

Lipinski	Payne	Smith (MI)
LoBiondo	Pease	Smith (NJ)
Lofgren	Pelosi	Smith (TX)
Lowey	Peterson (MN)	Snyder
Lucas (KY)	Peterson (PA)	Souder
Lucas (OK)	Petri	Spence
Luther	Phelps	Spratt
Maloney (CT)	Pickering	Stabenow
Maloney (NY)	Pickett	Stark
Manzullo	Pitts	Stearns
Markey	Pombo	Stenholm
Martinez	Pomeroy	Strickland
Mascara	Porter	Stump
Matsui	Portman	Stupak
McCarthy (MO)	Price (NC)	Sununu
McCarthy (NY)	Pryce (OH)	Sweeney
McCollum	Quinn	Talent
McCrary	Radanovich	Tancredo
McDermott	Rahall	Tanner
McGovern	Ramstad	Tauscher
McHugh	Rangel	Tauzin
McInnis	Regula	Taylor (MS)
McIntosh	Reyes	Taylor (NC)
McIntyre	Reynolds	Terry
McKeon	Riley	Thomas
McKinney	Rivers	Thompson (CA)
Meehan	Rodriguez	Thompson (MS)
MEEK (FL)	Roemer	Thornberry
MEEKS (NY)	Rogan	Thune
Menendez	Rogers	Thurman
Mica	Rohrabacher	Tiahrt
Millender-	Ros-Lehtinen	Tierney
McDonald	Rothman	Toomey
Miller (FL)	Roukema	Towns
Miller, Gary	Roybal-Allard	Traficant
Miller, George	Royce	Turner
Minge	Rush	Udall (CO)
Mink	Ryan (WI)	Udall (NM)
Moakley	Ryun (KS)	Upton
Mollohan	Sabo	Velázquez
Moore	Salmon	Visclosky
Moran (KS)	Sanchez	Vitter
Moran (VA)	Sanders	Walden
Morella	Sandlin	Walsh
Murtha	Sawyer	Wamp
Myrick	Saxton	Waters
Nadler	Scarborough	Watkins
Napolitano	Schaffer	Watt (NC)
Neal	Schakowsky	Watts (OK)
Nethercutt	Scott	Waxman
Ney	Sensenbrenner	Weiner
Northup	Serrano	Weldon (FL)
Norwood	Sessions	Weldon (PA)
Nussle	Shadegg	Weller
Oberstar	Shaw	Wexler
Obey	Shays	Weygand
Oliver	Sherman	Whitfield
Ortiz	Sherwood	Wicker
Ose	Shimkus	Wilson
Oxley	Shows	Wise
Packard	Shuster	Wolf
Pallone	Simpson	Woolsey
Pascrell	Sisisky	Wu
Pastor	Skeen	Young (AK)
Paul	Skelton	Young (FL)

NOES—1

Sanford
NOT VOTING—15

Ackerman	Doyle	Owens
Bachus	Evans	Slaughter
Campbell	Forbes	Smith (WA)
Carson	McNulty	Vento
Chenoweth-Hage	Metcalf	Wynn

□ 1213

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I was unavoidably absent on a matter of critical importance and missed the following votes:

On approval of the journal, I would have voted "yea."

On H.Res. 545, providing for consideration of H.R. 4810, the Marriage Penalty Reconciliation Act, introduced by the gentlelady from Ohio, Ms. PRYCE, I would have voted "yea."

On the bill, S. 1892, the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, introduced by the gentleman from the other body from New Mexico, Mr. DOMENICI, I would have voted "yea."

On the bill, H.R. 4169, Naming the U.S. Post Office in Reno, Nevada as the Barbara F. Vucanovich Post Office, introduced by the gentleman from Nevada, Mr. GIBBONS, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for rollcall votes 386, 387, 388, and 389. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 386, 387, 388, and 389.

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY RELIEF RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2000

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 545, I call up the bill (H.R. 4810) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 103(a)(1) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2001, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 545, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 4810 is as follows:

H.R. 4810

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. ETC.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000".

(b) SECTION 15 NOT TO APPLY.—No amendment made by this Act shall be treated as a change in a rate of tax for purposes of section 15 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN STANDARD DEDUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 63(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to standard deduction) is amended—

(1) by striking "\$5,000" in subparagraph (A) and inserting "200 percent of the dollar amount in effect under subparagraph (C) for the taxable year";

(2) by adding "or" at the end of subparagraph (B);

(3) by striking "in the case of" and all that follows in subparagraph (C) and inserting "in any other case."; and

(4) by striking subparagraph (D).

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subparagraph (B) of section 1(f)(6) of such Code is amended by striking "(other than with" and all that follows through "shall be applied" and inserting "(other than with respect to sections 63(c)(4) and 151(d)(4)(A) shall be applied".

(2) Paragraph (4) of section 63(c) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following flush sentence:

"The preceding sentence shall not apply to the amount referred to in paragraph (2)(A)."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2000.

SEC. 3. PHASEOUT OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN 15-PERCENT BRACKET; REPEAL OF REDUCTION OF REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to adjustments in tax tables so that inflation will not result in tax increases) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(8) PHASEOUT OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN 15-PERCENT BRACKET.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2002, in prescribing the tables under paragraph (1)—

"(i) the maximum taxable income in the lowest rate bracket in the table contained in subsection (a) (and the minimum taxable income in the next higher taxable income bracket in such table) shall be the applicable percentage of the maximum taxable income in the lowest rate bracket in the table contained in subsection (c) (after any other adjustment under this subsection), and

"(ii) the comparable taxable income amounts in the table contained in subsection (d) shall be 1/2 of the amounts determined under clause (i).

"(B) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the applicable percentage shall be determined in accordance with the following table:

"For taxable years beginning in calendar year—	The applicable percentage is—
2003	170.3
2004	173.8
2005	183.5
2006	184.3
2007	187.9
2008 and thereafter	200.0.

"(C) ROUNDING.—If any amount determined under subparagraph (A)(i) is not a multiple of \$50, such amount shall be rounded to the next lowest multiple of \$50."

(b) REPEAL OF REDUCTION OF REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS.—

(1) Subsection (d) of section 24 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (2) and redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2).

(2) Section 32 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (h).

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subparagraph (A) of section 1(f)(2) of such Code is amended by inserting "except as provided in paragraph (8)." before "by increasing".

(2) The heading for subsection (f) of section 1 of such Code is amended by inserting "PHASEOUT OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN 15-PERCENT BRACKET;" before "ADJUSTMENTS".

(d) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2002.

(2) REPEAL OF REDUCTION OF REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2001.

SEC. 4. MARRIAGE PENALTY RELIEF FOR EARNED INCOME CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 32(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to percentages and amounts) is amended—

(1) by striking "AMOUNTS.—The earned" and inserting "AMOUNTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the earned", and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return, the phaseout amount determined

under subparagraph (A) shall be increased by \$2,000.”

(b) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—Paragraph (1)(B) of section 32(j) of such Code (relating to inflation adjustments) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year in which the taxable year begins, determined—

“(i) in the case of amounts in subsections (b)(2)(A) and (i)(1), by substituting ‘calendar year 1995’ for ‘calendar year 1992’ in subparagraph (B) thereof, and

“(ii) in the case of the \$2,000 amount in subsection (b)(2)(B), by substituting ‘calendar year 2000’ for ‘calendar year 1992’ in subparagraph (B) of such section 1.”

(c) ROUNDING.—Section 32(j)(2)(A) of such Code (relating to rounding) is amended by striking “subsection (b)(2)” and inserting “subsection (b)(2)(A) (after being increased under subparagraph (B) thereof)”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate on the bill, it shall be in order to consider an amendment printed in House Report 106-726 if offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) or his designee, which shall be considered read and shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will control 30 minutes of debate on the bill.

□ 1215

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4810.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, here we are again. We are here again moving this Congress to do the right thing for married couples by eliminating the marriage tax penalty in the Tax Code.

This bill is identical to H.R. 6 that passed this House in February. Why are we here again? Because the blocking techniques of the Vice President, as President of the Senate and the minority leader in the other body, have prevented our bill from even being able to come up for a vote on the floor. And then they have the audacity to say we are a “do-nothing” Congress. They are forcing us to come back again and pass this bill under reconciliation, which procedurally cannot be blocked from coming up on the floor of the Senate by their delaying tactics.

I was somewhat surprised to see recent campaign ads touting Vice Presi-

dent GORE’s support for fixing the marriage tax penalty in the year 2000, because it sure does not match the Clinton-Gore White House 8-year “do nothing” record of stonewalled opposition to fixing this unfair tax. Since 1993, the Clinton-Gore White House has sent 25 million married couples an expensive gift from the IRS: A bill for \$1,400 a year. That is not exactly the traditional Happy Anniversary card.

So here we are, at it again, trying to fix this once and for all. And this is a bipartisan bill, with 48 Democrats in the House voting with us in February on a bill that is the most complete and fairest way to get this job done. But despite this bipartisan support, I have a feeling we will still hear excuses from Democrats today as to why we cannot do it.

For whatever reason, they may say we should not help stay-at-home moms and dads. And, yes, this bill does that. But their plan actually denies relief to these important parents. In fact, the Democrat plan leaves millions of married couples at the altar, and that is wrong. Raising a child is the single most important job in the world, and we are right to provide families with relief who have only one wage earner.

Democrats will also complain that this is too much tax relief. Of course, they say that about almost every tax bill that we bring up. But again they are wrong. Fairness demands it because it is wrong to take money from the pockets of wage-earning Americans just because they are married. The money should not be coming to Washington in the first place.

Then they might say, oh, we should wait; the timing is just not right to fix the marriage tax penalty. And they are wrong again. We should fix the marriage tax penalty right now. Married couples should not have to wait 1 day longer to be treated fairly by the Tax Code.

So, Mr. Speaker, this all comes down to a matter of principle. The fact that married couples pay more in taxes just because they are married is simply immoral, it is unfair, it is unjust, and today, once again, we are moving to overcome the blocking tactics of the Democrats in the other body and to fix the marriage tax penalty and return a small sense of decency to the Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that they are not to characterize actions in the other body.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I wish we did not characterize the actions of the President of the United States. I thought that the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means was about to discuss

tax policy with us, but he was not discussing principle, he was discussing politics. He was talking about the budgetary policies of the President and Vice President GORE.

I think we should be reminded that the only reason that we can even deal with reforming and providing equity for some of these tax provisions is that because of the Clinton-Gore budget policies we are now able to think in terms of surpluses instead of just deficits.

I would like to remind my colleague, too, that not one Republican ever voted for the Clinton-Gore 1993 budget. And when the vote was tied in the Senate, it took the Vice President to split that tie.

Now, when it comes to whether we are doing this thing in an irresponsible way, I used to think that that is what the Republicans were trying to do. When they had this \$792 billion tax cut, they did not talk about paying down the national debt, they did not talk about our responsibility to Social Security, they did not talk about Medicare or affordable prescription drugs for our aged, and I, at that time, thought it would be irresponsible for them to move forward and just get enough political votes to pass a bill. I have changed my mind. It really is not irresponsible. It may be political.

But I have discovered that my Republican friends do not ask for these irresponsible cuts until first they find out that the President is going to veto it, and only then do they come out with not tax law but they come out with political statements. Whether we are talking about the minimum wage bill, the Patients’ Bill of Rights, affordable prescription drugs, or whether we are talking about pension benefits, we can rest assured that when we Democrats try to work with them to remove the inequity to make the tax system more simple so that people can find it easier to file, they will find some way to entice the President to veto the bill.

Do they come back and ask to override the veto? Never, never, never. All they want to say in Philadelphia is that they passed the bill and the President vetoed it. I hope that the American people realize that the Congress, as any business or any family, before we just deal with revenue losers, we ought to take a look at the total package and the total responsibility.

I am so pleased that the President is willing to give my Republican friends a second chance by reconsidering getting a decent, affordable prescription drug bill, and then he would consider reviewing once again the bill that they have sponsored in terms of removing the marriage penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Illinois

(Mr. WELLER) will manage the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER).

