degree that they scared every single individual across this Nation into believing that the kind of policies that were being proposed were going to destroy the program. Well, nothing could have been further from the truth.

What we were attempting to do was to make it where that kind of growth curve in a mandatory or an automatic spending program didn't occur so there was greater fiscal responsibility here at the level of the Federal Government and we were attempting to empower individuals in their communities to a greater degree with the kind of resources that they would gain from their employment.

If we don't, if we don't make certain that we address and fundamentally reform those three programs, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, we will not be able to sustain the kind of Federal Government, the kind of policies either in defense or in transportation or in energy, all of the things that we need to be doing as a Nation in a positive way to move forward, we will not be able to do those things unless, unless we responsibly, responsibly, go ahead and reform the mandatory spending.

This chart points out the fact that the growth in those mandatory spending programs, if the law isn't changed right now, if we don't act positively together as a Congress, if we don't change that, these programs will grow at a rate of about 6.2 percent every single year.

Now, you see that the rate of inflation is estimated to be about 2.4 percent. Well, those programs will outpace the rate of inflation. They will also outpace the growth in membership in those programs. That is again, Mr. Speaker, an economic policy that is truly unsustainable. That is not something that we can continue as a Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that we are continuing to try almost weekly to encourage our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to assist us in being fiscally responsible, helping to solve many of the challenges that we have. This week is no different. We will have on the floor of the House this week H.R. 5766, which is an act called The Government Efficiency Act. And what it does is sets up a framework to target inefficiency, waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government to make certain, to make certain that we route out that kind of waste, fraud, and abuse.

I want you, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that you watch how our friends on the other side of the aisle vote on that, because you heard them earlier say that making certain that we decrease inefficiency, waste, fraud, and abuse is so incredibly important as a Federal Government. I believe that to be true. We have got a bill that will do that. We are going to give them the opportunity to vote ''yes,'' vote positively and vote ''yes'' on something. So I encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to keep an eye on H.R. 5766 as it comes up for a vote this evening.

I have got just a few moments left, but I am pleased to be joined by my good friend and colleague from Georgia, Representative LYNN WESTMORELAND, who is a wonderfully fiscally responsible member of the freshman class, and I yield to my friend from Georgia.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you, Mr. PRICE, and I appreciate you doing this tonight.

I have listened to the other side and your debate, and basically, Mr. PRICE, wouldn't you just assume that this basically comes down to a difference in philosophy? I heard about the deficit, I heard about the spending. But I believe that this Republican majority and the leadership in this House has given the other side every opportunity in the world to reduce that deficit. I believe we had the Deficit Reduction Act that the Republican majority had to pass themselves. And their philosophy is, to reduce the deficit, they would raise taxes. None of us like the deficit. We need to cut our spending. But every opportunity that the majority has had to cut spending, we have been opposed by the other side.

So I think what the people, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. PRICE, need to realize is that this is a difference in philosophy about how this government should be run and about where the priorities for our spending are. And I know you had the chart up there about Social Security and Medicaid and Medicare. And we all want people to get their benefits, but there is going to come a time of reckoning, and the majority party in this House has taken the leadership to try to address some of those things.

□ 2130

Not by cutting them but just by slowing the growth, and yet at every turn, at every turn you know that we have had opposition from the other side. So there has got to be a point where they come to the realization that they need to help us. They need to become part of the solution, rather than just being a party of ''no.''

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate those comments so much, and I appreciate you reminding me about the Deficit Reduction Act. It was in my notes, and I wanted to make certain we pointed that out. We had that bill passed earlier this year in January. It would save the American people $40 billion.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. If you do not mind me interrupting, but that was at no cuts. This was just a decrease in the spending, a decrease in the growth of our government; and they spoke about sitting around the kitchen table and talking about your budget. We all do that. We all have to do that. The American family has to do that, but at the same time, if we know we are going to get a 5 percent pay raise or whatever, we cannot spend more than that. Sometimes we have to rein in our spending, and this is what the Republican majority has tried to do here.

So I want to thank you for bringing the Truth Squad to the floor and for explaining to all of us exactly the good things that this majority party has done to put this country in the right direction, and I might also add that our deficit has come down over the last quarter and the last months due to these tax cuts that we gave the American people because they know so much better about how to spend their money than we do as a Congress and as a government.

But I want to thank you for taking this opportunity to bring the Truth Squad to the floor and to bring truth to some of the things that are said here.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you so much. I appreciate that, appreciate your comments, your pointing out again the Deficit Reduction Act that we passed on the floor of this House earlier this year with not a single vote from other side, again $40 billion in savings, which is just simply decreasing the increase that is going up in those mandatory programs, many of those mandatory programs.

So I appreciate you pointing that out, and it just really is a privilege for me to be able to, on behalf of the leadership and behalf of the Republican Conference, to be able to come to the floor tonight and to share some positive news, to share some facts and share some truth about the American economy, about the importance of allowing Americans to keep more of their hardearned money; and when you do that, when we do that as a Nation, as a national policy, what happens is that the economy flourishes and people are better off.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to being able to share more comments at some point in the future. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you tonight.

## 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to kick off the 30-something Working Group, and my good friend Mr. MEEK from Florida, who was delayed for a minute, will be here any second to talk about taking America in a new direction.

