

strongly urge my colleagues to come together to use the budget surpluses to protect both Social Security and Medicare for future generations. Both of these programs are success stories for the American people.

Prior to Social Security, over half of our retirees were in poverty in this country. Now, it is less than 10 percent. Medicare is the same success story, providing health care to millions of retirees and disabled across the country.

If we cannot dedicate the majority of the surpluses to both of these important investments for our retirees when we have a surplus, if we cannot pay down the debt when we have a surplus, when will we do it?

Putting dollars into Social Security and Medicare and paying down the debt is the right thing to do at this time, and I hope we will come together when we can. Now that we have a robust economy, we have the opportunity, with budget surpluses, to pay down the debt through paying back Social Security and Medicare. We need to do that first before we proceed with anything else.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON RETIREMENT SECURITY

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a fundamental difference of opinion between the Democrats and the Republicans on the issue of retirement security.

Just this past weekend a distinguished Member of the other body mentioned repeatedly that his father would not have known how to invest for his own retirement. He needed the government to do it for him. That same government that every few years tells us proudly they have fixed Social Security, only to discover that it is going bankrupt again.

Mr. Speaker, the approximately 43 million Americans who own a mutual fund or retirement money invested in the stock market must really think that liberal Democrats take the Americans for fools. Or they might be laughing their way to the bank at the silliness of all these Washington-knows-best liberals who have so little faith in the ability of grown-ups to manage their own affairs that they are scandalized by the very idea that the average American ought to take advantage of the market prosperity, too.

While the liberal elites get rich and talk about their 401(k) plans at cocktail parties, they would deny the same opportunity to ordinary Americans who have to rely on a retirement system that has gone bankrupt. What arrogance.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE MUST WITHSTAND CRUSH OF BABY BOOMER RETIREMENTS

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

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, when Franklin Roosevelt established Social Security more than six decades ago, he did it over the strong objections of Republicans here in Congress. Thirty years later, when Lyndon Johnson established Medicare, he faced similar opposition in this very Chamber. Both of these programs have been a big success. But it is funny how history has a way of repeating itself.

Our Nation faces an enormous challenge in ensuring that Social Security and Medicare can withstand the crush of baby boomer retirements. That is why Democrats want to reserve nearly 80 percent of the budget surplus to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Now, the Republicans also claim they want to use the budget surplus to save Social Security, but their numbers just do not add up. Their plan would divert money from the trust fund for tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy. And, even worse, their plan does not reserve a single penny of the surplus for Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats were right about Social Security in 1935, we were right about Medicare in 1965, and we are right in 1999 about putting Social Security and Medicare first.

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REPUBLICANS ARE AWAITING PRESIDENT'S LEGISLATIVE PRO- POSAL ON SAVING SOCIAL SECUR- ITY

(Mrs. CUBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, the President has talked about saving Social Security many times since his State of the Union last month. We Republicans stand ready to work with him on this issue.

Although his proposal does contain a number of serious flaws, such as double counting over \$2 trillion and a foolish idea about how Uncle Sam should be the biggest investor in the stock market, we believe that there does exist some common ground on which both Republicans and Democrats can agree. But now is the time for the President to produce a legislative proposal, to move from rhetoric and concepts and ideas into actual legislation something that we can act on, something that will be set on the table so that we have a base on which to place our actions. His proposal in vague, broad terms needs to be introduced into this body in detail.

We share a common goal of strengthening Social Security, preserving the

safety net, and giving younger workers more freedom to provide for their retirement needs. So let us get to work. Republicans are standing by waiting for the President's proposal.

LET US MEET IN THE CENTER

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing for the last 4 months that the majority party wants to meet the Democrats in the center; they want to come together and work with us and meet us in the middle.

Well, I am telling my colleagues the middle does not start in the center and go to the right. The middle is the center between the left and the right. And meeting in the middle means that the Republicans would meet with Democrats, for starters, to invest our surplus and reduce our national debt by putting that surplus in Social Security and Medicare and not indulging in reckless tax cuts.

Let us think big. Let us really think in the center. Let us think for the majority of the people of this country. Let us look at the budget surplus, the future of our Nation, reducing our national debt, and protecting our children and their children and a safety net for Social Security and Medicare.

HONORING IRVING DILLARD'S 94TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, on December 5, the residents of Collinsville, Illinois, had a celebration honoring Irving Dillard's 94th birthday. Although he was born and raised in Collinsville, his service to society does not stop at the Collinsville town border.

As a patriotic American, Irving Dillard first served in the U.S. Federal administration and in the Army during World War II. It is for this distinguished service that he received American, French, and British war decorations.

He also wrote for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch from the Great Depression to the Eisenhower presidency, where he is most noted for his speech regarding the advancement of civil rights and the protection of the Constitution. In fact, Justice William O. Douglas acknowledged him as "the one journalist who stood head and shoulders above all others when it came to the work of the Supreme Court."

After his distinguished career, he also lectured in Europe and spent a decade teaching journalism at Princeton University.