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I would say to the previous speaker that if he votes against this legislation, he will deny about 30,000 married couples in the 15th district in New York relief from the marriage tax penalty, and that is just not fair. We believe it is time to eliminate the marriage tax penalty once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of the accomplishments of this Congress. I am proud that we are now in the process of balancing the budget for the 4th year in a row. We locked away 100 percent of Social Security and stopped the raid on Social Security. We are on track to pay off the national debt by 2013, having already paid down the national debt by \$350 billion. Just this past week we passed and sent to the Senate legislation providing prescription drug coverage available for all seniors under Medicare.

I am proud of those accomplishments. And of course part of our agenda is not only to accomplish those accomplishments, but also to bring fairness to the Tax Code. We have often asked in the House Chambers, many of us, is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples, on average, pay almost \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married. Now, is that right, is that fair, that if a couple chooses to participate in the most basic institution in our society, marriage, that they are going to pay higher taxes if they work?

Unfortunately, under our Tax Code, that is true. If a husband and wife are both in the workforce, both the man and the woman are in the workforce, a two-income household, under our Tax Code they will file jointly and, because of that, they will pay a marriage tax penalty. That is just wrong. We have made this a priority, to eliminate the marriage tax penalty suffered by 25 million married working couples.

I was proud a year and a half ago, when we introduced a bipartisan bill, legislation sponsored by myself and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MCINTOSH) and the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. DANNER), Republicans and Democrats, that 233 Members joined as cosponsors of our legislation to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. And I was so proud in February when this House passed our legislation with a bipartisan vote, which included every House Republican as well as 48 Democrats who broke rank with their leadership and supported our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples.

In the well, Mr. Speaker, I have a photo of three constituents from Jo-

liet, Illinois, Shad and Michelle Hallihan. When we first introduced our bill almost a year and a half ago to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, Shad and Michelle were newlyweds. Because of delays put forth by the other party, using every parliamentary procedure to block passage in the Senate of our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, time has gone on, and now Michelle and Shad have a baby by the name of Ben.

For Michelle and Shad Hallihan, two public school teachers from Joliet, Illinois, the marriage tax penalty is real money. Michelle and Shad, their combined income is in the low \$60,000 range, about \$62,000. If they filed as single, chose not to marry, lived together and filed as single people, they would each pay in the 15 percent tax bracket. But because they chose to get married, Michelle and Shad Hallihan pay a marriage tax penalty.

Of course, when we think about Joliet, Illinois, \$1,400 is a year's tuition at our local community college, Joliet Junior College; it is 3 months day care at a day care center for little Ben; and it is also a washer and dryer for their home. It is real money for real people.

I would point out that Ben, who is growing very rapidly, by the time he is 18, if we eliminate the marriage tax penalty for Michelle and Shad Hallihan, \$1,400 over 18 years is over \$25,000 that they can invest in a college fund for Ben for his future. It is real money for real people, and that is why we need to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

I am proud our bipartisan proposal, which is essentially identical to what we passed out of the House earlier this year in February. And of course now we are working to protect ourselves from a filibuster in the Senate, which is why we have to vote on it again today.

We do several things. We help those who itemize and those who do not itemize. We help those who are poor working folks who utilize the earned-income tax credit. And we also protect parents from the AMT's impact on the child tax credit. We double the standard deduction for those who do not itemize to twice that of singles. That helps those who do not itemize their taxes.

And for those who do itemize, I would point out that it is likely they, of course, own a home, so that they have a mortgage and property taxes that they use to deduct, as well as to give money to their church or synagogue or institutions of faith and charity. So they itemize their taxes. And the only way to provide marriage tax relief for those who itemize is to widen the 15 percent bracket. So that those who are in the 15 percent bracket as joint filers can earn twice as much as single filers in the 15 percent bracket.

We provide marriage tax relief for those on earned-income tax credit, and

again I would point out that we protect those who benefit from the child tax credit, the \$500 per child tax credit from AMT.

The bottom line is we want to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. It is an issue of fairness for 25 million working couples, 50 million Americans; people like Michelle and Shad Hallihan, parents of little Ben.

Now, my friends on the other side of the aisle have realized they needed to respond and they are now offering an alternative, but I would point out that those who are middle class and homeowners are stuck with the marriage tax penalty. Under their proposal, middle class homeowners who itemize receive no marriage tax relief. They are left out because they think those individuals are rich, because they own a home. That is just wrong. We believe that suffering the marriage tax penalty is wrong no matter who the individual is. If couples are suffering the marriage tax penalty, it should be eliminated. That is the bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty. Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty in a way that benefits every one of those 25 million couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty. We have bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1230

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the senior member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I favor a marriage penalty tax relief bill. That is why I say to my colleague on the Committee on Ways and Means, I am for the Democratic substitute, and I can face the thousands of voters in my district, whose numbers the Republicans like to cite for each of us in the House. We know our districts, and I know this bill that I am supporting; the Democratic substitute is the answer.

They are desperately, on the Republican side, trying to escape the "do nothing" label. It sticks and it sticks, and it will continue to be adhesive as long as they simply send bills that will be vetoed. They will never escape that label.

Why will this bill of theirs be vetoed if it were to pass? First of all, half of the relief in their bill goes to those who do not pay a marriage penalty. So they attach the marriage penalty label, though more than half of the money does not apply to that situation.

Secondly, many families with kids will not get the full relief that the bill promises because of the way they have shaped it.

Thirdly, the lion's share, and this is important, of the money goes to the top quarter of the tax filers.

Fourthly, look at the out-year projections. Assuming the AMT is eventually applied, and the chairman of the

committee has promised that, the 20-year cost of their bill is \$700 billion. \$700 billion. That plays lightly with the future of my grandchildren and with the need to address Medicare and Social Security.

So if this bill is not what it says it is, if it is tilted against low- and middle-income families, if it shortchanges millions of families with children, and if it could break the bank, why this bill?

The answer is contained in the chairman's original speech. Pure politics. Philadelphia is what is on their mind.

The chairman of the Ways and Means Committee said, here we go again; and I say, there they go again passing a bill that will be vetoed by the President of the United States.

We can do better. The Democratic substitute does better, and that is why so many of us are going to vote for it and against the Republican bill.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the previous speaker, if he votes against this legislation wiping out the marriage tax penalty, he will vote to deny 120,000 married taxpayers in the 12th District of Michigan relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair. We need to work together to eliminate the marriage tax penalty as it affects everyone once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Illinois for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, today this House can take another important step toward tax fairness for the American people.

When couples stand at the altar to marry and each says "I do," not contained in their vows is any acknowledgment of an additional payment in taxes. And yet that is what we have, my colleagues, for average Americans, for working Americans, a penalty in our Tax Code, roughly \$1,500 a year.

Rather than talk about politics or political conventions or gamesmanship, Mr. Speaker, to the American people this is not a game. These are people who work hard, who play by the rules, who every week sit around their kitchen table trying to make ends meet; and they need to be able to keep \$1,500 of their own money.

Now, it is true my friends on the left, in a half-hearted way, offer a substitute. But again it points out, I guess, a legitimate difference, Mr. Speaker. My friends on the left honestly believe that the highest and best use of the money of the taxpayers of America is in the coffers of Washington, D.C., spent by Washington bureaucrats.

And that is fine. They are certainly entitled to that point of view. And to the extent that they now join us in

talking about debt relief and paying down the national debt, they now join us in talking about prescription drug benefits, they now join us in wanting to strengthen and save Social Security, we appreciate that.

What we say, Mr. Speaker, is not for partisan purposes. In fact, we hold out the hand of bipartisanship with bipartisan sponsorship of this legislation. We invite our colleagues to join with us for real marriage penalty relief for America's working couples.

And, Mr. Speaker, we do something more. We invite the President of the United States to join us. Because here is a chance to do something good for every working couple in America, to strike this blow for tax fairness.

No, far from being irresponsible, this is one of the most responsible things we can do in a bipartisan fashion to reaffirm our belief in the institution of marriage, to reaffirm that we value the contribution of working families, to reaffirm that the money belongs to the people, not to the Washington bureaucrats.

Join with us, my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, let us again pass this marriage tax penalty relief. The American people deserve a divorce from high taxes. They deserve to have a chance to hold on to more of their own money.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, just before I launch into my formal remarks here, when I was listening to the Republican leadership talk about tax equity and talking about the metamorphosis of their tax proposals over the last 6 or 7 years, has there been a greater hoax perpetrated on this House than their argument that they were going to simplify the Tax Code, they were going to pull it out by its roots, they were going to fundamentally restructure the Tax Code of America? Well, under their sponsorship and stewardship, thanks to them, it is more complicated than ever.

Yesterday, the Washington Post ran an editorial about the marriage tax penalty. It was accurate in its analysis, but no one is going to pay much attention because we have moved beyond worrying about tax policy. The marriage penalty and the marriage bonus, the singles penalty and the singles bonus, all derived not from some nefarious scheme embedded in our Tax Code but from the fact that we have a progressive tax system.

If two individuals, one working and one not, get married, their total tax payment under the current system goes down. They have a marriage bonus. They had a singles penalty.

If two individuals get married, both working and both making about the same amount of money, they have a marriage penalty. They had a singles bonus. It stems from the progressive nature of our tax system.

Putting that aside, we made a clear decision to get rid of the marriage penalty. That decision should be advanced on a broad bipartisan basis. However, that is not the choice here. The choice is to send the President a bill he will surely veto.

The President has said he would sign a Republican version of the marriage tax cut if they would accept his version of a prescription drug benefit for senior citizens. The Republican leadership said, no thanks, because it does not fit the Philadelphia political agenda.

But what is most annoying is the fact that the Republicans are using the alternative minimum tax to deny millions of Americans any relief under their bill. The promise of their bill is to cut taxes by about \$250 billion, but that will result in an increase in the alternative minimum tax of \$65 billion. That is why this bill is said to cost \$180 billion.

Make no mistake, it is deliberate. The interaction between the regular tax system and the alternative minimum tax is well known. Taxpayers in a State like Massachusetts claiming State and local tax deductions will most certainly be denied the promised relief that we have been told under the Republican version of this bill because personal exemptions and State and local tax deductions are not deductible against the minimum tax.

The Democratic substitute makes sure that everyone who is promised relief in the bill actually gets it. Our proposal is far superior, and the President will sign it.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the previous speaker, elimination of the marriage tax penalty is not only an issue of tax fairness, it is an issue of tax simplification, and that if he chooses to vote against this legislation, he will vote to deny 122,000 married taxpayers in the 2nd District of Massachusetts relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is not fair.

I invite him to join the 48 Members of the Democratic party on the other side of the aisle who voted with Republicans to eliminate the marriage tax penalty once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) a very distinguished and senior member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, marriage is a cherished institution in America; and we ought to promote it, not discourage it. So we intend to do just that today.

Right now married couples pay more in taxes than two singles living together. That is just wrong. Washington

needs to stop penalizing the cornerstone of our society, the American family.

This year my wife and I will celebrate 50 years of marriage. My wedding day was one of the happiest in my life. And back then, I have to tell my colleagues, I was not worried about having to hold the wedding reception at the IRS office.

Today, in my district alone, 150,000 Texans are penalized for just being married. By repealing the marriage penalty, we are going to restore the American family tradition and the American dream.

Republicans in the House have spent the past few years passing tax bills to eliminate the marriage penalty, but every time the Clinton-Gore administration vetoed them all.

Enough is enough. It is time to repeal the taxes on American values. Let us start by saying "I do" to repealing the tax on marriage.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to sign this legislation and, for once, put American families first.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), referenced an editorial in the Washington Post, and I include for the RECORD the editorial from July 11 entitled: "A Phony Issue."

[From the Washington Post, July 11, 2000]

A PHONY ISSUE

Congressional Republicans have scheduled votes this week on a sizable tax cut mainly for the better off, which they misleadingly describe as relief from a "marriage penalty." The president has rightly indicated that he will veto the bill as it is likely to be presented to him. That suits the sponsors perfectly, in that the vote is mainly intended as a frame for the national nominating conventions that will be held during next month's congressional recess.

