

Wages are worse than stagnant. Families are paying more for energy, health care and education, and yet real household income for working-age families has declined every year of the Bush administration, dropping nearly \$3,000 in real terms. Personal debt is at the highest in many years, and America's debt has climbed 50 percent, to more than \$28,000 per person since Bush took office, and will double to more than \$11 trillion.

I wonder if Americans realize that Republican leadership has stubbornly and consistently refused to accept Democratic calls to have pay-as-you-go budgets. The Democratic leadership would take our Nation in a new direction and begin to repair the economy for regular middle-class American families.

BREAST CANCER PATIENT PROTECTION ACT

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1849, the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act introduced by my colleague from New York, Congresswoman SUE KELLY.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women today. This legislation requires health care providers to cover hospital expenses for breast cancer patients undergoing a mastectomy or lumpectomy.

In my home State of Florida, it is estimated that over 13,000 new cases of breast cancer in women will be diagnosed this year, and that over 2,500 women will die of this disease. It is our duty to reduce these numbers, both in Florida and nationwide, by ensuring medical coverage for these lifesaving procedures. I urge my colleagues to join the fight against breast cancer by supporting this and other crucial pieces of legislation.

A PLEA FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE PEOPLE OF DARFUR

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to plead for the survival of the people of Darfur. Despite a peace agreement signed in May and the U.N. Security Council's approval for a peace-keeping force of 20,000 last month, Darfur is descending into chaos.

Twelve years ago the world stood by as ethnic war erupted in nearby Rwanda. One hundred days later, 800,000 bodies, hacked to death by machetes, had piled up in the streets and rivers. Without swift intervention, Darfur may soon erupt into a scene as deadly. Today's poorly trained and equipped African Union Force can only watch the chaos unfold. When they leave in a week, they must be replaced by a U.N.

force that can protect the Darfuri people from slaughter.

Sudan must allow the U.N. peacekeepers to end the government-sponsored genocide. President Bush must decisively lead the international community for this effort to succeed. The U.N. force must have the training, the equipment and the mandate to stop the slaughter and punish the slaughterers. The world must not deploy another force that will simply bear witness to the slaughter of innocents.

AMERICANS DESERVE REAL IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you know, all Americans know if you are here legally, you ought to be rewarded. If you are here illegally, you ought to be deported.

My constituents constantly complain to me that illegal immigration is a huge problem. Local officials have used the so-called "catch-and-release" policy when they apprehend an illegal immigrant. Really, that person should be sent to jail. Why would we want someone who was just picked up by the police and is here illegally still out in the community and potentially free to flee? That just doesn't make any sense.

It is time America totally ends catch-and-release policy when it comes to illegal immigration. Texans and all Americans want, need and deserve real immigration reform.

PROVIDING A NEW DIRECTION ON ECONOMIC SECURITY ISSUES

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern about the economic crisis facing American families under the failed policies of the Republican leadership.

Housing construction has plunged to the lowest level in more than 3 years. In fact, many families in my district can't even make their mortgage payments anymore. The average cost of food supplies is increasing, just like the increase in electricity bills.

In my home State of California, gas prices have doubled in the past 5 years to well over \$3.50 in my district. Families with two cars in Los Angeles will pay an extra \$2,330 per year for gas. That is higher than it was 5 years ago. The increase in gas prices will cost Los Angeles drivers an extra \$9.2 billion this year alone.

Real wages have not kept up with increased costs as well. In Los Angeles, workers there only make 84 cents on the dollar. In East Los Angeles, in my district, the unemployment rate is currently 7.1 percent, compared to 4.9 percent for all of California.

America's working families need a new direction, one that works for everybody and doesn't discriminate depending on where you live, instead of one that rewards the very wealthy at our expense.

SUPPORT THE FEDERAL ELECTION INTEGRITY ACT OF 2006

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give advance notice of a bill that will be coming up today, and I certainly appeal for your support for that bill.

There are very few things in this life that I hate, but one that I hate is dishonesty, particularly dishonesty in voting. I am very eager to make certain that every vote taken in this country is legitimate, is properly cast and properly counted, so that all citizens can be assured their vote will be counted and not be diluted by others who vote illegally.

With that in mind, our committee, the Committee on House Administration, has taken up H.R. 4844, a bill proffered by the gentleman from Illinois Mr. (HYDE). This bill will be coming up today.

It is very simple. It simply requires by the year 2008, in every Federal election, every voter will have to display a photo ID. That is not a bad requirement. You already have to show it to cash a check, to get on an airplane or to buy cigarettes or alcohol. It is not at all a difficult proposition. By the year 2010, that photo ID will also have to have something on it that shows that the voter is a citizen.

With those two improvements, I believe we can go a long way to get rid of fraud in our electoral process.

DEMOCRATS WORK TO FILL THE DOUGHNUT HOLE SO SENIORS DON'T LOSE DRUG COVERAGE

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that goes, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Well, just the opposite is true when it comes to the Republican prescription drug plan that is seriously broken. We must fix it.

This week, the average American senior will be denied payment of their drug costs through the private plans they have selected because they have fallen into the so-called doughnut hole. Under the Republican plan, seniors lose drug coverage after they have spent \$2,250 in out-of-pocket costs, and they won't be eligible for more assistance until they have spent \$5,100 for the year.