Despite his many worldly accomplishments, Mr. Dillard still considers

Collinsville his home, and we are glad he does.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY?

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

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, now that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have finished beating up on the President, perhaps we can deal with the real business of America. The most important issue facing us is what to do about Social Security.

We will hear my colleagues talk about big government and bad government, but the reality is that it was the government and the Democrats in Congress who gave us Social Security. We need to take strong steps to ensure its solvency.

The Democrats, along with President Clinton, have laid out a reasonable framework which says we will save the surplus for Social Security. Sixty-two percent of the surplus should go to preserving Social Security through the year 2055.

In addition, we want to save Medicare. We want to take an additional 15 percent of the surplus to make sure that Medicare remains solvent through the year 2025.

We have put forth on the table a framework for addressing the problems that really confront America, addressing the problems of our growing senior citizen population. On the Republican side, they are still trying to figure out what they want to do on tax cuts, tax cuts for the very wealthy.

We can spend money on our seniors or we can spend it on the very wealthy.

PRESIDENT HAS NO AUTHORITY TO WAGE WAR WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the threats of bombing did not bring a peace agreement to Kosovo. The President has no authority to wage war, and yet Congress says nothing.

When will Congress assume its war power authority to rein in the President? An endless military occupation of Bosnia is ignored by Congress, and the spending rolls on, and yet there is no lasting peace.

For 9 years, bombing Iraq and killing innocent Iraqi children with sanctions has done nothing to restore stability to Iraq, but it has served to instill an ever-growing hatred toward America. It is now clear that the threats of massive bombing of Serbia have not brought peace to Kosovo.

Congress must assume its responsibility. It must be made clear that the

President has no funds available to wage war without congressional approval. This is our prerogative. Therefore, the endless threats of bombing should cease. Congress should not remain timid.

Merely telling the President to reconsider his actions will have little effect. We must be firm and deny the funds to wage war without our consent. We live in a republic, not a monarchy.

CONGRATULATING THE VFW ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. HILL of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I cannot begin to tell my colleagues how proud I am to be here in the seat that Lee Hamilton held for 34 years.

As a new member of the House Armed Services Committee, I know that we owe a lot to those who currently serve our country and also to those who served in the past.

This year, one of the Nation's oldest and most distinguished service organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, celebrates its 100-year anniversary. This week, I will introduce a resolution calling on the Postal Service to issue a stamp to congratulate veterans of foreign wars for a century of work on behalf of our fighting men and women. It is the least we can do to honor those who have given us so much.

I also want to thank all the veterans back in Indiana and those who continue to contact me. I want to contact people like Elsie Foster of the Ladies' Auxiliary in New Albany whose four brothers served during World War II and whose husband served in the World War II and Korean War. Mrs. Foster, I want you to know that it was your request that convinced me to demand the stamp.

MARRIAGE TAX ELIMINATION ACT

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, let me ask a very basic and fundamental question: Is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code that our Tax Code discriminates against married, working couples by forcing married, working couples to pay higher taxes just because they are married? Is it right that under our Tax Code that 21 million married, working couples pay on average \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married, \$1,400 more than an identical working couple that lives together outside of marriage?

That is wrong. \$1,400 on the south side of the Chicago in the south suburbs of Illinois is 1 year's tuition in a

local community college. It is 3 months of day care at a local child care center. \$1,400 is real money.

My colleagues, I believe that we should make fairness and simplicity a goal as we work to make changes in the Tax Code. Let us make elimination of the discrimination against married, working couples a priority.

The Marriage Tax Elimination Act now has 230 cosponsors, a bipartisan majority of this House. Let us make it the centerpiece of this year's balanced budget.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE ARE BEDROCK

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the United States Census projects that in the next 25 years the size of America's elderly population will grow by more than 50 percent. This means that during our lifetime, Social Security and Medicare will face serious financial strain. In light of these facts, we must do what is necessary and what is fair and responsible, use the budget surplus to protect Social Security and Medicare while we still have the means.

These two programs are bedrock. Two-thirds of our seniors rely on Social Security for over half their income. In the 30 years since its inception, Medicare has raised the percentage of seniors with health insurance from less than half to 99 percent. These two programs are important and currently too financially vulnerable to be ignored for a one-time tax break.

Democrats want to dedicate 77 percent of the surplus to save Medicare and Social Security. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership disagrees. The Republican tax plan is silent on Medicare. What we need to do is to be ready to work to save and protect Social Security and Medicare. Let us use this historic surplus to do just that.

THERE IS NO BUDGET SURPLUS, THERE IS SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUS

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

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, there is no budget surplus. There is no budget surplus. There is a Social Security surplus. It is \$125.5 billion, and we ought to use it for Social Security. There is a deficit in the budget if you do not count Social Security, and that deficit is \$12 billion.

It just is not right to go with spending plans, no matter how well-intentioned, when the source of those spending plans is Social Security. If my colleagues support, as the President does,