The Republicans seek to score political points as the tax-cut party. But on this one, the merits are on the president's side, and our sense is that the politics may be as well. The marriage penalty is a phony issue; the cost of the bill is high; the bulk of the benefit would go to people already quite well off, and there are better uses for the money—to shore up Medicare, for example. The president can be expected to make good use of all those points; he has set his own stage for that in advance.

The tax code does not penalize married couples. To the contrary, as a matter of long-standing policy it is tilted in their favor. A married couple at a given income level owes less income tax than a single taxpayer at the same level. The so-called penalty arises when two single people, each with income, marry. Their combined income is likely to move them into a higher tax bracket. That's what the fight is about; the issue is not the treatment of marriage but the progressive nature of the income tax. The marriage issue is a veil. If the sponsors succeed, you can bet their next target will be the "singles penalty" that they themselves will

have helped to accentuate by lowering the taxes of married couples relative to single payers. The widow's penalty, they'll call it.

The proposed cuts are not even confined to people paying a "penalty" as the sponsors define it. About half of married couples—those in which one spouse earns the bulk of the income—receive a marriage "bonus" in that their taxes are less than if both were single. But they too would benefit; the sponsors hardly want to be accused of slighting the "traditional" family in which the mom stays home. About half the savings in the bill would go to such families.

The cost of the legislation would be a quarter-trillion dollars over 10 years. The president has said he would trade the Republicans. This bill for his Medicare prescription drug benefit, which carries a similar price tag. It's the wrong trade; a drug benefit does not redeem the defects of this bill. The politicians, including the president, say there's plenty of money for both, but the budget surpluses to which they point are projections only, and in some ways highly artificial. Among much else, they assume that future politicians will exercise precisely the kind of discipline that these are prepared to abandon. An easing of fiscal discipline would likely also cause the Federal Reserve to tighten monetary discipline; this is a vote for higher interest rates at one remove.

The marriage penalty is little more than a slogan, a bumper sticker masquerading as serious tax policy. The vote this week is a political stunt that would mainly solve a non-problem while weakening the government's ability to fulfill its long-term obligations. The right vote is emphatically no.

Mr. Speaker, this editorial lays it out very clearly. And that is why we are here. We are all here about politics. This is not about any kind of policy.

The editorial says that they know that they are going to send this bill to the President, he is going to veto it, and that "that suits the sponsors perfectly, in that the vote is mainly intended as a frame for the national nominating conventions that will be held during next month's congressional recess."

Now, this bill was written for me. I came to Congress, I was divorced, and I married somebody who has a job. This bill gives me a great tax benefit because our combined income is up around \$100,000 because that is as high as it goes. If they have a combined income of \$60,000, that is their wife makes 30 and they make 30, they will get \$218.

But my wife and I, because we make considerably more than that, we are all the way up to the maximum, we will get a benefit of \$1,150. Oh, and we do not have any kids. That is important. If they have kids, they are going to lose this on the AMT.

The Treasury says that by 2008, half the people in this country who are getting the benefit will lose it because if they have kids they lose it under the AMT.

□ 1245

Now, the reason I am going to vote against this bill, which would be in my particular financial interest, in my

pocket, is this: I have a mother. I have a mother who is one of the 9 million widows in this country who lives on \$8,000 a year. She is not getting anything from this. And this majority has consistently refused to deal with Social Security, which my mother lives on. That is her only income. They have refused to do anything about shoring up Medicare, which is the only health care system she has. And they will not give her a financial benefit for her prescription drugs.

Now, the President has made a deal, I think a bad deal, but it is not a bad deal for my mother. He says, we will take the Republican plan if you will give my mother a real pharmaceutical benefit. The Republicans say, "Nope, we ain't doing that." We are going to give your mother a little voucher and send her out there and let her look around for some insurance company like all the HMOs that have been pulling out of the State of Washington, and we are going to say, find one that will stand still long enough to give you a pharmaceutical benefit.

That is not a real benefit. I want my mother to have the benefit the President has promised. So I am going to vote for the Democratic alternative and hope the Republicans come to their senses.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would remind my good friend and colleague from Washington State that it was a Republican Congress that for the first time locked away 100 percent of Social Security and Medicare, stopping the raid. It was a Democrat Congress that raided the Social Security trust fund for 30 years.

I would also say to the previous speaker that if he votes against this effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he will vote to deny 106,000 married taxpayers in the seventh district of Washington relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is not fair. I invite him to join the 48 Democrats earlier this year who broke with him and voted with the Republicans to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MCINTOSH), one of the leaders, a proven leader in the effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, one of the chief sponsors of the Weller-McIntosh-Danner Marriage Tax Elimination Act.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, let me take a moment to commend the gentleman from Illinois for his tremendous leadership on this. His ceaseless efforts, particularly to shepherd it through the committee now twice, has been enormously important in making sure that this bill will come to the floor and that families will get their marriage penalty tax relief.

When I ran for Congress, I pledged to Hoosiers in my district that I would fight for more freedom, to cut their

taxes and to strengthen their families as the centerpiece of our community. When I discovered that the Tax Code discriminates against marriage, I knew that by eliminating the marriage penalty, Congress could both cut taxes and strengthen the family. I made eliminating the marriage penalty my highest priority ever since.

It is unbelievable to most Americans that our Tax Code punishes them because they are married and they choose to work. Two constituents of mine, Sharon Mallory and Darryl Pierce, both work in a factory in Indiana. They wanted to get married, but they learned from their H&R Block representative that they would give up a \$900 tax refund and be penalized \$1,800 if they decided to get married.

Sharon Mallory wrote me a letter and said, "Darryl and I would very much like to be married, and I must say it broke our hearts when we found out we can't afford it." Mr. Speaker, that letter broke my heart. I vowed to never stop fighting until this anti-family marriage penalty tax was eliminated. I have fought on the front lines for Darryl and Sharon and for 600,000 Hoosier families, 1.2 million Hoosiers, who will save over a billion dollars as a result of this marriage penalty relief and for 25 million Americans all over this country who want us to do the right thing.

The alternative bill, Mr. Speaker, does not help stay-at-home moms. It does not help stay-at-home dads. It does not help homeowners who do not qualify for the alternative. It does not help Darryl and Sharon Mallory. With record surpluses, this is the best chance we have to provide real tax relief and to help families at the same time. Let us put partisanship aside.

One of the things that I have noticed is that nobody stands up and says that it is a good idea to punish marriage and let us have a marriage penalty tax, but there are a lot of excuses for not doing it. Let me ask my colleagues on the other side to put aside partisanship and join us in getting this done. President Clinton has already indicated he could sign this bill. Of course he has got his conditions, but he said he could sign it. Vice President Gore is already campaigning on marriage penalty relief. So do not be left holding the bag here on the House floor. Join us in a bipartisan effort to do what is right for the American family and then we can be proud that we have helped to eliminate the marriage penalty for many Americans and reduce it for all families in this country.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the approximately 100,000 people who live in the Third Congressional District of Maryland that are affected by this bill are going to be somewhat perplexed by the debate that is taking place. About half of this 100,000 are currently paying a marriage penalty for being married. That is wrong. And they have their Congressman here today speaking up and saying that we should do something to help that approximately 50,000 that are paying a marriage penalty for being married. These are couples that have approximately the same income that are paying a penalty under our tax code for being married.

The other half are receiving a bonus today. These are individuals that are actually paying less taxes by being married than they would if they were filing single returns. These are couples in which one spouse has a much higher income than the other spouse. If they were living together without the benefit of marriage, they would actually be paying more taxes. They have a marriage bonus. They are not calling me. They are not writing me asking me to provide more relief because they are married. They are already getting the bonus.

The problem with the Republican bill is that it spends \$182 billion and one-half of that is going to the people that are already receiving a marriage bonus. This is not the first tax bill that we are considering in this body. We have already been considering estate tax repeal that spends \$69 billion over 10 years and then explodes in cost. And the list goes on and on and on.

The problem is we cannot afford to continue to spend money to deal with a problem that spends much more than we need to to deal with the issue. We have seniors who need prescription medicine coverage under Medicare. We have schools that we need to reduce class size and modernize. There are other priorities that we need to deal with.

This Congressman is interested in helping the people who pay a marriage penalty that live in my district. We can do that for one-half the cost of this bill. It is in the interest of all of my taxpayers, those that are paying a penalty, those that are receiving a bonus, that we do it right. The Democratic substitute is better targeted.

We should be working together, Democrats and Republicans, to figure out how we can target the relief to those that are paying the penalty and, therefore, we can do other priorities in addition to just this one. That is what we should be doing. But unfortunately this is more about a political message than it is about helping the 50,000 plus people in the Third Congressional District of Maryland that are truly paying a marriage penalty and deserve some relief by this body and unfortunately will not get it because of our inability

to work together on a bill that could be signed by the President.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I note my friend's comments about one-half of the relief going to those who do not suffer the marriage tax penalty. If they analyzed their own bill, what they do with the standard deduction provides a similar proportion of those who do not suffer the marriage tax penalty some relief.

I would also say to the previous speaker that if he votes against this legislation to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he votes to deny 132,000 married taxpayers in the third district of Maryland relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair. I want to invite my friend from Maryland to join the 48 other Democrats who have broken with their leadership and are supporting efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP), a senior and respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding me this time and for his leadership on this issue.

I represent the middle part of Michigan. In my district alone, there are 106,000 people paying more taxes simply because they are married. The Vice President is trying to criticize the Congress as a "do nothing for the people" Congress. Yet he probably will not mention that this is the second time we have had to pass this bill because the President and some congressional Democrats think we are doing too much for 28 million American couples.

Earlier this year, the President said he supported marriage penalty relief, but here we are today, 6 months later, again passing marriage penalty relief. Yet he continues to threaten American families with a veto. The President does not mention that his own proposal and the Democrat substitute, I might add, does not do one bit for a working couple who saved enough last year to buy a home. Why? Because those people itemize. They fill out a different tax form. To not help those people is simply not fair.

I for one am proud that we are able to take this step forward and fix this glaring inequity. Let us strengthen families. I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 4810.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, of course, our tax laws should not discriminate against marriage. And if ending such discrimination, if ending the marriage penalty were the true purpose of this initiative, it would have

already been law and married couples would have benefited from it for a number of years, at least 3. Indeed, last year we Democrats again came to this House, and we offered more marriage tax penalty relief than our Republican colleagues. They were much more concerned with loading up their trillion-dollar tax cut with special interest provisions like the chicken manure tax subsidy and so forth that was really the mainstay of their effort last year rather than helping married couples.

Again this year, we offered to work with them in a bipartisan fashion to create true marriage tax penalty relief. They have rejected that. They have done so, I must say, with some rather unusual arguments in favor of their proposal. This indicates, I suppose, what sheltered lives some Republicans live. Why, they have told us that the Tax Code is encouraging people to live out of wedlock; that it is encouraging illegitimacy. I hate to expose them to a rude awakening about premarital relations in this country, but I just have a feeling that the fine print of the Tax Code is not the first thing that young people look to before they decide on their living arrangements or their relations with the opposite sex. I think if they continue arguing that, they will only demonstrate that they are even more out of touch with what is happening in this country than they do by their usual endeavors here most every day.

Leave it to the House Republicans to take something we all agree with, that there should be no discrimination in our tax code, and turn it from a workable, bipartisan plan into a total political ploy. You will remember the first time they came out here, they just happened to package it up in a loving way on Valentine's Day to present to the American people. That is the kind of political grandstanding with little action behind it that has characterized this entire Congress.

I think that the only illegitimacy associated with this bill is its mislabeling. It is not marriage tax penalty relief. Over half of the dollar benefit in this bill goes to people who do not incur a marriage tax penalty, people who gain tax advantages because they are married and filing a joint tax return. I have been extremely fortunate to be married to the same woman who has put up with me for over 31 years, my parents together over 55 years. I value the institution of marriage. But there are many folks that have not been as lucky. Some of them are widows or widowers. Some of them are victims of domestic violence. Some of them are single mothers that are trying to do as good a job as we tried to do for our family to rear their children. Why should our tax laws discriminate against those individuals? That is exactly what this bill does. Not every family has the good fortune to be

married. Some choose to remain single for a variety of reasons. My feeling is that our tax code ought not to discriminate for or against someone depending on their marital status.