It is expected that more than half of the seniors who fall into the doughnut hole will not be able to escape it. This

is simply not fair. Many seniors on fixed incomes will be forced to cut back on their prescriptions, regardless of the consequences to their health.

Democrats in this Congress want to take a new direction to eliminate the doughnut hole. We believe that any prescription drug plan should provide enough monthly assistance so seniors no longer have to choose between putting food on their table or having the prescription drugs they need to live longer and healthier lives.

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SEARCHING FOR THE PRESIDENT'S IRAQ PLAN

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President told the world that building a more hopeful future in the Middle East is "the greatest challenge of our time" and "the calling of a generation."

There is no question the President's policies in Iraq have created the greatest foreign policy challenge of a generation. What started off as a battle between democracy versus stability has now become a civil war between the Shiite and the Sunni. It became that way because of our incompetence and failure to plan.

We shouldn't expect a plan soon, because the President's Iraq Study Group just announced they will not release their plan for Iraq until after the November midterm elections.

Quote: "We think it's more important, frankly, to make sure whatever we bring forward is taken out of domestic politics."

This is how we are teaching democracy in the Mideast. Keep the voters in the dark until it's too late.

I will end the suspense. The new plan for Iraq, there is no plan and there never has been one. According to Brigadier General Mark Scheid, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld threatened to fire anyone who tried to come up with a plan for the postwar and hostilities.

The President tells us we're in a long war, but thanks to this White House's refusal to plan, it has become an endless war.

It's time for a new direction.

IRAQ

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I came here this morning to chastise the Republican majority for their failure to act on the minimum wage, but one of my colleagues said something so outrageous and indecent that it demands an answer.

One of my colleagues lauded President Bush's action on security and foreign policy, asserting that we hadn't

had any losses since September 11, that we hadn't been attacked.

We have been attacked in Baghdad. We have been attacked in Mosul. We have been attacked in Tikrit. We are being attacked every single day, because this President and this do-nothing Congress has sent our troops and our finest men and women, our sons and daughters, our husbands and wives, into harm's way, where they never should have been in Iraq. We have lost 2,600-plus. We have had 15,000 of them limping around America because of the absurdly incompetent, ineffective, boneheaded decisions by this President and this Congress which has allowed them to go into harm's way.

Those who sit there and pat themselves on the back and say that we have had unalloyed success have done a disrespect to the fallen in Iraq. They shouldn't stand here and pat themselves on the back. They should be covered in shame for their failure to hold this President accountable for the competence we need in Iraq.

THE REPUBLICAN MYTH OF A HEALTHY ECONOMY

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration and Republicans in this body love to tout the so-called success of their economic policies, but as any economist or working American will tell you, the facts just do not add up.

Republicans claim that their policies are increasing job growth, but the fact is they are presiding over the lowest monthly job growth rate of any administration since Eisenhower. The current tepid growth is less than one-fifth of the average of jobs created each month during the Clinton years.

When it comes to the real money American workers take home, the picture is equally dismal. Inflation-adjusted hourly wages have actually fallen since 2003, and the median annual income has decreased 3½ percent during this Republican administration. Meanwhile, productivity is up so Americans are working harder for less pay, while their employers reap the rewards.

The solution to our economic situation is not the Bush plan of more tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest 1 percent. These policies have done nothing to benefit American workers and have driven our country into huge debt.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG LAW CREATES A GIANT HOLE IN DRUG COVERAGE

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, millions of American seniors are going to see why the Repub-

lican prescription drug plan was written to help the pharmaceutical companies and the private insurance companies rather than to help our seniors.

Republicans on Capitol Hill sided with the pharmaceutical companies when they wrote the law to forbid the Federal Government from negotiating lower prices. Then they sided with the private insurance companies when they allowed them to create private plans that include what is known as the doughnut hole, a giant gap in coverage, when seniors must continue to pay their premiums but receive absolutely no help with their prescription drug bills.

That is right. Under the private plans that the Republicans created, seniors will lose their drug coverage after they spend \$2,250 of their own money on prescription drugs.

This Friday, Mr. Speaker, is the day that the average senior is expected to fall into the doughnut hole. If congressional Republicans were really interested in helping our seniors, they would join us in filling the doughnut hole so seniors do not have to continue to face this giant gap in coverage.

CONGRESS SHOULD HELP SENIORS OUT BY FILLING THE DOUGHNUT HOLE THAT MILLIONS OF SENIORS FACE

(Mr. RUPPERSBERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, this Friday, September 22, the average American senior will lose his or her prescription drug coverage that was promised by the majority.

This is the same confusing and complicated drug plan the majority created through the private sector rather than through the Federal Government's Medicare program.

Millions of seniors have already lost their coverage, but in the coming days, those numbers will climb as more seniors are expected to be denied their coverage when they hit the \$2,250 mark. How can this be? How can the majority create a plan where seniors are still forced to pay monthly premiums but are denied coverage?

How can a majority create a law that is supposed to help seniors and then not allow the government to negotiate to bring down drug prices? We must give the Federal Government the ability to negotiate on behalf of seniors so that we can bring down drug prices and eliminate the doughnut hole so no senior loses their drug coverage.

It is time we take our country in a new direction.

STAY THE COURSE IN IRAQ IS NOT A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Republicans support the Bush promise to