We have heard a lot tonight, and I want to agree with my colleagues on one thing that they said earlier, just a few minutes ago, that the American people know how to spend their money better than the United States Congress, and I agree with that.

If you look at where this Congress has given the money, $16 billion in subsidies to the oil companies, hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax returns, tax breaks for millionaires, Madam Speaker, I agree that the American people would not do that, and that is why it is time to take the country in a new direction.

I want to, before we get too revved up here, thank our good friend from Massachusetts for carrying the ball last night when the younger and the weaker, the fatigued other Members of the 30-something did not have the stamina to come here at 11:40 last night, and you showed up, and I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, well, I am glad to see that you have recovered and that Mr. MEEK has made it. I knew that both of you were tired. You worked hard yesterday, but I hope that in the future you can just reach down, grab a little extra, and you know, be here when it counts. I have been very impressed with your perseverance, your performance over the course of the past year and a half; but remember, it has to be consistent. It has to be consistent. It cannot be just about talk. It has to be actions.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. DELAHUNT, and I know you are all excited about your birthday that took place last week, and it is well noted not only amongst the Members but also in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We notice that you are eligible for Medicare. We are excited about that. Hopefully, having you as Medicare recipient now, folks on Medicare will have a stronger voice in Congress because you can actually understand what they are going through.

It has been 3 years and 2 months we have been doing 30-something. We are just so glad that we can have you as the something of the 30-something which I will be joining you in September.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I look forward to seeing you graduate to a different level, and I am sure that you will be able to be here for the last hour once you hit that magic mark in September.

Like I was saying, we hear a lot of rhetoric on the floor here, and we just heard an hour's worth of good talk, good talk, and you know, I welcome the fact that it would appear, if you listen carefully, that the Republican majority is going to get serious about fiscal responsibility.

I would only note that they are coming very late to the issue, because, I know neither of you were here in 1994, but in 1994, this branch, Madam Speaker, was taken over. The Republicans assumed majority. So let us see, from 1994 to 2006, that is 12 years, that is 12 years and now we are faced with runaway deficits, external debt.

We just recently received a report from the Comptroller General of the United States that informed the American people that despite the fact that they have already spent 30 billion of their dollars in Iraq, that the bill is coming for another $50 billion to reconstruct Iraq.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What is that $50 billion going to be spent on?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I think a lot of it is going to line the pockets of corrupt officials because that is what Mr. Walker, who is the Comptroller General of the United States, found. He expressed concern about the black market in the sale of oil.

We all remember the words of Paul Wolfowitz who was the Under Secretary of Defense that the revenues from the oil reserves of Iraq would pay for its reconstruction. False.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Again, this is the 30-something Hour, Madam Speaker. This is the 30-something Hour, so we are talking about issues that are going to face generations to come, but I want to agree again with the statement that the previous speakers made, which we do not like to refer to, but they said that the American people know how to spend their own money better than the United States Congress, and I am all in on that statement.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But, Madam Speaker, the Republican majority in this House is spending the American people's money not in America, but in Iraq.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And not spending it in a manner which the United States citizens, from Florida and Ohio or Massachusetts or wherever they are from, would completely and totally and wholly disagree with where the Republican Congress is spending their money. They are building hospitals in Iraq. They are building schools in Iraq. They are building clinics in Iraq. They are building roads in Iraq, in a fruitless attempt to try to win over the Iraqi people.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And where are they getting the money?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are borrowing the money from China, Japan, and OPEC countries in order to fund the war and to fund tax cuts that are going predominantly to people who make more than $1 million a year.

The average American person, Madam Speaker, does not agree with that policy. They wholly reject that policy because it makes no sense. People in Youngstown, Ohio, work very hard, and they meet their obligations for the Federal Government. They pay their taxes, and to watch the United States Congress, Republican-controlled, take their hard-earned money and build roads and bridges in an elective war, with no plan, no exit strategy, no idea of how to execute it, and take their money and build roads and bridges and hospitals over there. I yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just want to make sure that just because they say it, Madam Speaker, the Republican majority does not necessarily mean that it is true. You have heard me say this before. The good thing about the 30-something Working Group is that we come to the floor and not with rhetoric, not with a Democratic message that is not factual. We do not do that. People are looking for straightforward government, making sure that we level with the American people, not level with Democrats, not level with Republicans and Independents, but level with the American people.

The American people want us to work in a bipartisan way, but only the majority can allow that to happen. We have legislation that is moving through the process that Democratic Members are not even noticed of the conference committees that are going on, some of the decisions that are being made, and we have Republican majority Members that come here and say, well, the Democrats, how can they say it when they have been in control.

Let me just say this real quick. I tell you they did not share in the hour before this hour, they did not share how the Republican majority has made history in all the wrong ways. On $1.05 trillion borrowed in 4 years, 2001 to 2005, from not only President Bush but the Republican majority that dethroned 42 Presidents, 224 years of history, $1.01 trillion.

Mr. RYAN mentioned who we are borrowing from. Japan, $682.8 billion. The American people had nothing to do with that. Republican majority, rubber-stamp Congress, had everything to do with that. China, at $249.8 billion; UK, $223.2 billion; Caribbean, $115.3 billion; Taiwan and on and on and on.