This bill could also be called the Single Mothers Tax Penalty Act, or the Widow and Widowers Tax Penalty Act. The gentleman from Illinois seems to have so many statistics on those individuals that are going to benefit from this act, I wonder if he has statistics on how many will be discriminated against by a bill that accords over half of its benefits to people that do not suffer any marriage tax penalty. Unfortunately, instead of crafting bipartisan legislation, we have another political ploy that would produce more bad public policy.

□ 1300

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to my friend from Texas, the previous speaker, if he votes against this legislation, this bipartisan legislation to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he will vote to deny 116,000 married taxpayers in the 10th District of Texas relief from the marriage tax penalty. By voting for the Democrat substitute, one votes to discriminate against those who itemize, particularly middle-class, married couples who own a home.

I also want to extend an invitation to my friend from Texas to join the 48 Democrats who broke with their leadership this spring and vote in a bipartisan way to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and I thank him for just outstanding leadership, and all of the cosponsors of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in the 35 counties in east Tennessee, 200,000 people are adversely affected by the marriage tax penalty. More than 110,000 couples pay approximately \$1,400 per year more in taxes simply because they are married. That is not right, and the fundamental issue here is whether or not we are going to reduce the tax burden on the middle-class folks in this country.

When I was born in 1957, if you add up the Federal, State, and local tax burden on my parents when I was born, it was not collectively, combined, more than 10 percent of every dollar that they made. Today, it is almost 50 percent.

In my lifetime the level of taxation in this country has gone from less than a dime of a dollar to almost half of every dollar you make. At what point are we going to roll this back? The fundamental issue is, it is time in a budget surplus to roll some of the taxes back from the middle-class taxpayers in this country.

If we do not do it now, with these record surpluses, my question is, when are we going to? If we do not sign the bill into law now, when will it happen? Because I would suggest if we do not do it now, it is not going to happen, and it is important that we continue to persist.

I am grateful that some people do not make everything out to be partisan. This is not about Republicans and Democrats, this is just about regular folks saying some taxes, death taxes and the marriage tax penalty, are unfair, they should be eliminated, never should have been there to begin with. And if you are not going to wipe those taxes out at a time of unprecedented surpluses and a good economy, when are you going to do it? It is not going to happen.

I believe in tax relief. I do not mind saying so. I also believe in tax fairness, in tax equity. There are 65 provisions in the Tax Code that penalize people just because they are married. Well, that is nonsensical. Our Tax Code is out of hand, to begin with. It is way too big and complex, it needs to be dramatically overhauled, and that will come, I hope, soon, but not between now and November.

This is today. This is now. We can pass this conference report, after all the debate that has taken place; we can send it down the street with some bipartisan support, and the President can sign it into law. I call on him to do that.

I call on all of our colleagues to come together and get some taxes, just one step at a time, off the back of middle-class America. Some people play class war with taxes. This is just regular people. These are the regular people you run into at the Food Lion in east Tennessee. Cut their taxes. Eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the speaker that was in the well and hope that the leadership of the House could come together with some type of package to present to the President that could be signed into law that would include a decent affordable drug package. There is an opportunity to do this.

I also agree with the gentleman that the present Tax Code is in the shape that most tax writers, as well as other Members of Congress, should be ashamed of.

The majority has been there for over half a dozen years. They talk a lot about pulling it up by the roots; but obviously, like with Social Security and Medicare, they have not been able to get enough discipline on their side to do anything about it. But that does not mean that something as important as a tax cut should be handled in the manner in which they are handling it.

I think that we should try to do it in a bipartisan way, not to do it in a

piecemeal way, to agree to the cuts we are going to have, and to allow the other bills that we are talking about, whether they are the minimum wage bill, whether they are the Patients' Bill of Rights bill, whether it is pension bills, not just try to stack up on each and every decent piece of legislation a tax cut.

I think there is plenty of room for us to work together on, so that at the end of the day we can say in a bipartisan way that we have come to a meeting of the mind. There will be enough for us to debate at the polls come November, but certainly on these important tax issues, we should have to agree that whether it is the Republican majority today, or the Democratic majority next year, we cannot get anything done unless we work together in a bipartisan way. Neither one of us will enjoy the substantial margins that would allow us just to work our will. We are going to have to work in a bipartisan way if we are going to get any progress now or next year, so why not begin to think about working together this year.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I want to once again remind my good friend from New York, the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means, that this legislation, when it passed the House earlier this year, it received bipartisan support. Forty-eight Democrat Members of the House joined every House Republican to vote yes to eliminate the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples.

I would also point out to the previous speaker that if you vote against our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty in a bipartisan way, you will vote to deny 60,000 married taxpayers in the 15th District of New York relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair.

Again, I want to extend an invitation to my friend from New York to join us in a bipartisan effort, join those 48 House Democrats who voted with Republicans, to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), a distinguished Member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for his phenomenal leadership on this very important issue.

We have heard a lot of debate today about saving Social Security and Medicare and prescription drug coverage; and it is interesting if you think for a moment, the President and Vice President have been in office for 8 years, and now in the last 3 months or 5 months of their term in office, they come up with

all these plans to rescue Medicare, Social Security, add prescription drug coverage. Those are important issues, and the Republicans take them seriously. We on the Committee on Ways and Means have been working on these very, very important issues.

Regrettably, when you talk bipartisan legislation, or at least when they claim it from the other side of the aisle, it is only bipartisan if it is their idea and their way. But the remarkable thing about this process on this floor is that after all of the baying at the moon about what a lousy idea this marriage tax penalty elimination is, we will be joined by numerous Democrats who recognize that the marriage penalty is in fact a penalty on marriage. Like estate tax relief, when we talked about it, we were derided for hour on hour on hour, and ultimately we had 95 brave soldiers join us in passing this very important piece of legislation.

Taxing two hard-working Americans who are married is a shame. It is abomination. Now, they use those words in their press conferences, but I do not hear them uttering them on the floor today.

Now, I just ask Americans who are watching today, hearing this debate and wondering what it is all about, there is a lot of rancor from one side and a lot of boasting on our side about the great importance of this bill; and I think at the end of the day, we win the debate. But more importantly, stay tuned, because the President will join us and support us and probably sell out his side of the aisle in order to make a deal on his legacy. And the Vice President, against tax cuts at the beginning of the year, now embraces \$500 million of tax cuts.

So I just suggest to everybody, wait around for a little while and sooner or the later the parade follows leadership on issues important to the American taxpayer.

Now, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is not bankrupting the system with this bill. We will have money for prescription drug coverage. We will have money for Social Security reform. In fact, we lockbox Social Security and protect it for now and into the future, instead of, as they were for 40 years, borrowing out of the money and using it to pay their bills, or actually not even paying their bills, putting us in deeper debt and deeper deficit. We are in a financial quagmire because of their leadership. Now we have been in charge for 6 years, and finally advancing bills that are helping the American family.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill and go to church this Sunday and explain your actions to your fellow parishioners, why you voted to continue to tax the sanctity of marriage. I am single, so I am not going to have a big argument from what I will save in my tax bill.

But to those of you who feel compelled, go to church next Sunday and stand up in the choir and praise the Lord first, and secondly say but I voted against you who are married, because I think you should have an added burden. Not only are you trying to raise children, pay the mortgage, buy a new washer and dryer, but the Government thinks because you are married, we should take a few more bucks out of your pocket and then spend it in Washington, because you know Washington knows best.

Save marriage, end the penalty, let Americans prosper.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Members are reminded that their remarks are to be directed to the Chair and not to other persons who may be viewing the proceedings of the House.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am not as much troubled by what I hear today, as by what I do not hear. What I do not hear is any of the participants reminding the American people that because of actions that Congress has taken during our lifetimes, our Nation is \$5 trillion deeper in debt than the day that any of us were born; that we are the beneficiaries of those expenditures; that our Nation won the Cold War; that it built the interstate highway system; that it built the intercostal canal system; that it did a lot of good things for all us. And now it is time, when we have the opportunity because of some small surpluses to pay the bills, we seem intent on doing those things not to pay them.

In a search to give some Americans a break, we are going to see to it that all Americans continue to have \$1 billion a day of their tax money squandered on paying interest on that debt; \$1 billion a day.

I hear my colleagues talking about this enormous surplus, as if somehow this building is awash in cash. Well, if it exists, why are you delaying the pay of the people who serve our Nation in crummy places like Bosnia and Korea, people who are at sea right now, under the sea, on the sea on aircraft carriers for 6 months at a time, why are you delaying their pay from September 29 of this year to October 1, making them go an extra weekend when they cannot buy baby formula or diapers?

Do you know why? Because you are trying to disguise the true nature of the debt. You took that \$2.5 billion pay period and you shifted it to the next fiscal year so it would look like the surplus is bigger than it really is.

Mr. Speaker, why are we not as intent on paying down the debt that was incurred in our lifetime as we are in trying to score political advantage against each other come November 2?

The Nation that the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) fought for, the Nation that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) fought for and so many Members of this body fought for is worth saving. If we do not pay our bills while we have this brief opportunity, the first time in 30 years that we actually have a surplus, then we never will.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my good friend from Mississippi, who I share many of his concerns on behalf of our friends, I would point out many of our military men and women suffer the marriage tax penalty, and invite him to join with us in a bipartisan efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, to close, I yield the balance of my time to my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), a leading and respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, like 144,000 other taxpayers in the 3rd District of Georgia, I wear a wedding band.

□ 1315

It is a symbol of my marriage. But, due to the Tax Code, it is an excuse to raise more revenue, and that is not right.

Under today's Tax Code, 25 billion married couples pay higher taxes as a result of saying, I do. Today's bill will change that. It will allow both wives and husbands to each take a full standard deduction, and it will broaden the lower tax bracket so that lower- and middle-income couples will not be punished or pushed into a higher tax bracket when their incomes are combined.

The Marriage Penalty Tax Relief Act of 2000 will provide American families relief from the excessive taxation which has been caused by our government's excessive spending. Now that a balanced budget and reforms that the Federal Government has done in the past few years, we have a positive cash flow. It is time to reduce the tax burden on working Americans. Ending the unfair marriage penalty is an important step in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, my hope is that we will not stop there. American families are also paying far too much for gasoline, which is a necessity for most households. My hope is that we will look at repealing some of the Federal excise taxes which contribute to the high cost of gasoline.

But today, Mr. Speaker, we are considering relief from the marriage penalty. I had hoped that we would have made the tax relief in this bill effective for the tax year 2000 instead of the year 2001 so families could get immediate relief. Hopefully, in the conference we

will be able to accomplish the change in the effective date for the taxable year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, despite the delay in implementation, this is a good bill that will correct an injustice in the Tax Code. I urge the House to pass this legislation. I urge the President to sign this bill into law, and I call on Members of the House and Senate to resist the temptation to use tax relief for married couples as a pawn in some political game.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to help make our communities more livable—to make families safe, healthy and economically secure. Clearly, affording needed tax relief to America's working families is part of that effort. This bill, however, skews priorities: Rather than focusing on the working people who need help the most, the bill offers the most relief to those who already have lobbyists working for them.

First of all, we ought to be making things easier for families, not more difficult. One big problem for them is that a growing number are being forced into the Alternative Minimum Tax, which was originally intended to ensure that very wealthy people paid at least some income tax. Just last week, I was confronted back home with a farmer who has 10 children that he works hard to support. Taking the tax credits for his children triggers the AMT for him, and no one would confuse him with Bill Gates.

This bill not only fails to solve the problem, it actually makes things worse. In every year, a larger percentage of families are shut out from the full benefits of the bill, exceeding 50 percent by 2010.

