time and address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the people of Ohio are wondering why the Bush administration has turned its back on them. After all, Ohio was the linchpin State in the Bush victory in 2004.

Now, what else can Ohioans think? The Bush administration has just cut the funding for homeland security in Ohio and its major cities by one-third. Over \$8.5 million was cut. Last year, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, the four largest Ohio cities received \$26.1 million in antiterrorism funding; this year \$17.6 million, an \$8.5 million reduction. Why?

Surely President Bush does not think the terrorist threat has diminished. If he does, perhaps he should read the newspapers. Dateline Toronto, the Canadian Government just broke up an alleged terrorist ring in Ontario Province. That is on the north side of Lake Erie, and Ohio shares a border across that lake with Canada. And that ring apparently possessed enough material, 3 tons of it, to cause an explosion three times larger than that which destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995.

If that is not enough to think about, Mogadishu, Somalia, has just fallen into the hands of Muslim militia groups in what the New York Times calls "a setback for U.S. policy." Now that failed state might become another stronghold for al Qaeda. That is not good news.

How about Baghdad? The violence in Iraq continues to escalate. And in Kabul the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. And here in Washington the Bush administration responds by making deeper cuts to homeland security funding to the four largest cities in Ohio.

What did Ohio do that would cause President Bush to turn his back on her? Funding in Columbus, the largest city in the State, will fall from \$7.6 million last year to \$4.3 million this year. Mayor Coleman said that Columbus is the 15th largest city in the country, "and time and again we are being told to do it yourself. Best of luck."

My own hometown of Toledo is being cut from \$5.3 million to \$3.85 million this year. I think the President spent almost that much just on ads during the last campaign in our region. Yet recently in our city, the U.S. Justice Department made national news with the arrests of three men whom it suspects of being potential terrorists. Indeed, Ontario's terrorists drove from

Columbus through Toledo, up to Detroit, across the bridge to Windsor to their Ontario hideouts.

□ 1930

Toledo is a major port on the Great Lakes, literally the crossroads of America.

Our position as a premier international transportation center, with such great proximity to our Nation's population center, is key to our economic vitality. We have to make sure that our air, water, rail, port and surface transportation infrastructure is safe and secure, and we need the Federal Government's help to do exactly that.

At this very moment, this crucial moment in our Nation's history, this President is turning his back on Ohio, the State that delivered for him, turning his back on Toledo and Columbus and Cincinnati and Cleveland. He is turning his back on virtually every city across our country, cutting homeland security funds by over one-third when our communications systems cannot even work interoperably.

No, Mr. President, mission not accomplished. There's still a lot to do. National security is the responsibility of the Federal Government. National security is the job of the Federal Government. Let the record show, Mr. Speaker, that the Bush administration has turned its back on the safety of Ohioans and across this country on the safety of Americans, including especially on our Nation's fourth seacoast.

I hope the Bush administration listens to this message this evening. We need help with homeland security in Ohio, in our major cities and across this Nation.

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

(Mr. MCHENRY 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 gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HELPING OUR VETERANS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to go out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Ohio is home to one million veterans and servicemembers. On May 22, a couple, 3 weeks ago, the Pentagon announced that the names, the Social Se-

curity numbers and other personal information of 26.5 million veterans and their spouses, including most of the 1 million in Ohio, across the country, including every living veteran discharged since 1975, had been stolen from the home of a Department of Veterans Affairs data analyst.

Now, this is a department, the VA, which has a leader, a political appointee, who was rewarded for his service as a national party chair for one of the two political parties, not someone who was put in place because of his lifetime dedication to veterans.

This breach of confidence at the VA is unacceptable. To fix this, our government owes to veterans, we should offer veterans free credit reports and work with America's credit bureaus to waive fees associated with placing security alerts on their credit accounts. We should be willing to reimburse veterans for costs caused by identity theft resulting from this scandal, and we should amend the bankruptcy law passed by this body last year. When the bill was then considered, I opposed it, as did many in this body, in part because it did not extend bankruptcy protections to victims of identity theft, which is what could happen to many of these veterans.

Veterans trusted that their government would protect this personal information. They did not think this Department of Veterans Affairs would be run by a political operative. We must regain that trust by taking the important steps I just mentioned.

Ten days ago, we all honored our veterans and honored those who died in the line of duty on Memorial Day. Once the parades were completed, once the graveside ceremonies were finished, too many politicians came back to Washington, simply not concerned about what happens to veterans in this country.

Negligent policy and irresponsible budgets have endangered the care available to veterans. We have failed to adequately fund the VA health care system to improve the quality of health care, to reduce the wait times for all veterans. As good as the service is at VA hospitals like Brexfield, like Wade Park in greater Cleveland, all over Ohio, and all the VA clinics all over our State, veterans too often have to wait too long for care. We need to provide enhanced mental health care service for soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Returning veterans should have access to first-rate education benefits through an enhanced 21st century GI bill and job training programs. Current benefits for vets with 4 years of active duty military service cover less than two-thirds of the average cost of tuition and fees at a 4-year public college. We should be covering more of that cost.

We must not forget, it is not just the veterans; it is the families and children of servicemembers and veterans who also are sacrificing for their country.