What they also did not say is how the Republican majority has given themselves a pay increase along with all Members of Congress, meanwhile, Madam Speaker, not addressing the minimum-wage workers in America since 1997. So I would not come to the floor with a straight face talking about the American people can handle their dollars that we give them or they can handle the dollars because they can handle it best.

Well, guess what, I think that is a true statement because the bottom line is the Republican majority has shown that they cannot. Just real quick, I want to make sure that we spell this out.

In 1998, Members of Congress, $3,100 raise; minimum-wage workers, zero; 2000, Members of Congress, $4,600 raise; minimum wage, zero; 2001, $3,800 increase, cost of living Members of Congress; minimum wage, zero; 2002, zero minimum wage; $4,900 real money increase for Members of Congress thanks to the Republican majority; 2003, $4,700; minimum-wage workers, zero; $3,400, 2004; minimum-wage workers, zero; 2005, $4,000; minimum-wage, zero; 2006, $3,100; minimum-wage workers, zero. And the Republican leadership has said it is just not going to happen. They did not want to share that with the American people. That is why the 30-something Working Group, why we do that.

The good thing about this report is that we are saying on this side of the aisle we will not vote for an increase in Members' pay if we do not vote for an increase in the minimum wage. That will mean an increase in individuals that are making above the minimum wage because the American workers should be making more than the CEOs that are retiring with big-time retirement packages.

□ 2140

I wish I had my chart here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, I do have my chart. So that we don't have CEOs of major oil companies with $398 million retirement packages. A retirement package. And a $2 million tax break, thanks to the Republican majority.

So, Mr. RYAN, when folks come to the floor and start talking about, and Mr. DELAHUNT, what the American people can do, tell you what, why don't we play fair? We have control of the minimum wage, Mr. DELAHUNT, we can raise the minimum wage.

On this side of the aisle we said, number one, we will be raising the minimum wage. Okay, not raising the salaries for Members of Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Within the first 100 hours.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Within the first 100 hours we are willing to move forward, and we have said it, in our new direction for America. We have said we are going to cut student loan costs in half, Madam Speaker, more than the Republican majority that is in control now.

We have said that we are going to move in the direction of true energy innovation, investing in the Midwest versus the Middle East, here in America with E–85 ethanol. Republican majority has the House now. They are not doing it.

We have said that we are going to pay as we go and have real fiscal responsibility, because we are the only party in this Chamber, Mr. DELAHUNT, that can say we have actually balanced the budget. We have balanced the budget, with surpluses as far as the eye can see. The Republican majority takes over and we are borrowing from countries that we have issues with, like China, Japan, and the U.K. Well, not the U.K., but other countries that are questionable. OPEC nations. And I don't even want to go through that list.

So when we start talking about these things, gentlemen, and when they come to the floor, and this is a free country and what a democracy, but meanwhile, Mr. DELAHUNT, we have veterans that have fought, some are at Arlington Cemetery for paying the ultimate price for us to salute one flag. We look at the services and the things that we have promised veterans, and this is not a Democrat or Republican or Independent or nonvoter issue, this is an American issue. To see veterans having to wait 2 and 3 months to see a specialist at a VA hospital, whether it be a foot doctor, an eye doctor, or just getting a simple exam, is unacceptable, especially when the Republican majority is giving tax breaks in a record breaking way to individuals that are not even asking for them, and when billionaires have $398 million retirement packages, I think it is important for us to come to the floor and share this with the American people.

It is not only important, it is our obligation. So that the reason why, Mr. DELAHUNT, as I land, that it is important, no matter how late, if it is 11:40 at night or it is a few minutes before 10 p.m.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Or if it is at 11:30.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Or 11:30.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And you are by yourself.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We have worked all day, and some Members of Congress, Madam Speaker, are home enjoying themselves, relaxing, what have you, some are working in their offices right now answering their e-mails or regular mail, that we come to the floor, take away from what some may say is our personal time after we finish our regular business, that we come to the floor to show how we have the will and the desire to put America in a new direction and not only fight for working class folks, but making sure that those that pay their price to this country, which are a number of Americans but especially our veterans, will be treated with dignity and respect.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, sir, I would yield, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Because I think it is so important that the American people and the Members who are watching this here tonight understand that things will be completely different when the Democrats take over in January; that we will, within the first, not 100 days, Madam Speaker, Mr. DELAHUNT, but within the first 100 hours out of this House we will pass a minimum wage increase that will get us in a few years to $7.50 an hour; that we will, in the first 100 hours, cut student loan interest rates in half for parents and for students, which will save families $5,000 over the course of the loan.

We are not rocket scientists. We are not saying we have some extravagant plan that is very elaborate and very complex. These are basic fundamental things. We are going to strip the oil companies of the $16 billion that they get in subsidies, and we are going to put that towards education and innovation and alternative energy sources. And all these things we need to do, Mr. DELAHUNT, in order for us to be competitive as a country.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. One second, Mr. RYAN. I just want to make sure we are accurate. It is $7.25, not $7.50, sir, that we want to move the minimum wage. I want to make sure that we are accurate. I know you mistakenly said $7.50. I would like to do $7.50, but our plan is $7.25, just for the record. Because we believe in making sure that even when we make a mistake to level with the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Reclaiming my time, I yield to my friend from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I appreciate the gentleman yielding his time, and I want to compliment my friend from Florida, Mr. MEEK, because he just did something that is rare in Washington. He acknowledged that there was an error; that there was a mistake. Because you will never hear that on the floor of this House.