It's not that hard to fix this. The Democratic alternative, which I support, would offer \$89.1 billion in marriage penalty relief. It would fix the AMT problem, making sure that families actually get the tax relief they've been promised. It would direct an additional \$10 billion to low- and moderate-income families. Even better, it would cost less than half of what the Republican bill does.

With that additional revenue, we could address other pressing priorities. More than 11 million American children have no health insurance. Many of their grandparents pay staggering sums for the prescription drugs that prolong and improve their lives. We have children with special educational needs that Congress has promised to fund—but Congress can't find the money for them. Sadly, in my own state, one in five children suffers from hunger sometime during the year. I believe these issues deserve our attention just as much as adjusting the tax schedule.

For that reason, I will vote for the alternative that offers the most direct and targeted tax advantages for American families. Unfortunately, the majority has rejected the opportunity for commonsense reform in favor of political theater. The bill the House will pass today will rightly be vetoed by the President. It is going nowhere—and it shouldn't go anywhere. At \$182 billion, the cost of admission to this political sideshow is just too high.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, once again this House has before it legislation to eliminate the penalty on marriage that is found in the income tax code.

Quite simply, marriage should not be taxed.

As the financial pressures of families result in both spouses entering the labor force, an increasing number have become subject to the marriage penalty. A major reason why so many joint filers face this added burden is that the very first dollar earned by the lower-earning spouse is taxed at the marginal rate of the higher-earning spouse, not necessarily at the lower 15% rate faced by single filers. This problem was exacerbated in 1993, when the Clinton tax measure increased the number of tax brackets from three to five.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that over 20 million married couples pay higher taxes than they would if they were single. This "tax" on marriage averages nearly \$1,400 per couple. This \$1,400 could be used by families to save for college or retirement, make car payments, or pay for tutoring.

Middle income families are hit the hardest by this penalty and they need this legislation for tax relief. I urge the House to pass this legislation.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4811 and in strong support of the Rangel substitute. Unlike the underlying bill, the Rangel substitute alleviates the marriage penalty while preserving the necessary resources to enact other tax cuts for working families, to pay down the debt, and to protect Social Security and Medicare.

About half of all married couples pay more in income taxes because they are married than they would if they were single. The other half pay either the same or less. The Rangel substitute provides \$90 billion in targeted relief to couples who pay the marriage penalty. The Republican bill, by contrast, funnels more than half the \$182 billion in tax benefits to couples who receive a marriage bonus and 2/3 of the tax benefit to households earning more than \$75,000 annually.

With finite resources available, the Republican bill must be viewed in term of its opportunity costs. The more than \$100 billion in this legislation that is unrelated to marriage penalty relief could be used to enact significant tax cuts for working families. Rather than increasing tax bonuses for higher income people, Congress should help families cope with their core pocketbook issues such as reducing the cost of college, increasing the affordability of health insurance, and encouraging savings for retirement. In my view, these areas, along with marriage penalty relief, should be the tax cut priorities.

The current budget projections will accommodate significant tax cuts along with an aggressive plan to pay down the debt and to strengthen Social Security and Medicare. Paying down the debt and in turn reducing interest rates is perhaps the most significant tax cut Congress could offer. Lower interest rates would cut mortgage payments on a \$100,000 house by \$2,000 annually. Likewise, the cost of farm operating loans, car loans, and student loans would all be reduced.

Finally, before allocating surplus for tax cuts, Congress should set aside sufficient resources to shore up the long-term future of Social Security and Medicare. The current surplus projections afford us a rare opportunity to strengthen these programs for the Baby Boom generation and beyond. We must also reserve

adequate resources to enact a guaranteed drug benefit as part of the Medicare program so that seniors will not be forced to choose between their prescriptions and their food and shelter.

In sum, there are a host of priorities that deserve our support, including marriage penalty relief. It is critical, however, that this relief be targeted so that we may enact other tax cuts for working families, pay down the debt, and protect Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, when we considered a basically identical bill in February, I voted for it, although I was very reluctant to do so.

I was reluctant because that was not the best time for this bill, and that was not the best bill for the job.

It wasn't the right time because we had not yet adopted a budget resolution and so a tax bill—or a spending bill, for that matter—should not have been considered then. Now, of course, we have a budget resolution in place. So, today at least the time is right.

But this still is not the best bill for the job because in some areas it does too little, and in others it does too much.

It does too little because it does not adjust the Alternative Minimum Tax. That means it leaves many middle-income families unprotected from having most of the promised benefits of the bill taken away. The Democratic substitute would have adjusted the Alternative Minimum Tax, which is one of the reasons I voted for that better bill.

The Republican leadership's bill does too much in another area. Because it is not carefully targeted, it does not just apply to people who pay a penalty because they are married. Instead, a large part of the total benefits under the bill would go to married people whose taxes already are lower than they would be if they were single. In other words, if this bill were to become law as it now stands a primary result would not be to lessen marriage "penalties" but to increase marriage "bonuses."

And, by going beyond what's needed to end marriage "penalties" the bill—if it were to become law—would go too far in reducing the surplus funds that will be needed to bolster Social Security and Medicare.

Those were and remain the reasons for my reluctance to vote for this bill. They are strong reasons then and they are strong reasons today.

In fact, if voting for the bill today would mean that it would be law tomorrow, I would vote against it. But that isn't the case, fortunately. The Senate still has a chance to improve this bill. So, I will reluctantly vote for the bill because I favor eliminating the marriage penalty.

I am prepared to give the Republican leadership one last chance to correct the bill's deficiencies rather than simply to insist on sending it to the President for the promised veto. I hope that the Republican leadership will allow the bill to be improved to the point that it merits becoming law—meaning that it will deserve the President's signature.

But if they miss that opportunity, and insist on sending to the President a bill that falls short of being appropriate for signature into law, I will vote to sustain a veto.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of H.R. 4810, the Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000. This is yet another bill in a series of legislation brought to the floor to help America's wealthy. Yes, we have entered an era of budget surpluses, but the surpluses must not be squandered on those who don't need it—the wealthiest U.S. income-earners. I support targeted marriage tax relief such as the Democrats have provided in our substitute amendment today. I also support increasing the earned income tax credit for the working poor who really do need the tax break. The Democrats have provided for this in the substitute bill as well. And the Democratic substitute makes sure that nobody will be denied the relief because of the AMT. The Republican bill does not.

The Republicans have brought the estate tax, marriage penalty tax, medical savings accounts, and the telephone excise tax to the floor for consideration, and next week they plan to bring pension reform to the floor as well. Not a single one of these provisions will provide relief for middle and lower income working families. This Congress has already spent \$471 billion on tax cuts for the wealthy and plans to spend another \$54 billion on increasing pensions for the wealthy next week. This Congress can be charged with recklessly spending half a trillion dollars on the wealthiest Americans and there may be more to come. This is an irresponsible use of the hard-earned tax funds lower and middle-income earners contribute to their federal government.

I. MARRIAGE PENALTY TAX

This bill should target tax relief for those who need it most. Unfortunately, the GOP proposal actually helps wealthy Americans, not simply those facing a tax penalty due to marriage by implementing a tax bracket change favorable to those in the top brackets. There are nearly as many families that receive "marriage bonus" as receive marriage penalties in the U.S. As much as half of the \$182 billion in tax relief in the GOP bill will go to families who receive the bonus and are not hurt by the marriage penalty. This bill's costliest provision, expanding the 15% tax bracket, only benefits taxpayers in the top quarter of the income distribution. This accounts for 65% of the plan's total cost, or nearly \$100 billion. This bill's title implies that it helps those who are faced with a marriage penalty when it truthfully benefits the wealthy.

II. ESTATE TAX

The estate tax repeal—and the numerous other tax measures passed by the House—should be scrutinized with a measure of fairness. It hardly seems fair to come to the floor of the House week after week to provide hand over fist full of tax break dollars to the wealthiest U.S. taxpayers, when we haven't even addressed Medicare's solvency. The estate tax bill is the most egregious of all of the tax bills that have come before the House for a vote. It spends the most amount of money—\$105 billion—on not just the wealthy, but the very wealthy. Ninety percent of the tax cut benefits will go to those in the top 1% income group—those earning \$319,000 per year and with estates over \$20 million. Clearly this is a tax break for the rich.

III. PENSION REFORM

The Ways and Means Committee is scheduled to markup the pension reform bill tomorrow

and it's expected to be on the floor sometime next week. While many of my colleagues would like to believe that this package of reforms will help to increase pension coverage for working Americans it will do exactly the opposite. Trickle down economics didn't work for Reagan and it won't work for pensions. This bill will directly help those executives who earn \$200,000 per year. This bill will purely benefit the rich when not one provision is included to help increase pension coverage for low and middle-income workers.

IV. MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

The Republicans want to appear as though they are helping the average American worker so they decided to include medical savings accounts (MSAs) in the Patients Bill of Rights. The greatest savings from MSAs will help workers who have little or no health care expenditures. It allows people with low health costs to avoid taxes through essentially a new form of an IRA. And the Republicans go even further by allowing people to withdraw money from their MSA without any tax penalty if they maintain the deductible of \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for families. This isn't a health proposal at all—it's just more money for the rich.

V. TELEPHONE EXCISE TAX

While this isn't a bill to directly help wealthy Americans, its primary purpose is to help wealthy corporations. This is just another fiscally irresponsible way for the Republicans to reduce federal revenues for the vital programs that the working families of this country rely on. The leadership of the 106th Congress doesn't care if it squanders another \$20 billion in tax revenues by repealing the telephone excise tax. The GOP doesn't care if we have enough money to save Social Security and Medicare for future generations or to give our seniors a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

The Democratic substitute bill targets those workers who need it most. The Democratic substitute addresses the marriage penalty by giving married couples a standard deduction twice that of single people. In addition, low-income married couples face a marriage penalty in the earned income tax credit. The Democratic substitute would reduce those penalties by increasing the income level at which the credit begins to phase out by \$2,000 in 2001 and by \$2,500 in 2002 and thereafter. It would also repeal the current reduction in the EITC and refundable child credit by the amount of the minimum tax. The Democratic substitute is the responsible way to address the marriage penalty tax without pandering to the wealthiest 2% of U.S. earners. I urge my colleagues to support the Democratic substitute and oppose H.R. 4810.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to state my opposition to this bill being adopted in its current form. We should offer relief from the tax burdens, which may be imposed by our nation's current marriage tax policy only to those who are in need of help.

As founder and co-chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I do share many of the leadership's concerns regarding the promotion of stable and secure marriages in our society. After all, the foundation of any civilization is the strength of its families. Therefore, I believe that we should seriously consider passing legislation that will provide true relief

for those pending marriages which are threatened by our nation's current marriage tax policy.

For this reason I have joined my fellow Democratic colleagues in voicing opposition to H.R. 4810, the Marriage Penalty Tax Elimination Reconciliation Act as it is written because it does less than what it is being purported to do. For example, it will not provide marriage penalty tax relief for the poor of our society who face many hurdles to finding stable footings upon which to build lives for their children and families. In addition to this concern, H.R. 4810 provides a tax break mostly to the very wealthy. This fact alone taints the image that many in this body would like to project to Americans, that our actions have the altruistic intent of only helping those young people in our communities who are just starting out in life and who would like to marry.

I would suggest to those Americans who eagerly await our actions in this matter pay close attention to what this body is actually attempting to do. Our efforts today should not be based on tax cut slight-of-hand and short-sided actions on the issue of marriage.

All of us present understand that the institution of marriage is very important. I personally believe that it is sacred, and for this reason we should be very careful about what we do as a legislative body, in an area that is after all a personal decision. We should be very sure that any legislative changes made to any benefit for our citizens has the effect of supporting the institution of marriage in real and meaningful ways.

I would ask my colleagues to remember the struggle shared by them and their spouses when they first married. For this reason, I am very supportive of Congressman RANGEL's substitute amendment to this bill. I applaud Congressman RANGEL's attempts to reach some middle ground on this issue with the majority, and thank him for bringing before this body an opportunity to have a rational discussion regarding the marriage tax policy of our nation. As the bill is currently written, the tax penalty to the federal government should this bill become law would be \$182 billion in lost government revenue.

