November 17, 1999

American families. One of the most critical items to fall by the wayside has been sensible gun safety legislation. Congress has been derelict in its duty to not address the high cost and lack of accessibility and affordability for prescription drugs, particularly to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress should not adjourn without closing the loophole that has fallen into the wrong hands. It is time for responsible action.

ACROSS-THE-BOARD CUT IS A REASONABLE APPROACH TO FEDERAL BUDGET

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, just as a follow-up to the previous speaker, I wish everybody, Mr. Speaker, could read the editorial in the Wall Street Journal today. It conveyed the message that part of the reason this economy is doing so well is Congress is staying out of its way. And yet some people say, let us pass more legislation. Let us do more things, increase taxes, make it tougher for business to succeed and end up increasing the tax revenues that come to this government.

We have been working at this budget for the last 9 months. Now we are saying after all of the gives and takes, the compromising here is our best effort level of spending prorated among different programs. Now we have calculated that in order to save the Social Security surplus, we need to cut about 1 cent out of every dollar that is now proposed to be spent across the board for discretionary programs. Not leaving it up to the President to cut Republican programs and leaving it up to the Republicans to cut Democrat programs.

Mr. Speaker, an across-the-board cut is reasonable. Let us do it and get on with this budget and let us have a new beginning to save Social Security.

CONGRESS’ UNFINISHED BUSINESS SHOULD BE ATTENDED TO

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear our colleagues on the other side of the aisle tell us that they want to keep government quiet and not do any business. One Member, in fact, was quoted as saying that this last session was a “legislative respite.” In fact, there is unfinished business; and the American people do want Congress to attend to that business, not the least of which would be prescription drug relief. Anybody that goes back to their district and talks to anyone, particularly seniors, understands that this Congress has been derelict in

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATION BILL MAY CONTAIN TAX RELIEF FOR ONE ALREADY WEALTHY MAN

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, every time we have one of these year-end omnibus appropriations bills, it always becomes sweet heart deal time.

The Washington Times reports on its front page today that the White House and some Members of Congress are attempting to give a $238 million tax break to just one man, Abe Pollin, owner of the Washington Wizards basketball team.

Mr. Speaker, this tax break would help defray costs Mr. Pollin incurred in building the MCI Center, which he owns and from which he will make millions.

The Times story says, “The House and Senate are considering whether to include in an omnibus spending bill a retroactive, 5-year tax credit so narrowly tailored that it would benefit only Mr. Pollin . . . .”

The Times quotes one Senate tax aide as saying, “My jaw dropped. It’s so bad, it’s not even funny. This is just gross.”

Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Pollin pulls off this sweetheart $238 million tax break, he is more of a wizard than his players. Speaker, no one should vote for a bill that contains an insider multimillion dollar tax break like this that benefits just one already very rich man.

FAT SHOULD BE CUT FROM THE BLOATED WASHINGTON BUREAUCRACY

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a minute to set the record straight. While the Democrat leadership was out of town yesterday raising money, we were fighting for American families by strengthening education, our defense system, and protecting Social Security surplus.

We have heard a lot of wild accusations being thrown around, and I guess the liberals think that if they throw enough mud, maybe some of it will stick. But we are protecting the Social Security surplus, and we voted to ensure that by taking a 1 percent across-the-board savings.

Now, the liberals claim that our effort to trim waste and fraud and abuse in the Washington bureaucracy, and not threaten important programs, will somehow be overwhelming. But this

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

30007

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was listening very closely to the comments of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle this morning. I felt compelled to come down here again to once again, unfortunately, to those who watch C-SPAN on a regular basis, to give another history quiz, another history lesson.

Mr. Speaker, who was it back in 1935 that created Social Security? The answer is a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress. Only one Republican stood up and voted with the majority at that time to not recommit Social Security. A motion that would have destroyed and killed Social Security as we know it today. A gentleman by the name of Frank Costner from Delaware stood up against the tide of his own party and said, “No, I will not destroy Social Security.”

Mr. Speaker, Social Security was created because over 40 percent of the population at that time in our country were dying in poverty. They had nowhere else to go. They were dying in poverty.

Social Security has enabled young families to save, send their kids to school, to college. It has meant the wealth to this country, and now we expect the Republican side of the aisle to save it? Give me a break.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that their remarks are to be addressed to the Chair, and not to the viewing audience.

DEMOCRATS CREATED SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, this tax break would help defray costs Mr. Pollin incurred in building the MCI Center, which he owns and from which he will make millions.

The Times story says, “The House and Senate are considering whether to include in an omnibus spending bill a retroactive, 5-year tax credit so narrowly tailored that it would benefit only Mr. Pollin . . . .”

The Times quotes one Senate tax aide as saying, “My jaw dropped. It’s so bad, it’s not even funny. This is just gross.”

Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Pollin pulls off this sweetheart $238 million tax break, he is more of a wizard than his players. Speaker, no one should vote for a bill that contains an insider multimillion dollar tax break like this that benefits just one already very rich man.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
plan will protect Social Security and restore fiscal responsibility in Washington. This is just a common sense proposal that gives the Department and agency heads leeway to trim the waste, fraud, and abuse they find in their budgets. We are not mandating specific cuts, so if important programs get slashed and the administration suggests that it is the right thing to do, then because they have decided to do it, let it be.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that fat should be cut from the bloated Washington bureaucracy, and we can protect Social Security and Medicare by making sure the savings do happen.

PARTIES TO THE BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS ARE AWOL

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I find it disappointing. As we try to bring this budget to conclusion, as we try to finalize the negotiations, we have major people that are a part of this process that are AWOL. They are absent.

How does the Speaker of the House who has to negotiate with the President stay up late at night every night so he can call the President in Turkey? Is that the way to negotiate?

In Pennsylvania where I come from, I ask the governor or if his cabinet left town during those final negotiations, the press would have been all over them. Why is it possible for the President, the minority leader, who was away yesterday who is the one who is proposing any kind of trimming of waste or fraud, he is the one who is holding out, but he is not available to negotiate yesterday? That is why this process has run on. The President is just finishing his second trip abroad since October 1, and this is when we have been trying to finalize the budget.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is important for those who are a part of this negotiating process to stay in town, get the work of the American people done, so we can pass the budget that does not rob Social Security.

CONGRESS HAS MORE TIME THAN TAXPAYERS HAVE MONEY

Mr. THUNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, it is November 17, and we are still here for one reason, and that is that we have got more time than the American taxpayers have money.

This Congress has passed all 13 appropriation bills. The President has chosen to veto 5 of those bills. Why did he veto them? Because they did not spend enough money. So we are still here negotiating with all the President’s men since he is trying to negotiate. This is the way to do it.

The minority leader is traveling in California raising campaign cash. We are still here until the President agrees with us on a budget that does not raid Social Security, does not raise taxes, and rids the budget of waste, fraud, and abuse.

We will stay here as long as it takes until the President gets back and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) gets back from his California dreaming.