But the American people, I would submit, want their elected officials to acknowledge when a policy has failed and come up with another idea and be forthright about it. I mean, when I hear about all of the problems that haven't been solved because of a minority party, I begin to wonder, is there an alternative reality there?

As I said earlier, Madam Speaker, the Republican majority has owned this Chamber for 12 years. Where have you been? Now you are talking about fiscal responsibility. And the reason you are talking about it is because there is 100 days to an election. That is why you are talking about it. And you talk about the direction of the country. You know, we talk about a new direction and a change in direction, Madam Speaker, because there is no alternative.

If we continue to go and continue to chart the same course that the administration and the Republican House and the Republican Senate have charted for the United States, we will be in serious trouble. And let me just give you four statistics:

Since the Republicans have controlled both branches of Congress in the last 5 years, and President Bush was inaugurated in 2001, college tuition has increased by 40 percent, health care costs to the American people have increased by 55 percent, and gas prices have increased by 79 percent.

But Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, you know what has gone down in this country? Madam Speaker, you know what has declined in this country? Median household income. A family of four in this country, since the Republicans have governed here in this institution for 5 years, the average American family has experienced a decline of 4 percent in their income. On top of all the escalating costs that are eating away at their security, everyone in America knows that retirement security no longer exists. They know that their health care plan can be canceled at any time. They know that they won't be able to afford to send their children to college because they can't afford the loans. I mean, the list goes on and on. We have got to change the direction of this country.

With that, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you so much to my good friend, Mr. DELAHUNT, and I am glad to be here with my three good friends from the 30-something Working Group.

You know, the answer to the question that is on everybody's mind, which is why do they keep moving us in this direction? Well, if you actually shine a light or a magnifying glass on what is really going on here, then it would be clear that their priorities are all wrong. So instead, what they do is they engage in the politics of distraction, like they did all during last week.

If you recall last week, let us take a walk down memory lane here, did we focus on the priorities of the American people, like gas prices and health care and the true direction that we should be going in in the war in Iraq? Were those at the top of the Republican agenda last week?

Mr. DELAHUNT. We talked about stem cell research.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We talked about trying to override, unsuccessfully, a veto on stem cell research. We did that and the Pledge of Allegiance bill, and we did gay marriage. We engaged in the politics of distraction, because the only way that the Republican leadership here can take the focus off of all the horrendously bad things that they are doing on the priorities of the American people is by focusing on that.

I had a social studies text book with me last week, I am not sure if we still have it, but last week I really wanted to bring a social studies textbook to the floor because essentially there is no point in using it any more in our public high schools. At the end of the day, the Republican leadership here has thrown out the concept of how a bill becomes a law.

That Pledge of Allegiance bill we brought here last week? I sit on the House Judiciary Committee. That bill was defeated in committee, and yet we still saw it on this floor. When we teach high school civics, we teach that a bill has to go through the committee process, it has to garner a majority of the committee members to move on then to either the next committee or to the next point of reference in the legislative process.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the bill stripped the courts of hearing a case that the courts actually ruled in favor of what they wanted.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Exactly. Let us focus on what the bill itself actually did, which also throws out the whole system of checks and balances and who is responsible for what according to the way the Founding Fathers set it up.

That bill actually said, like you said, Mr. RYAN, that specifically because the Republican leadership here does not agree with a specific court decision, they decided to pass a bill stripping the courts of the ability to decide that question. Now, whether or not you agree that ''under God'' as part of the Pledge of Allegiance is or is not constitutional, that is not relevant. We certainly shouldn't be passing legislation here that was defeated in committee; that couldn't even garner enough support on the Republican side to pass out of committee, and they stack the committees in their favor, to strip the courts of the ability to decide a question that the Republicans don't agree with.

But, you know, the rubber stamps, the rubber stamps in this body just went ahead and approved it anyway. Break it out, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, you are exactly right. It wasn't that they didn't like the answer, because it went to the appeals court and the court ended up ruling in their favor, that ''under God'' should stay in the Pledge. But they didn't like the question, which is so typical down here, Mr. DELAHUNT.

They don't like the questions that people are asking, whether it is at President Bush's press conferences or having a hearing and asking questions about what is going on in Iraq or Katrina or with gas prices or what the oil companies are doing. When you have an elected body in a democracy that stops liking the questions, we are losing the basic fundamental aspect.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just stop for one moment. The war in Afghanistan and Iraq has been going on for years. Every day we pick up a newspaper and learn about the loss of American lives.

□ 2200

Every day we hear about the rampant corruption that goes on in Iraq. Every day we hear about the escalating costs of the military deployment in Iraq. And now we know from the Comptroller General, not from the administration, that the $30 billion that we have already spent in Iraq is not enough to rebuild the country. It is going to cost us $50 billion more. And you know what, Madam Speaker? We ought to be having a hearing on a weekly basis, every committee, every single committee who has some jurisdiction, and yet nothing happens.