Like the bill, the Rangel substitute would reduce the marriage tax penalty by increasing the basic standard deduction for a married couple filing a joint income tax return to twice the basic standard deduction for an unmarried individual, and adjusts the Alternative Minimum Tax in an attempt to ensure that the benefits of the standard deduction change would not be nullified. However, an added benefit of the Rangel substitute is that it will also reduce the marriage tax penalty by modifying the tax code in order to make more married couples eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit beginning in 2001. Additionally, the Rangel substitute will increase the income level at which the credit begins to phase out by providing \$2,000 in 2001 and \$2,500 in 2002 and subsequent years. I would add that unlike the bill, the substitute does not provide for an increase in the upper limit of the 15% tax bracket. I would hope that this body not endorse a tax cut for the wealthy under the guise relief tax relief for newly married young couples.

This body did not do all that it could have done to promote the stability of marriage

among our nation's senior population with the passage, of what was called, the senior's prescription drug benefit bill that was passed prior to the July 4, break that legislation merely gave insurance companies more money. If the marriages of our elderly poor are shattered due to the high cost of health care and in particular the financial stress created by the unfair cost of prescription drugs then the security of their marriages as well as their lives together are threatened. We should take the opportunity presented to us through the consideration of the Rangel substitute to make amends for some of the lack of attention given to real life problems through the adopting of a marriage penalty relief bill that will provide real tax relief to real people.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4810, the Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000. This bill is the exact marriage penalty relief bill that was passed in February. So I must ask why are we wasting valuable time debating legislation that has already been considered and which the president threatened to veto last February? It is time that we provide tax relief for those couples that are truly penalized and then use the remaining time in this session to do what the American public is asking for; providing prescription drug coverage, paying down the national debt and strengthening Social Security and Medicare.

While I support tax relief for those couples who are penalized, I do not, support H.R. 4810 which would provide tax relief half of which will go to those couples who benefit from a marriage bonus rather than a marriage penalty under the current tax code. Further, this bill would cost \$182.3 billion over the next ten years and would give the lion's share of its tax cuts to higher-income families. The average tax cut for families with incomes less than \$50,000 would be about \$149 per year, while families with incomes over \$75,000 would get an average tax cut of nearly \$1,000 per year. That is why I oppose H.R. 4810 and support the substitute offered by Representative Rangel, which is fairer and more fiscally responsible.

The substitute would do a better job of fixing the marriage penalty, and cost less than half as much as H.R. 4810. It would assure that the Alternative Minimum tax (AMT) does not deny the tax relief the bill promises. The AMT ensures that everyone pays at least a minimum tax. Under H.R. 4810, many married couples with children will not get the advertised tax relief because they fall under a complex set of AMT rules. When this bill was drafted behind closed doors, it ignored the effect of the AMT. As a result, by 2008, nearly half of the American families with two children would be under the minimum tax and receive nothing or less than what H.R. 4810 promised.

Like the bill, the substitute would reduce the marriage tax penalty by increasing the basic standard deduction for a married couple filing a joint income tax return to twice the basic standard deduction for an unmarried individual. The substitute also would reduce the marriage tax penalty by modifying the tax code in order to make more married couples eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) beginning in 2001. It would increase the income level at which the credit begins to

phase out by \$2,000 in 2001 and by \$2,500 in 2002 and thereafter.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to do what is right for the American people and oppose H.R. 4810 and support the substitute that provides genuine relief for our citizens who are truly penalized.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, with great regret, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4810. The regret is not only because I must oppose this bill, but because my friends on the other side of aisle are unwilling to enact true and meaningful reform that benefits all American citizens. Instead, we are being presented with proposed legislation that will assist couples making more than \$75,000 a year at the expense of strengthening future financing of Social Security and Medicare and modernizing Medicare by including affordable prescription drug coverage.

On the surface, this bill appears to be a blessing for all married couples but there will be millions of unhappy tax payers next April 15th when they learn that they will not benefit from the promises being made today.

Who will benefit? Two-thirds of the actual benefits in this package will go to the 30% of married couples making more than \$75,000 a year. Review of the bill by financial analysts indicate that the average tax cut for couples receiving more than \$75,000 would be \$994 a year, compared to a tax cut of only \$149 for couples making less than \$75,000 a year.

Perhaps the most egregious flaw in this bill is that makes no modification to the Alternative Minimum Tax which places a floor on the total amount of deductions which couples may file for each year. By not adjusting that figure, many middle-class families with children will not receive a dime from the sham "benefits" contained in this bill. I believe that it is those very families with children who most deserve a marriage tax benefit.

H.R. 4810 proposes to remove \$50.7 billion over five years and \$182.3 billion over ten years from the federal budget. We are already scrounging for funds in an effort to pay down the national debt and shore up the Social Security and Medicare funds. Where will this put us in ten years when today's middle-aged married couples are ready to retire?

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises today to express his support for H.R. 4810, the Marriage Penalty Tax Elimination Reconciliation Act. This bill will have a positive effect, in particular, on middle and lower income married couples.

At the outset, this Member would like to thank the distinguished Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee from Texas [Mr. ARCHER], for introducing this legislation.

It is important to note that H.R. 4810 has the same provisions as H.R. 6, which passed on the floor of the House on February 10, 2000, by a vote of 268-158, with this Member's support. However, the Senate has been unable to reach the 60 vote threshold on a cloture vote to close debate on marriage penalty legislation. As a result, the House is now considering the marriage tax penalty as the first reconciliation bill, a status which will allow debate and amendments to be limited in the Senate.

While there are many reasons to support H.R. 4810, this Member will enumerate two

specific reasons. First, H.R. 4810 takes a significant step toward eliminating the current marriage penalty in the Internal Revenue Code. Second, H.R. 4810 follows the principle that the Federal income tax code should be marriage-neutral.

1. First, this legislation, H.R. 4810, will help eliminate the marriage penalty in the Internal Revenue Code in the following significant ways:

STANDARD DEDUCTION

It will increase the standard deduction for married couples who file jointly to double the standard deduction for singles beginning in 2001. For example, in 2000, the standard deduction equals \$4,400 for single taxpayers but \$7,350 for married couples who file jointly. If this legislation was effective in 2000, the standard deduction for married couples who file jointly would be \$8,800 which would be double the standard deduction for single taxpayers.

THE 15 PERCENT TAX BRACKET

It will increase the amount of married couples' income (who file jointly) subject to the lowest 15 percent marginal tax rate to twice that of single taxpayers beginning in 2003, phased in over six years. Under the current tax law, the 15 percent bracket covers taxpayers with income up to \$26,250 for singles and \$43,850 for married couples who file jointly. If this legislation was effective in 2000, married couples would pay the 15 percent tax rate on their first \$52,500 of taxable income, which would be double the aforementioned current income amount for singles.

2. Second, H.R. 4810 will help the Internal Revenue Code become more marriage-neutral. Currently, many married couples who file jointly pay more Federal income tax than they would as two unmarried singles. The Internal Revenue Code should not be a consideration when individuals discuss their future marital status.

Therefore, for these reasons, and many others, this Member urges his colleagues to support the Marriage Penalty Tax Elimination Reconciliation Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The time for general debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE OFFERED BY MR. RANGEL

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute offered by Mr. RANGEL:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN STANDARD DEDUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 63(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to standard deduction) is amended—

(1) by striking "\$5,000" in subparagraph (A) and inserting "twice the dollar amount in ef-

fect under subparagraph (C) for the taxable year";

(2) by adding "or" at the end of subparagraph (B),

(3) by striking "in the case of" and all that follows in subparagraph (C) and inserting "in any other case.", and

(4) by striking subparagraph (D).

(b) INCREASE ALLOWED AS DEDUCTION IN DETERMINING MINIMUM TAX.—Subparagraph (E) of section 56(b)(1) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The preceding sentence shall not apply to so much of the standard deduction under subparagraph (A) of section 63(c)(2) as exceeds the amount which be such deduction but for the amendment made by section 2(a) of the Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000.

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subparagraph (B) of section 1(f)(6) of such Code is amended by striking "(other than with" and all that follows through "shall be applied" and inserting "(other than with respect to sections 63(c)(4) and 151(d)(4)(A)) shall be applied".

(2) Paragraph (4) of section 63(c) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following flush sentence:

"The preceding sentence shall not apply to the amount referred to in paragraph (2)(A).".

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2000.

SEC. 3. MARRIAGE PENALTY RELIEF FOR EARNED INCOME CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to credit for earned income) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) REDUCTION OF MARRIAGE PENALTY.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a joint return, the phase-out amount under this section shall be such amount (determined without regard to this paragraph) increased by \$2,500 (\$2,000 in the case of taxable years beginning during 2001).

"(B) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—In the case of any taxable year beginning in a calendar year after 2002, the \$2,500 amount contained in subparagraph (A) shall be increased by an amount equal to the product of—

"(i) such dollar amount, and

"(ii) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year in which the taxable year begins, determined by substituting 'calendar year 2001' for 'calendar year 1992' in subparagraph (B) thereof.

If any increase determined under the preceding sentence is not a multiple of \$50, such increase shall be rounded to the next lowest multiple of \$50."

(b) REPEAL OF REDUCTION OF REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS.—

(1) Subsection (d) of section 24 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (2) and redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2).

(2) Section 32 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (h).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 545, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and a Member opposed each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As I have pointed out earlier, there comes a time that we should be talking about legislation that does not just pass the House, but is signed into law. What we have done is to recognize that there is an inequity that exists when certain couples pay more taxes than they would pay if they were not married, and that is why we double the standard deduction to take care of this inequity.

We too would like to give more dramatic tax cuts, but not just to give \$200 billion out at a time, but to take a look and to see that the tax cuts are targeted, that they are fair and that they are equitable, but at the same time that we have fulfilled our responsibility to the Social Security, the Medicare system, and that we pay down some part of our Federal debt. This is so important when we think of the trillions of dollars that we are still in debt and the billions of dollars that we pay every year in interest.

Mr. Speaker, it would just seem to me that if we could come together and compromise, to make certain we take care of the problem without trying to make political statements, that the House of Representatives will be in better shape not as Republicans, not Democrats, but as lawmakers that are able to say that in the House, the people govern.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) claim the time in opposition?

Mr. WELLER. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to briefly respond to my good friend from New York, and I respect his efforts to offer a proposal addressing the marriage tax penalty, and I would point out that even though he means well, his proposal falls short.

Unfortunately, under the Democratic alternative, there is a very large group who suffer from the marriage tax penalty who are left out, essentially discriminated against under the Democratic alternative, and they are those who itemize their taxes. I would point out that those who primarily itemize their taxes are middle-class families, middle-class married couples who itemize their taxes because they give money to charity, their church or their synagogue, their temple, institutions of faith and charity, or they own a home. So if we think about it, we think about our constituents back home, married couples who, of course, suffer the marriage tax penalty and whether or not they own a home and, of course, I have thousands of married couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty and own a home. Under the Democrat proposal, they would be left out. They

would still have to tough out suffering the marriage tax penalty.

Let us remember, what is the average marriage tax penalty? The average marriage tax penalty is \$1,400. Here in Washington, \$1,400 is a drop in the bucket; it is nothing to those who want to spend money here in Washington. But for families back home in Illinois and the Southside of Chicago and the south suburbs where I have the privilege of representing, it is real money. Fourteen hundred dollars is a year's tuition at our community college, it is 3 months of day care at our local child care center, it is a washer and a dryer. Frankly, for someone who just had a baby such as Michelle and Shad Hallihan, two public schoolteachers from Joliet, if they are able to set that full marriage tax penalty every year, that is \$25,000 that they could set aside for their little child, Ben.

The bottom line is, if we want to help those who suffer the marriage tax penalty, we should help those who itemize taxes, such as those who give to charity, those who give to their church or their synagogue, as well as those who own a home.

