

I will commend the chairman of the committee for all he did and by not voting "yes" on the rule because even he, a Democrat chairman, saw the error of their ways in what they did.

Mr. DREIER. He was quoted as saying he believed it wrong that they were denied. Tragically, this was done in the aftermath of the unveiling of this report that we put forward simply stating the facts of what has taken place in the last 9 months.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I would just conclude by concurring with the gentleman from Georgia on this. Although we are in the minority here, this is not an issue for the minority; this is for half of America. And it doesn't matter whether the Americans watching tonight are Democrat or Republicans. Their voices are being silenced because they cannot have their voices heard through us in the Rules Committee and have their important issues made part of the process.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and now yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), a hardworking member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the ranking member from California for not only putting together this Special Order tonight, but also talking about the Rules Committee which I think is so important. I have had an opportunity to serve on the Rules Committee for 9 years. For 9 years previous to this, I have seen the Rules Committee as being part of the process to make sure that the agenda of policy is done properly by the Speaker of the House through this committee. I would like to note to the gentleman from California, as he remembers that, Republicans utilized this committee to make sure that we balanced the budget, to make sure that we had responsibility and the opportunity to make sure that the American people benefited from that which we did here in Washington, D.C. by cutting taxes.

Republicans balanced the budget when they said it was not possible in 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. We went in and we balanced the budget. We utilized the Rules Committee to make sure that we had responsible government.

I have now seen during the last 10 months that we have been in the minority that it is also true that the new Democrat majority utilizes the Rules Committee to do things that I don't think that the American people can completely understand, and that is that they want to raise taxes, they want to raise spending, and they want to make sure that what happens is that loopholes are there in place for them to do earmarks despite the debate that has taken place on this floor.

So I am pleased to join the gentleman from California tonight in summarizing that the Rules Committee is a very difficult place for all Members. It is a difficult place whether you are in the majority or the minority, but it

is still the place where the political work gets done, and nothing has changed. The Democrat Party is still here to raise taxes and raise spending and to take away from the American people that which they earn, and that is called their hard-earned money.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Dallas for his very thoughtful remarks and hard work.

I recommend to my colleagues going to rules-republicans.house.gov to see a copy of this very, very important report that we have just unveiled, because it is on behalf of the American people, not any bipartisanship, the American people, that we are fighting on behalf of their rights.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members be able to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, what we have just witnessed on the House floor is an example of why the American people are sick and tired of all of the partisan bickering that goes on up in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, there are 47 of us who are fiscally conservative Democrats who want to put an end to the partisan bickering. We are a group of conservative Democrats who quite frankly don't care if it is a Democratic idea or a Republican idea. We want to know if it is a commonsense idea and does it make sense for the people that send us here to be their voice.

Mr. Speaker, there are 47 Members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. As you walk the Halls of Congress, it is easy to identify which Members are members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition because you will see this poster as you walk the hallways of the Cannon House Office Building, the Longworth House Office Building and the Rayburn House Office Building.

This poster not only serves as a door-mat to Blue Dog Coalition Members of Congress, but also as a daily reminder to Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and to the American people that our Nation is in debt.

Today, the U.S. national debt is \$9,010,742,245,690. If you divide that enormous number and put it in perspective by every man, woman and child in America, every one of us, our share of the national debt is \$29,735. It

is what we have coined the phrase "debt tax," and that is one tax that cannot be cut and that is one amount that is not going to fund America's priorities but rather is going to simply pay interest on the national debt and to pay down the national debt.

I had a constituent from back home in Arkansas in my office today. She said she was in my office a couple of years ago, and everybody's share of the national debt was some \$27,000. Again, today it is \$29,735. Under this Republican administration, we have seen the largest debt ever in our Nation's history. We have seen the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history.

Contrast that with the past administration, the Clinton administration. President Clinton was the first Democrat or Republican in 40 years to give us a balanced budget; and yet here we are 7 years later with the largest debt ever in our Nation's history, and as members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we want to restore fiscal discipline and commonsense to our Nation's government.

That is why there was a lot of talk about the first 100 hours on the House floor in this new Democratic majority, and we accomplished more in the first 100 hours I would dare say than the previous Congress did all together. In fact, I believe we have done more on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in the past 9 months than the previous Republican Congresses have done in 9 years.

Unfortunately, these bills are then sent to the Senate where too many of them remain. But I am proud of the work that we are doing in the House under this new majority. And, Mr. Speaker, we are doing it with fiscal discipline. We are passing these bills, a new vision for America, putting America's priorities where they ought to be, and that is putting our families and children first again. But we are doing it in a sensible and responsible way, a way in which we pay for it.

One of the first things to happen on the floor in this new Congress was to reinstitute the PAYGO rules. PAYGO is an acronym for "pay as you go." It is what we do at the Ross home in Prescott, Arkansas. It is what most American families do.

Mr. Speaker, for the past 6 years, a Republican-led Congress and a Republican President gave us the largest debt ever in our Nation's history, the largest deficit year after year. To put it in perspective, to put it in perspective, this President has borrowed more money from foreigners in the past 6 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined.

We are going to put an end to that, and we did so when we reinstated the PAYGO rules on the floor of the House of Representatives. Every bill that comes to the floor of the House in this new Democratic Congress must be paid for. Now, some of the Republicans say, oh, that's a disguise to raise taxes. The Republicans now believe that the only