Why are we losing ground in Afghanistan? Why? But we do not dare ask the question.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman from Ohio yield?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much. Because the Prime Minister of Iraq is here in Washington, today met with the President, and the whole notion of stubbornness and refusal to acknowledge that they are wrong and refusal to change course is so evident in the decision-making that goes on with this administration as far as the direction that we are going in Iraq.

June 13, when the President went on that surprise visit to Iraq and praised up and down the Prime Minister's plan for ending the bloody violence in Baghdad, came back and said, The Prime Minister of Iraq has a plan and I am supportive of it.

Well, today they finally acknowledged that it is not working and it is not effective and not that, yes, we are going to change course. It is ''changing the plan is under consideration.''

Well, because we have had a shift in focus, in terms of the media's attention, to the crisis in the Middle East as it relates to Hezbollah, its attacks on Israel, it has deflected attention away from the fact that the actual number of deaths and bombings have increased in Iraq in the last month.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman from Ohio would continue to yield for one moment, we all know that there is much public discourse about whether the violence in Iraq is of such a magnitude that it should be called a civil war. There are no figures that are ever released by the administration, but the United Nations just released a report in the last several days that indicated in the months of May and June, 6,000 Iraqis were killed because of political violence. Will somebody please explain to me, is that enough to make it a civil war? Of course it is a civil war going on there, Madam Speaker. Please stop using semantics with something that is so serious that the American people deserve to be continually informed.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, in this talk today, as we watched the press conference, the Iraqis have army and police force in one region that is in southern Iraq, where nobody lives. They have got control of it, and the Prime Minister is here with the President saying, See, we are making progress.

You are not making progress. Electricity, water, utilities are all at prewar levels. Below prewar levels.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And instead, Mr. RYAN, we are focusing on the Pledge of Allegiance and gay marriage. And what it really comes down to, do you think that the mom whose baby is in Iraq fighting on behalf of our country is worrying about whether one of her children is going to be able to say ''under God'' in the pledge at school, or is she more worried that her baby over in Iraq is going to come back to her? What do you think is a higher priority for her?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Or that the baby, in the country that this baby was born into, is going to owe $11 trillion to China and Japan and OPEC countries.

This is bogus. This Congress is bogus, Madam Speaker. This is the biggest illusion, smoke and mirrors nonsense. This is disrespecting the American people in the past couple of weeks. Totally has disrespected and insulted the intelligence of the American people.

I yield to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. How about this? I mean, let us go beyond just the mom or dad of a young man or woman fighting in Iraq. How about the father of four who leaves for work every day, and do you think he is worrying about whether someone who is gay is going to be able to get married or not, or is my Member of Congress voting to amend the Constitution to deal with that, or do you think that it is more likely that he is pissed that he is having to pay $3.01 a gallon to fill up his tank and it is going to cost him like $55 and he is wondering whether he is going to be able to get to work in the morning?

Where on the list of priorities, Mr. DELAHUNT, do you think that is for the

Joe and Jane average constituents that we represent?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Could I add to that?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Of course.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What do you think an American mother feels as she sees this administration embroil us, embroil us, in wars, sectarian strife all over the world? Does she become concerned that at some point in time her child will be compelled to serve in the military?

I found it fascinating reading some articles in the Weekly Standard, which is, if you will, the gospel of the neoconservative movement, suggesting now is the time to bomb or strike Iran. Just another war. Just another war. And, of course, the original frontier in terms of the war on terrorism, Madam Speaker, was Afghanistan. And you know what is happening in Afghanistan? The Taliban is back, the group that gave safe haven to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, because of the distraction that was foisted on the American people by this administration with the complicity of this Congress and putting us into the quagmire of Iraq.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, do you know how many troops we have in Afghanistan versus how many we have in Iraq?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes, I do.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Twenty-two thousand in Afghanistan versus 130,000 in Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman from Ohio will continue to yield, do you know who really said it the best? The NATO commander who was taking over the NATO force in Afghanistan. He happens to be a British general by the name of David Richards. And he said this: You know, we were distracted. We took our eye off the prize, and that is why we have the problems that we have now. We became too focused on Iraq, and we forgot about Afghanistan, and some would have us already hitting into Iran.

When does it end, Mr. MEEK? When does it end?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, I just wanted to say really quickly that it is important that we point out, you have got one, two, three, and I am four Members of Congress. We have friends on the majority side of the aisle. We see them every day. We have lunch together, and we go to the dining room here in the Capitol. We know one another's families. We travel together to foreign countries. We visit military bases here in the United States and abroad. Madam Speaker, this is not personal. This is business. And the bottom line is that this Congress is making history in all the wrong ways. We have a rubber-stamp Congress, as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ pointed out earlier, that has rubber-stamped everything that the administration has put forth to this Congress, and now we are in a situation where the American people do not see the same vision that the Republican majority has.

Now, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, before we leave here tonight, you must talk about immigration.

□ 2210

You must talk about immigration in a way that shows that the Republican majority and the Bush White House is not leveling with the American people.