So clearly, I rise in opposition to the Democrat alternative. The bipartisan effort which was supported by every House Republican, as well as 48 Democrats who broke ranks with their leadership, and again, I want to extend an invitation to those who did not support us this spring to join with us in an even greater bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Democratic substitute and in opposition to the base bill we have before us concerning tax relief.

I think what stuns me the most is how time and time again, the majority party proves its preference for clinging to a political sound bite that they hope will translate into Election Day results rather than actually seizing golden opportunities to accomplish something good for the American people.

How much more clear could it be that the vast majority of this body, as well as the Senate and the President, are eager to bring about genuine marriage tax relief for the average American family? We could come to the floor this afternoon and in very short order develop the compromise that would bring meaningful support and tax equity to millions of Americans. Sadly, we choose instead to continue a charade.

The other thing that amazes me is the level of inconsistency reflected from one message of the day to the next. On one day, this House loves to congratulate itself on its commitment

to debt reduction. The next day it is tax relief for small businesses. Another day, we swear our support for Social Security and Medicare, while doing nothing about Social Security and Medicare. Then, we promise a huge tax cut not only for middle- and low-income married couples, but we also sneak in wider tax brackets to benefit on this folks.

Now, I think most of these things are worthy, and, in fact, should be among our highest priorities. But it is just not possible to have 10 different number one priorities.

The blue dogs looked at the whole picture and realistically balanced each concern with the other, rather than pandering to the "cause du jour." We do not live in the political fairy land which believes in a Budgetary God-mother who can wave her magic wand and grant all of our expensive wishes.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the Democratic substitute on the floor today. It would accomplish what the name implies: genuine tax relief for couples who have been penalized by virtue of marriage. It corrects the flaw in the Republican bill, the AMT problem which would deny relief to nearly half of middle-income American families with two children by the time the bill would be fully phased in. It also endorses the idea that lower-income, married couples deserve relief by adjusting their earned income tax credit. Just as importantly, the Democratic substitute ensures that we will have resources for other priorities, such as debt reduction, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, estate tax relief, prescription drug coverage, and providing relief to our rural hospitals. The Democratic alternative and motion to recommit will guarantee that estate tax relief does not come at the expense of raiding the Medicare trust fund or taking away resources needed for Medicare prescription drug coverage.

Mr. Speaker, we have the opportunity to actually accomplish good today. Will we choose that path, or will we continue to choose rhetoric over solutions? Vote for the Democratic substitute and strongly oppose the base bill.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would say to my good friend from Texas that if he chooses to vote against our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he will vote to deny 114,000 married taxpayers in the 17th district of Texas, many of whom are ranchers and farmers, relief from the marriage tax penalty, and that is just not fair. I would extend an invitation to my good friend from Texas.

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

Mr. WELLER. Not this time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER)

is going to use my name and my district, I would ask the gentleman to yield.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I extend an invitation to the gentleman from Texas to join us in a bipartisan effort and to join the 48 Democrats who already voted for this legislation.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time is controlled by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER). The Chair will be glad to extend an opportunity shortly.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL), my good friend, and a leader in the effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I am sure if my colleagues or the public is listening in on this debate, they are kind of confused, because Republicans and Democrats are both coming to the floor and they are saying they want to provide marriage tax relief and both are saying that it is unfair.

Folks, what we need to understand is that the Democratic leadership plan could best be labeled "Marriage Penalty Tax Relief Light." The reason for that is that the Democrat leadership plan wants to create new discriminations in the code. They want to, for example, discriminate against stay-at-home moms or stay-at-home dads, or they want to discriminate against the people who own a home, but might have a mortgage against it, but provide tax relief for those people who own a home, but who would not have a mortgage against it.

Basically, what the Democrats are saying is that we will support your plan, if you will shift the marriage penalty from some families and impose it on other families.

Now, this bill is not just about tax relief, it is also about tax fairness. The Republican plan says, let us do this. Let us treat all families basically the same, if they have the same level of income.

Mr. Speaker, this Republican tax package started out as part of our budget. We said that we wanted to balance the budget and pay down the national debt. That was opposed by the Democrat leadership. We said we wanted to set aside 100 percent of Social Security in a lockbox. That was opposed by the Democrat leadership. We passed a prescription drug plan, \$40 billion for seniors, also opposed by the Democratic leadership, and now we have a tax plan, a tax relief plan for all American families, and that is opposed by the democratic leadership as well.

Mr. Speaker, 90,000 families in my district, and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) does not have to tell

me how many, because I know, are going to get an average of \$1,400 in tax relief from this bill, and they need it. I urge us to support the Republican plan, I urge us to oppose the Democrat substitute for tax relief light.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) to give him an opportunity at least to respond to the accusations made by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, in response to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), my good friend, it may be true, and I assume the gentleman's numbers are correct, but I also have 116,000 Social Security recipients in my district. In all due respect, the Republican tax bill and the entire other tax package will jeopardize the future of Social Security and Medicare. And just as the gentleman in his own district, he has 92,000 senior citizens that he is willing to put at risk for this continued charade that we have today.

With all due respect, we have to have a balanced package, and we cannot do all of those things which the gentleman from Illinois and others contend we can do. We must map some priority choices, and I resent the fact that the gentleman from Illinois would imply that what I am voting for today does not eliminate the marriage tax penalty in the 17th district because it does, and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) knows it.

□ 1330

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), the distinguished minority whip.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), for yielding time to me. I do not think I will need 4 minutes, but I appreciate the courtesy.

Mr. Speaker, I have 61,000 good reasons to reform the marriage penalty. That happens to be the number, 61,000, of couples in my district being stuck with the marriage penalty today. What they will tell us is that taxing marriage is not just unfair, it is irrational, so why on Earth would any couple be forced to pay a penalty for getting married?

But if we listen closely to what they are saying to us, they are saying something besides, do not tax my marriage. They are saying, yes, we want a tax cut, but once we get it we do not want to have to spend it paying for our parents' prescription medicine.

They are right. That is why we have offered an alternative. We are cutting the marriage penalty for the middle-class couples, I think a better alternative than what the Republicans have offered, because it is fair, it is more equitable, it deals with the concerns of working men and women in this country, working couples.

But we are saying, let us just not stop there. Let us invest in providing an affordable prescription drug benefit through Medicare. If we do this right, and the offer has been made by the President, if we do this right, we can provide tax relief for married couples and affordable medicine that older Americans deserve. Even more, we can do it without busting the budget. We can do it within the confines of fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, let us make sure that the tax relief that we provide goes to the couples who have earned it, not to the big drug companies who want it.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the substitute and vote against passage of this bill. When we get into conference, as we will, as we get into a final discussion of this issue as well as other tax issues, as well as the prescription medicine, prescription drug bill, we will be able to facilitate the needs of both of those very important constituencies that we represent, and we will be able to do it within the confines of a balanced budget, reducing our national debt, getting the debt gone so we can have some fiscal solvency in our national life, as well as making sure that Medicare and social security are solvent at the same time, and providing tax relief for the people who need it in this country.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I would remind my good friend, the minority whip, that the balanced budget we are working on this year not only locks away 100 percent for social security, but it pays off the national debt before 2013, the same year the President has set as a goal, and also sets aside \$40 billion for prescription drug coverage under Medicare, legislation we passed just a few short weeks ago.

I would also note to my good friend, the gentleman from Michigan, that if he chooses to vote against our bipartisan efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he will vote to deny 122,000 married taxpayers in the Tenth District in Michigan relief from the marriage penalty.

That is just not fair. Let us work together. I would extend an invitation to join with the 48 Democrats who broke with their leadership and voted in a bipartisan way to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON), a family advocate and leader in the effort to eliminate the marriage penalty.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me, and I commend him for solid work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support for the Republican bill and in opposition to the Democratic substitute. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is immoral to have a Tax Code that discour-

ages people from getting married. It is immoral to have a Tax Code that encourages people to live out of wedlock.

I saw it firsthand in my medical practice where I had couples coming in to see me as patients who were living outside the bonds of marriage, and when I would ask them why, the reason I heard most often was because their taxes would go up.

It particularly disturbed me to see it in senior citizens, who knew that they were setting a bad example for their children and their grandchildren, and they would most often cite to me that their taxes would go up \$1,000 to \$1,400 if they were to get married. Our tax relief package provides that necessary relief so we would not have a Tax Code encouraging people to live outside of wedlock.

The Democratic substitute will provide about \$210 worth of marriage tax penalty relief to those same couples, and it does not get the job done, in my opinion. We will not relieve this immoral feature of our Tax Code with their substitute, so that is why I am encouraging people to vote against it.

I would like to address head-on two of the big complaints that we are hearing today, one of which is that when we expand the 15 percent tax bracket for married couples filing jointly so that they do not suffer a marriage penalty, we provide tax relief to some married couples where the mother stays home and takes care of the kids.

I say, what is wrong with that? Is that not a middle-class tax cut? Did President Clinton not campaign in 1992 on welfare reform, balancing the budget, and a middle-class tax cut? What is wrong with providing those same families with a stay-at-home mom or stay-at-home dad some relief from their taxes?

Do not all the psychologists tell us that one of the best things to make sure kids do well in school and we have a lower incidence of juvenile delinquency is to have parents that are more involved? Should we not be encouraging parents to take more time to stay at home and be with their kids?

Another thing that I want to address head-on, and we heard this from one of the previous speakers, is that, oh, we are better off using this money for something else.

I heard that argument in 1997 when we passed the \$500 per child tax credit and the capital gains relief. We passed those, and all the naysayers said, well, the money will be gone. We will not see that money anymore. We could better use it to spend on this or that.

What happened? Well, revenue into the Treasury went up. Indeed, those same arguments went on in 1980 when Ronald Reagan lowered taxes. The same arguments went on in 1960 when Jack Kennedy lowered taxes. Every time we lower taxes, revenue into the Treasury goes up, it does not go down. It is not a zero sum game.

The parents who get that money are going to spend that money. They are going to create jobs, stimulate the economy. We pass this tax package and it will be the best way for us to make sure that Medicare is solvent and that we can have a prescription drug plan, because revenue into the Treasury will go up, it will not go down. It is not a zero sum game.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, here we go again. We passed a bill that would cost us, once fully phased in, \$50 billion a year to provide relief to 2 percent of taxpayers when we cut the estate tax. The 2 percent of the taxpayers happen to represent the 2 percent wealthiest taxpayers in America, and 98 percent of all American families would not participate in any of that tax cut. That will cost about \$50 billion once it is fully phased in.

This bill, which purports to provide relief for married couples, would cost about \$30 billion per year as well once it is fully phased in. When we start adding it up, we start to realize that if we do do all of these things, we will not have money to do some other things.

Like what? Well, we are fighting on this floor these days to try to figure out a way to provide seniors with a way to pay for not an estate tax, when we have a massive estate and we are trying to avoid taxes on it, but trying to help them pay for basic coverage for drugs that they need, prescription drugs that they need, just to continue a healthy lifestyle as seniors.

We cannot get there. We have not done that yet. Yet, we will not have the money to pay for the cost of helping seniors afford prescription drugs so they do not have to make the decision between their prescription drugs or their rent or their prescription drugs or their food because we are going to spend it on giving a tax cut in the estate tax repeal bill that will benefit only the 2 percent richest families in America.

We are now talking about doing a marriage tax penalty relief that will benefit in many cases families that are not even being penalized. About half of the benefits of this bill go to families that are not even being penalized, so-called penalized, under the marriage penalty because they are families where there are two income earners, and one of the income earners happens to be very high earning and the other very low earning, but because this is a bill that gives an across-the-board cut to anyone who is married, even those who are benefiting from the Tax Code, and that includes that working family

where there is one very high-earning spouse and the other a low-earning spouse, we are still going to give them a benefit, when in fact what we are trying to do is make sure there is no so-called penalty for any couple that decides to get married as compared to two people who stay single to live together.

How unfortunate that what we are planning to do is to provide tax cuts and not help seniors, unfortunate that we are looking to do tax cuts that benefit mostly wealthy folks and not help seniors, trying to do this and not protect young people who are trying to go on to school and perhaps make it on to college; do these tax cuts that help mostly wealthy individuals, and not help shore up our Armed Forces, where we have Armed Forces personnel, some of our men and women in uniform, who are on food stamp programs because we cannot give them enough money.

