

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have with me a sign that I am proud of tonight. This is entitled the Blue Hound Dog Coalition because it is such a great idea to keep reminding the majority of what the debt is.

These are great signs, very similar to some we see around the halls. I know some people in our body are not wanting their signs to be brought to the floor; so I had to have one made up special myself. But it is a great thing to remind the majority of what the debt is because Democrats are in the majority. It is no longer Republicans that can be blamed for running up the price of gasoline. It is no longer Republicans that can be blamed for running up the debt.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOHMERT. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. How did it get to be \$8.8 trillion? When you took over, it was only at \$5 trillion. How in heaven's name over the last 6 years could you possibly be so irresponsible to take it from \$5.5 trillion to \$8.8 trillion? I am amazed, shocked, chagrined, and saddened.

Mr. GOHMERT. Reclaiming my time, it is like my momma used to say, you are responsible for what you are responsible for. The numbers are going up every day and it is on your watch. And I congratulate the gentleman. The numbers continue to climb, and I look forward to seeing what you do with them.

THE NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, Mr. GOHMERT clearly doesn't realize that under Mr. Reagan we had a \$1.41 trillion deficit. Under Mr. Bush 1, we had a \$1.04 trillion deficit. Under Bush 2, we had a \$1.69 trillion deficit, for a total of \$4.14 trillion under Republican administrations. Under Mr. Clinton, we actually had a \$62.9 billion surplus.

So I would like to ask the gentleman who is truly responsible for the national debt?

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's yielding for the answer. I know we are all grateful to the Republican Congress since 1994 and 1995 and the great strides that were made in reducing the deficit. It has gone up since the war, and I look forward to seeing if you continue to increase it or help some of the rest of us bring it down.

FOREIGN DEBT

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I might also add to my good friend, the gentleman from Texas, that

this President, our 43rd, has racked up more foreign debt than all 42 previous Presidents combined.

So if we are going to discuss who it is that is responsible for the numbers on your mock-up chart, let's ensure that we put the full blame on the 43rd President who is fully responsible for the number on that chart and fully responsible for the debt that has been accumulated more than the 42 other Presidents combined.

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THE NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. COSTA. I think it's important that when we're talking about the debt, that we be up front with the facts for the American public. Yes, the war has certainly cost a great deal, but it's off budget. It's off budget, just like a host of items that are off budget, specifically designed in that way.

The largest single segment on the debt is the interest on the debt, which is 6 percent and growing rapidly. And it's true that we've acquired more debt in the last 42 years than the previous 41 Presidents than this President has accomplished in his last 6 years.

So I think it's important that we be up front with the American people when we're talking about the debt and the figures that are involved there.

Yes, we've got to turn this ship around. It won't come overnight, but it will come with the bipartisan cooperation that I think we saw took place with President Clinton's administration, and that's what we ought to be doing.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. SALI. Well, Mr. Speaker, and ladies and gentlemen that are here, there has been a great discussion about who is actually responsible for all this debt, which team it is. And I think at the end of the game, the conclusion has to be that, by golly, maybe you just can't trust anybody around here. And so I would encourage the good majority leader to make sure that a balanced budget amendment gets passed through this House this year so that the next time that the Republicans take control of this body, by golly, they won't engage in any deficit spending.

There is the challenge to the majority right now, to make sure that you keep the Republicans under control.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the

House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RADIO FREE AMERICA AND THE SPEECH POLICE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, it is written, "Congress will make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or bridging the freedom of speech or the freedom of press or the right of the people to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for redress of grievances." Of course, this is the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. And Mr. Speaker, it is first because, without these first principles, the rest of the following amendments are meaningless. These are rights that Americans take very seriously, particularly in regard to freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

There are some in Washington, D.C., however, that feel if someone is saying something they don't like, they ignore this freedom of the right to speak and try to control speech. This is where the so-called Fairness Doctrine comes into play.

In the early 1940s, the Federal Communications Commission, or the FCC, established the so-called Fairness Doctrine. It was instituted in an attempt to ensure that all broadcast station coverage of controversial issues be fair and balanced. This mainly applied to radio stations. This means allowing equal time for each side on an issue. If a radio station wanted to talk about the need to secure the borders, they would have to grant the same amount of time to individuals who wanted open borders.

The Fairness Doctrine was considered by many journalists a violation of the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and freedom of press. And I agree with this assertion. It even led many journalists to avoid reporting on controversial issues to protect themselves from having to report on the other side of the issue. This led to the opposite effect of the doctrine that the FCC had intended. It actually stifled free speech.

So, by 1987, the FCC revoked the Fairness Doctrine, realizing the gross error in their ways in total disregard for the freedom of speech. There have been several attempts by speech-control advocates to reenact the Fairness Doctrine, and all of these attempts have continued to fail. But this decision still does not sit well with many in Washington, D.C., who feel that broadcast talk radio is one-sided. What it really means is that talk radio largely boasts conservative views and not liberal viewpoints. Liberal radio doesn't go over well with Americans, and these stations generally fail financially and with the American listeners. So the critics of conservative radio