Mr. DELAHUNT, you pointed out, Mr. RYAN was mentioning 750 earlier. I am looking here at our plan, it says 725. He was in the middle of a speech, and I wanted to make sure that we were accurate for the record. I wanted to make sure we were leveling with the American people. I want to make sure that Members watching in their offices or watching at home are saying, even on the majority side, the reason why I can't be upset with those four Members on the floor right now is because they speak the truth; not fiction, not what we think will sound good. We are sharing the facts with the American people and with the Members of Congress, Madam Speaker.

So that is the reason why Members of the majority side, which is the Republican majority that is in control, we have situations where States are suing the Federal Government on education, lack of funding. We have local communities trying to figure out how they are going to stand up to unfunded mandates handed down from this Congress.

We have minimum wage workers that haven't received a raise since 1997. Meanwhile, Members of Congress have received $3,100, $4,900, $3,200, in some cases $2,900, $4,100, and a proposed $3,100 this year. Meanwhile, minimum wage workers are sitting waiting on some leadership and representation in Congress.

As we raise their minimum wage, what we have pledged to do in New Direction for America, Members, people that are making $8 and $9 an hour, employers are going to have to say, we have to give them also a raise, because the minimum wage has risen. So the American everyday worker not making minimum wage will do better under our plan.

Saying that, Mr. DELAHUNT, that is the reason why we should feel very motivated and empowered to be here any time we get an opportunity to come to the floor.

So I am excited about the fact that we are armed with the facts. I am glad, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the facts she had she got from third party validators, not what we came up with, to share with Members and the American people, because we don't want members of the rubber-stamp Republican majority to go home and say ''we didn't quite understand that,'' or ''it was the Democrats.'' We have to make it abundantly clear that the Republicans are in control.

Mr. RYAN, as I close, I just want to break it down like this: On the Democratic side, we don't have the opportunity to bring a bill to the floor. We are not chairmen or chairwomen of committees. We can't order up a congressional hearing and subpoena Halliburton and other companies that obviously have done things that have reached the level of, some may say, the criminal level. We can't do that.

We can't have inquiries of Federal agencies. Our good friend from Tennessee has legislation that is talking about agencies coming to the Congress and asking them, what happened to $28 million that we gave you last year? They say I don't know. They just write it off. It is the taxpayers' money.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What happened to the $89 billion in Iraq.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. What happened to the $89 billion in Iraq. This will never surface, Madam Speaker, unless we get rid of the rubber-stamp Congress and we move towards a Congress that is willing to follow the Constitution of the United States to make sure that the American taxpayer dollars have the proper oversight and that we spend it in a way that is responsible, not just giving away tax breaks to millionaires and special interests when the Republican majority feels like doing it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There is just no accountability. There are just words. There is no action to back up the words.

You know, if you listen to the Republicans on immigration, as Mr. MEEK referenced, you would think that they were the hardest line, the hardest core, that border security was the highest priority to them. But if you closely examine the facts, you don't have to even closely examine the facts, you just scratch the surface a little bit. Take a look at what the real record of this hard line Republican congressional leadership is when it comes to border security. Let's show the American people who is for immigration reform and who is just kidding.

These are third-party validators here. Here is border security by the numbers. We took a look and found that as it relates to the average number of new Border Patrol agents that are added each year, because the Republicans talk a good game about how many Border Patrol agents they want to add, well, under the Clinton administration, from 1993 to 2000, the average number per year added was 642. You take a look how many were added, Border Patrol agents per year, under the Bush administration from 2001 to 2005, it was 411.

That is not just a couple, that is not a handful, that is a big difference. 642 minus 411, I am not a mathematician, whatever it is, someone subtract it for me.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 231.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. A 231 difference. That is a big difference. Maybe that is an anomaly. Maybe that is just isolated.

No, keep going. Let's look at another indicator of who is for border security and who is just kidding. The INS fines for immigration enforcement, making sure that we actually crack down on illegal immigrants: 1999, 417. The actual

statistic is in 1999 the United States initiated fines against 417 companies. In 2004, it initiated fines against three companies. Who was President in 1999? President Clinton. A Democrat was President. Who was President in 2004? President Bush.

We are talking about going after the firms, the businesses, that aggressively hire illegal immigrants. But maybe that was an isolated incident. Maybe it was just those two indicators that were off the charts, different than the policy that the Republicans talk about.

Keep going. Let's look at the Bush administration's record on pursuing immigration fraud cases. In 1995, under President Clinton's administration, 6,455 immigration fraud cases were prosecuted. In 2003, under President Bush, 1,389 cases were prosecuted.

At the end of the day, I think the American people will want to examine the facts, and not just listen to the words.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I think that is the perfect example. Those are facts. We did not make it up. Those are facts on how the Clinton administration versus the Bush administration handled illegal immigration.

But look, if you are just the average Joe and you are sitting in the cheap seats watching politics in America, that is not all you see, is the failure to address the illegal immigration problem.

You have watched over the past 5 years, Katrina, in which our FEMA, the Republican appointed members of the emergency management system here in the United States of America, had five or six days, knowing that a hurricane was coming to the Gulf States, and we got the kind of response that we got go.

