

gas at the pump, the Republican Congress has failed to address these day-to-day concerns. Instead, they have enacted tax cuts for the very wealthy. My constituents want Congress to address their needs, not the wants and desires of a select few. It is clear which side the majority has chosen.

Instead of budgeting fairly, the Republicans have relied on smoke-and-mirror, borrow-and-spend gimmicks. They don't include the war in Iraq and the military activities in Afghanistan in their budget, they don't include the massive costs of repealing the estate tax for estates valued at \$10 million or more, and they don't include the full cost of the Medicare part D prescription drug benefit. Despite these efforts to keep costs hidden, their budget schemes create new deficits every year and have added nearly \$3.5 trillion to our national debt.

Mr. Speaker, American families deserve better and they deserve a new direction. Instead of making smart investments in America's future, the Republican budgets have run up massive deficits each year and have added to our national debt, so that as of now our national debt is nearly \$8.5 trillion. This means that we spend more on interest payments on our debt than the combined Federal investments in education, homeland security, and veterans health care combined. The Nation's debt is unsustainable and it is immoral.

Mr. Speaker, American families deserve better. They deserve a new direction.

Mr. Speaker, the budget policies of the Bush administration and this Republican Congress leave our Nation less secure. Their schemes rely on borrowing more and more money from foreign investors. More money, mind you, than the amount borrowed by all past American Presidents combined.

And instead of enhancing our safety at home and bolstering our security abroad, the Republican Congress continues to underfund important security initiatives at our ports, chemical plants and along our borders, this at the same time they are failing to enact many of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations, including enabling our police and firefighters to communicate seamlessly.

Mr. Speaker, American families expect the government to make the necessary investments to keep them safe, and they believe that the American Dream should be available to everyone, not a select few. They deserve a new direction.

Democrats understand that unless we change course, the harmful effects of the Republicans' borrow-and-spend budget policies will only continue.

Democrats have a plan that makes tough, fiscally disciplined choices, to restore our budget to balance and to meet our obligations to American families; Democrats have a plan that fulfills the basic budgetary principles of living within our means; and Demo-

crats have a plan to reduce wasteful spending and make smart investments in all Americans that will ensure the Nation's current and future fiscal well-being and protect the safety, security and freedoms that make our Nation great.

Mr. Speaker, Americans work hard every day. My constituents work hard every day to meet their obligations to their families, to their communities and to their Nation. We must honor their commitment, and we should not and cannot walk away from our obligations to them.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats are committed to fiscal responsibility, the Democrats are committed to the future of our Nation, and the Democrats are prepared to lead the Nation in a new direction.

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

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

#### SUPPORT THE FEDERAL ELECTION INTEGRITY ACT

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Permission to speak out of turn.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will take up the Federal Election Integrity Act. The Federal Election Integrity Act will ensure American elections of Americans, for Americans, and by Americans. This measure promotes fairness and simply assures compliance with U.S. law. All citizens in this country hold a stake in our electoral system, and we owe it to our constituents to crack down on voter fraud.

For these reasons, I have long supported photo ID requirements for voters in Georgia. In fact, Georgia enacted into law such a requirement in the past year. Nearly all voters already have a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license or a passport.

Georgia made photo IDs available to all citizens and offered them for free to those who could not afford the nominal fee. With these safeguards in place, it makes no sense to argue that photo ID requirements disenfranchise certain segments of our population.

Photo ID requirements actually protect the sanctity of every legal vote. The greatest threat to the constitutional right to vote is voter fraud. A legal voter whose ballot is canceled out by the ballot of an illegal voter has effectively been disenfranchised. We seek not to suppress the vote to promote the sanctity of the vote.

The Federal Election Integrity Act will require in the 2008 election that voters show a photo ID. In 2010 it will

require that voters show a photo ID that could not be obtained without proof of citizenship. I have supported such efforts in the past, and I will support this bill.

Though I have acted consistently throughout my career in public service to promote fair and accurate election, I fear the House debate will be rife with irony. You see, just 2 months ago, this House voted by a lopsided margin to trample the equal protection clause of the Constitution and to violate the sovereignty of the State of Georgia by extending the Voting Rights Act for 25 years.

I joined several of my colleagues from Georgia on this floor to educate Members of the House on our State's tremendous progress on voter equity. We presented hard evidence that the Georgia of 2006 is far removed from the Georgia of 1964. We proved that Georgia is no different than any other State when it comes to voter equality.

After I defended the honor and integrity of my State, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee slurred my State's record. He entered into the RECORD a statement that said: "The record since 1982 makes clear that Georgia and its political subdivisions have not progressed beyond the need for the temporary provisions of the Voting Rights Act." As evidence of ongoing problems in Georgia, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and others cited Georgia's photo identification law.

Now, the nearly 400 Members who voted to penalize Georgia should reflect on that vote. They need to ask themselves what changed between July and September of this year. Why was it bad in July to have a photo ID requirement for my home State of Georgia, but okay in September to have a photo ID requirement nationwide?

Make no mistake, I will be voting for the Federal Election Integrity Act. I only wish it went further, to make all sections of the Voting Rights Act applicable to all States and to make all ballots be in English only.

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

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

#### SUPPORTING A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the gentleman from Alabama for organizing this series of 5-minute statements and for his leadership on this issue.

Two weeks short of the end of the fiscal year of 2006 and with no budget in