You look at Iraq. You look at not when the statues fell, but look afterwards, and you see it has been an utter and complete failure. Utilities and all the electricity, all at below pre-war levels. Our army right now, two-thirds of our army is not combat ready. Two-thirds. That is atrocious.

And when you look at lack of investment in alternative energies, and the median wage is down 4 percent, all of the increases in college tuition, all these things, if you are just watching this from afar and you see millionaires getting tax breaks and average Americans struggling to get ahead and falling behind every single paycheck, you have to at some point say, aren't you taking the country in the wrong direction? Aren't you taking us down the wrong road?

Real quick, Mr. DELAHUNT, whether it is domestic policy or foreign policy, you look at what is happening, and there is a severe disconnect between where the American people want to be and where the administration and President Bush's Congress is taking us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I really found it interesting. I ran across this article today in the Washington Post, and much of what we have said is repeated here. The Iraq war didn't work and we didn't prepare for peace. The response to Hurricane Katrina was a monumental failure of government. You don't go to Congress to become the party that you have been fighting for 40 years, the spending, the finger pointing, not getting bills passed. Just shut up and get something done.

Now, that was the quotes of a candidate, but it was a Republican candidate. It was a Republican candidate. I think that tells you something about going in the wrong direction, Madam Speaker.

I find it interesting that the frustration level is so profound now that the former Speaker of the House that sat in the Chair that you, Madam Speaker, are currently occupying, summed it up like this: ''We just ought to start firing everyone.''

□ 2220

That is what he said. And yet we continue to go in the wrong direction. We continue to hear that, you know, if the Democrats would only help us. I mean, we do not even get invited to committee hearings. They don't tell us where a hearing is if it is a significant hearing, and I am referring to, specifically, I am referring specifically to the Medicare prescription drug legislation that was passed several years ago.

We couldn't find the room where they were meeting to discuss an issue of such great consequence. I mean, it is unbelievable.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I enjoyed watching Mr. Gingrich over the past year or so be critical. But the funny part is that this is the neoconservative agenda we are living with now. It has been implemented. There is really nowhere else to go. They have given tax cuts to the wealthy. They have appointed all of their cronies. They control the House, the Senate, the White House, the Supreme Court. They control every major branch of government, they have all of their appointees in all of the right positions through the executive branch, and it is not working. They have implemented the neoconservative foreign policy agenda.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Do you know what we have accomplished with that? We have strengthened Iran.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have increased the number of terrorists.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We have increased the number of terrorists.

What I find interesting, tomorrow in this Chamber the Prime Minister of the newly elected government will be addressing the body. And this is what he has to say. He is referring to Israel's action after Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and began shelling northern Israel, but he is referring to Israel: ''I condemn those aggressions and call on the Arab League's foreign ministers meeting in Cairo to take quick action to stop these aggressions. We call on the world to take quick stands to stop Israeli aggression.''

No reference at all to the actions of Hezbollah. None whatsoever. And the Speaker of the House in Iraq, Madam Speaker, again the exact position that Mr. HASTERT holds in this House, uttered anti-Semitic remarks that every American would deplore and find unacceptable. May I quote what he had to say. He is referring to the terrorist acts against other Iraqis. And this is what he claimed, and I am quoting him: ''These acts are not the work of Iraqis. I am sure that he who does this is a Jew, and a son of a Jew. I can tell you about these Jewish Israelis and Zionists who are using Iraqi money and oil to frustrate the Islamic movement in Iraq. No one deserves to rule Iraq other than Islamists.''

That same speaker said this, Madam Speaker: ''The United States' occupation is butcher's work under the slogan of democracy and human rights and justice.''

And understand that there has been a bilateral military cooperation agreement signed by Iraq with Iran. What have we done? We have got over 2,500 Americans killed. Tens of thousands seriously wounded. And is this what we expect? No. It is not what we expect. It is certainly not what we deserve. And now Iran has become the hegemon in the Middle East.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you for sharing that, because that is so very, very important. It is going to be the issue of tomorrow and today. I mean, when we get into after the 12 o'clock hour.

Mr. RYAN, I think it was important, and Mr. DELAHUNT brought up some comments that the past Speaker made, the person that gave birth to the Republican ''revolution,'' the Contract on America, I mean for America, and what has happened to all of that, the broken promise to America from the Republican majority.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ pointed out the fact that the Republican majority talked about that they are tough on immigration, but at the same time they have been in control double digit years, and now all of a sudden they notice that we have an immigration border protection problem.

And folks are burning Federal jet fuel flying down to the border for photo shots; this, that and the other that we are doing something about it. Bill Buckley, I don't need to talk about his credentials, because here in this article from Connecticut.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is William F. Buckley.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. William F. Buckley. It is an article that Bush is not a true conservative when it comes down to spending. As you know, he has dethroned a number of individuals. And he is noted in this article, which was dated July 22, 2006 as the Father of Moderate Conservatism, talking about William F. Buckley.

□ 2225

He is saying, if you had a European prime minister who experienced what we have experienced, it would be expected that he would retire or resign.

This is what Buckley said about the President of the United States. He is allowed to do that because this rubber-stamp Republican Congress allows him to do it.

I would like to yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and hopefully Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ will yield to Mr. DELAHUNT and then yield to you, to talk about, Madam Speaker, what Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, former Speaker, is saying about this Congress.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, if you will indulge me, please.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I would be glad to.

In fact, what is really interesting about these comments from Speaker Gingrich was that he was sitting on a panel of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, with former Speaker Foley, the Democratic Speaker who Gingrich succeeded, and they were literally trading head nods back and forth from what one another was saying. And one of the things that Speaker Gingrich commented on was as follows:

''Congress has to think about how fundamentally wrong the current system is. When facing crises at home and abroad,'' he said, ''it's important to have an informed, independent legislative branch coming to grips with this reality, and not sitting around waiting for presidential leadership.'' And he said so much more than that. Mr. DELAHUNT, I would yield to you. And he went on, on the same day and in the same panel discussion.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I think what he said in a quote that appears here, really, is the summation, if you will, of his disgust with what is occurring in the American political system. He described it as a broken system. These are his words, Newt Gingrich's words:

''The correct answer,'' Gingrich said, and he is speaking to the remedy, ''is for the American people to just start firing people.''

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, before you yield to Mr. RYAN, he actually went on and I have the rest of his comments from that point. He actually went on and suggested that Congress rediscover its power to supervise the administration. And he said, ''The failure to do effective aggressive oversight disserves the country and disserves the President.''

I mean, disserves the country and disserves the President. We are not talking about the namby pamby liberals that the Republican leadership always refers to. We are talking about the former Speaker of this House and the leader of the Republican Revolution. This is damning criticism. Damning criticism. Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to thank Mr. MEEK for the opportunity to speak on this point, which Mr. Gingrich stated back in March that they, the Republican majority, are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function.

When you look at what he is talking about, and what even Mr. Gingrich stated the other day on Meet the Press, is that the institutions haven't kept up with the times. And the majority has had now 12 years to try to reform these institutions, and they have made them worse, not better. Because, in the example of FEMA where they appointed horse attorneys, equestrian attorneys to run FEMA, or all the graft and patronage that is going on in Iraq, Mr. DELAHUNT, which you know about better than us and spoke very eloquently about at 11:30 last night by yourself, all of these issues add up.

When you have higher tuition costs, the paycheck you get doesn't buy as much, when you have higher health care costs, when you are worried about your pension, when you have the auto industry collapsing before its very eyes, you have a low minimum wage that hasn't been raised since 1997, you are unable to govern, as Mr. Gingrich said.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, this is what Republicans are saying. I mean, making history in all the wrong ways.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and I will be back at 11:32 for the last hour here tonight. We hope that you gentlemen will be able to join us.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We want to congratulate our 30-something. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ here was rated ''One of the Most Beautiful People on Capitol Hill.'' And that is quite an honor. It is an honor for us to be here with you. KENDRICK and I and Mr. DELAHUNT didn't even make the list. I don't even think we were nominated. But we have all have roles to play, and unfortunately, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ covers them all. WWW.HouseDemocrats.gov/30-Something. All the charts you saw here tonight, and we could maybe get a copy of the Hill newspaper.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That should be put on the Web site. Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I thank the leader and our leadership, STENY HOYER and JIM CLYBURN and JOHN LARSON for the opportunity to be here.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). The Chair must remind members that remarks in debate should not include words that might be construed as vulgar or profane.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, can you clarify what is vulgar or profane? Just an inquiry of the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will be pleased to consult off the record on that question.

## ASSURING THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, in the last year and a half I have come here to the well of the House a number of times to talk about subjects ranging from embryonic stem cells and the challenge of deriving these cells ethically so that we might hopefully enjoy the great potential medical benefits. I have come here to talk about electromagnetic pulse, a very interesting consequence of the detonation of a nuclear weapon above the atmosphere that produces a surge which is very much like a lightning strike everywhere all at once or an enormously enhanced solar storm. And I have come here I think maybe as many as 18 times in the last year and a half to talk about a problem which we as a country and we as a world face, and that is the peaking of oil. We are shortly, I believe, if we haven't already, going to reach the maximum production rate of oil in the world, and then the world will need to deal with how we substitute renewables.

But tonight I come to the floor to talk about something that could very easily become a victim, a casualty of the tyranny of the urgent. All of us are familiar with this phenomenon in our personal lives, in our professional lives; it is true for our country that very frequently the urgent pushes the important off the table. Things you have got to deal with today frequently push things off until tomorrow that you might wait until tomorrow to address.

I want to spend a few moments this evening talking about something that concerns me. We have 10 children in our family, I have 15 grandchildren and two great grandchildren, and I am concerned that I leave them a country as good and great as I found when I was born into this country in 1926.

The story that I want to spend a few moments on tonight begins with a quote from Benjamin Franklin. There are several versions of this. I have one here from the Dictionary of Quotations, requested from the Congressional Research Service. It says, ''On leaving Independence Hall at the end of the constitutional convention in 1787, Franklin was asked, 'Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?' '' Of course, they were very used to a monarchy because that is what they lived under as a colony of England.

According to Dr. James McHenry, a Maryland delegate, he replied, ''A republic, if you can keep it.''

Another version of this has the question asked by a woman who asked him as he came out of the constitutional convention, ''Mr. Franklin, what have