Why do we not start to do the right things first, get rid of those things that we need to do first, work on passing legislation that deals with the important parts of getting our seniors their benefits, getting our men and women in the Armed Forces the monies they need in their salaries, and then we go on to do the tax cuts that will benefit all people, not just the wealthy?

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would say to my good friend, the gentleman from California, that if he chooses to vote against our bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he will vote to deny 88,000 married taxpayers in the 30th District in California relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair.

Let us work together. I invite my friend from California to join the 48 Democrats who broke with their leadership and supported our bipartisan efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 3½ minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN), who has been a real leader on behalf of families.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, this is a good day. This is a good day for Americans because we are moving one day closer to eliminating the marriage tax penalty. It is a good day for working women.

I am a working woman. Many working women have a large portion of their salaries eaten up by this unfair tax that is placed upon them only because they are married.

Garth Brooks is one of my favorite entertainers of all time. The reason I started liking him was because he sings a song called "Shameless." I cannot help but think of Garth Brooks when I am sitting here listening to this debate today, because it seem to me that the speakers on the other side are shameless.

One on the other side said, "We should not be passing this tax cut because we should be reducing the debt." The others are not quite so shameless because they say, "We should not be passing this tax cut. We know better how to spend your money, so let us spend the money. We will spend it on other programs."

The truth is, if there is money in Washington, it will be spent. So our choice is not whether or not we pay down the debt or cut taxes. After the President vetoed the \$792 billion tax package last year that we passed, within 48 hours every single penny of that was spent.

So let us get honest, it is not between paying the debt and tax cuts, it is between giving people's money back to them, and it is their money, they know how to spend it best, or our arrogance, saying we know how to spend their money for them better than they do.

Over the past several weeks I have had the pleasure of attending weddings in my hometown of Casper, Wyoming. In both cases, as in the case with almost every young married couple these days, both the bride and the groom were starting bright futures in our Nation's work force. It is very satisfying to me to know that, along with my colleagues in the 106th Congress, I would have the opportunity to ensure that these young, ambitious, and hard-working couples would not have to shoulder an additional tax burden just because they took the marriage vows.

Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the 45,000 married couples in my home State of Wyoming, or the 25 million married couples across the United States that are currently subjected to that tax every year.

Marriage is a sacred institution, it is not a taxable institution. Today we will have the opportunity to vote on a measure that will level the playing field for hard-working husbands and wives.

This legislation also includes specific provisions to assist our Nation's lowest income families. Washington should not be in the business of penalizing families but in providing them with more freedom, more choice, and more opportunity. I urge my colleagues to vote against the substitute and for the bill.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, since I believe the previous speaker made at least one reference towards me, I would like to point out that the Constitution of the United States says that no money shall be drawn from the Treasury except by an appropriation by Congress. The Presidents cannot spend money that we do not allow them to.

If this Congress truly believes in reducing the debt, then we can put a line

in the budget saying x number of dollars will go towards reducing the American debt. That is what I am for. I hope Members will join me.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this whole concept about if we do not give the money back to the taxpayers that it is going to be spent by the Congress, I do not know what is in the water on the other side of the aisle, but the Republicans happen to be in charge of the Congress. It is almost like a serial killer saying, stop me before I kill again.

If they cannot control themselves in terms of this spending, then let the whole world know it before November, but do not say, we are going to waste the taxpayers' money. It will not be "we," it may be "thee."

□ 1345

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), my colleague and the ranking member of the committee for yielding me time that he has given to me.

Mr. Speaker, I have a record in support of reducing the tax burden for American families, one that I am very proud of here in this Congress. Today, I rise in support of Mr. RANGEL's Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Proposal.

The Rangel proposal provides greater marriage penalty tax relief and yet it maintains our budget discipline. For example, the proposal doubles the standard deduction for couples. It expands the Earned Income Tax Credit so vital to people who live in the area I represent.

It mitigates the harmful effects of the alternative minimum tax so that families with children will actually receive these benefits.

Under the Rangel proposal, a family with two children will receive almost \$300 a year in tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, I have worked in the financial markets and my colleagues on Wall Street tell me that the Republican bill will devour one-fourth of the projected on-budget surplus, monies that we really need to direct at Social Security, prescription drug coverage, Medicare, and, most importantly, to pay down the debt.

Marriage penalty relief needs to be addressed, but not with the Republicans bill, not this large, skewed to the wealthy bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the proposal of the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my good friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) that while she claims that the Democrat proposal pro-

vides more marriage tax relief than the bipartisan proposal, I would point out according to the Joint Committee on Taxation that the bipartisan proposal provides \$51 billion of marriage tax relief over 5 years, while the Democrat provides only \$38 billion; 38 is less than 51. It is simple math.

Mr. Speaker, I would also ask the previous speaker, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) to note that if she chooses to vote against our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, she will vote to deny 101,000 married taxpayers in the 46th District of California relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair. I want to extend that invitation for her to join the 48 House Democrats who broke ranks with their leadership in order to join in a bipartisan effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in strong support of H.R. 4810, the Marriage Tax Penalty Elimination Reconciliation Act.

This legislation increases the standard deduction for married couples to twice that of single filers. Moreover, it expands the 15 percent tax bracket to twice that for single taxpayers, phasing the increase in over a 6-year period. In all, the bill provides over a 10-year period more than \$182 billion in tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, this measure also provides an increase to the earned income tax credit, EITC, for working poor families, by raising by \$2,000 the amount of income a couple filing jointly may earn before the EITC benefits begin to phase out.

Currently, the Tax Code punishes married couples where both partners work by driving them into a higher tax bracket. Moreover, by prohibiting married couples from filing combined returns whereby each spouse is taxed using the same rate applicable to an unmarried individual, this Tax Code penalizes marriage and encourages couples to live together without any formal legal commitment to each other.

The CBO further found that most severely affected by the penalty were those couples with near equal salaries and those receiving the earned income tax credit.

This portion of the current Tax Code simply does not make sense. It discourages marriages. It is unfair to female taxpayers and disproportionately affects the working and middle-class populations who are struggling to make ends meet. For these reasons, this marriage tax needs to be repealed and, accordingly, I urge our colleagues to support this timely, appropriate legislation.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans consistently use this word bipartisan, bipartisan, bipartisan. To be bipartisan, it would mean that they have some type of an agreement with the Democrats, and certainly that would include the President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, to say that we have some Democrats and not enough to override a veto hardly seems to be a truly bipartisan effort.

It reminds me of the story that someone who asks what was the recipe of this very delicious horse and rabbit stew, and they said it was equal part rabbit and equal part horse; that is, you put in one horse and you put in one rabbit, and that is not exactly equal. Neither is having a handful of Democrats something that my colleagues can call bipartisan.

If my colleagues want to be bipartisan, let us sit down with the leadership of your side and our side and the President of the United States and get something that is not a political statement but something that we can go home so proud that we have something signed into law that brings relief and not something that makes people in Philadelphia feel good.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN).

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, we are not legislating today, we are choreographing for the upcoming Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. If we were legislating today, we would be doing as my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) just said, we would be sitting down in a bipartisan fashion and trying to figure out a way in which we could fix H.R. 4810, the bill before us today, that could get a true bipartisan vote for it, and would address some of the flaws in the underlying bill.

For instance, the underlying bill does nothing about the alternative minimum tax, and the gentleman knows very well that there are many American families who actually do suffer a marriage tax penalty but also have children, two or more children, I have two children, I assume I would be subject to this at some point, that they would hit the AMT, and they would not get any benefit, if any at all, of what is proposed in H.R. 4810, but the bill does not take care of it.

The Democratic substitute does, perhaps that is something my colleagues might want to pick up in their bill.

Second of all, the underlying bill goes far beyond the efforts to address the marriage tax penalty, because we know from studies, nonpartisan studies, that about 48 percent of Americans suffer from a marriage tax penalty, about 42 percent get a marriage bonus, and the underlying bill does not just try to address the marriage tax penalty, it gives an additional bonus to

those who are already getting a bonus under the Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, why is that under the manacle of the marriage tax penalty; that should be addressed, but the other side does not want to do it, instead they come up and say, oh, we want to take care of them too. That is not addressing what the underlying bill is; Democrats, in our bill, try to fix that.

Finally, the President has put a pretty good offer on the table. He said if we want to have a marriage tax penalty bill, he would be willing to work with us on that, but let us have a prescription drug plan under Medicare for senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I just spent a week back in my district having senior citizen town hall meetings. I heard time and time again about the rising costs of pharmaceuticals, the rising demand for prescription drugs among senior citizens and the fact that they cannot pay for it. And the Republicans have fought tooth and nail against bringing a bill. When they finally did bring a bill to the floor, it was a bill that would subsidize insurance companies to do something they did not want to do, quite frankly, under your standard, in fact, exceeding your standard of, quote, unquote, bipartisanship, there was bipartisan opposition to the Republican bill that they put on the floor.

The President has laid an offer on the table. Mr. ROTH, the gentleman from Delaware, in the other body, has put a bill on the floor that is like the President's bill and the Democratic bill to try and address this, but the Republican leadership in the House does not want to have anything to do with it because they do not want to legislate.

They want to go to Philadelphia, have a convention, say, look what the Democrats will not let us do, even though we are in the majority. If you give us a President and give us complete control of the Congress, look at what we will do.

We have already seen what my colleagues cannot do and what my colleagues do not want to do, and that is what this debate is about today.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would remind my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) that not only does our balanced budget this year provide \$40 billion for prescription drugs and that we passed it 2 weeks ago, but also point out when he talks about a portion of the relief here going to those who do not suffer the marriage tax penalty, the Democratic alternative, one half of the relief it provides goes to those who do not suffer the marriage tax penalty, so same goes.

Mr. Speaker, I would also point out to my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) that if he chooses to vote against this bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he

will vote to deny 122,000 married taxpayers in the 25th district of Texas relief from the marriage tax penalty, and that is just not fair.

I want to extend an invitation to my good friend from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) to join the 48 Democrats who broke with their leadership and supported our bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LEWIS), a good friend and distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, where did we get the marriage penalty tax? Where have we had the tax burden placed on our shoulders in this country, where the average family pays 40 percent of their income in local, State and Federal taxes, a big chunk that of the Federal taxes, where did we get all of these taxes?

When I came here to Congress in 1994, the Democrats had control of the Congress. In 1995, Republicans won the majority. And since 1995, we have not passed one tax increase, not one. We have cut taxes, but we have not passed a tax increase.

Where did we get all of these taxes that are burdening and pressing down on the American people today? One of the worst taxes is the marriage penalty tax. Where did we get them?

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats controlled, our friends on the left, controlled this House for 40 years. And also when I got here, we had a debt of \$5½ trillion, and the spending was going up. The deficits were \$200 billion.

I think they have never seen a tax that they did not like. I do not think they had ever seen an opportunity to spend more money that they did not like. They love taxes. They love big spending, and every time we try to do any tax cuts in this House, it is always a battle. It is always a fight. They never want to cut taxes. Why? Because, friends, there is not enough money in this world, I think, for them to spend.

There is not enough projects for them to think up to spend the taxpayers' money. Mr. Speaker, it is time to start cutting taxes.

I remember also in 1995 when we wanted to balance a budget, they fought us every inch of the way. I remember in 1995, when we wanted to cut taxes, they fought us every inch of the way, fought us all the way up until finally in 1997, the President finally signed into law a Balanced Budget Act that cut taxes. Actually, we balanced the budget. You know what? We have been paying down debt. We paid down \$140 billion since 1997 in paying down the debt.

Mr. Speaker, they said it could not be done. They said we could not balance the budget. They said we could not cut taxes, but it has been done. We have walled off Social Security.

Medicare was going to go bankrupt in 2 years, in 2 years, from 1995. We reformed Medicare. Finally, in 1997, the President signed it into law, and Medicare now is safe for 25 years, 25 years into the future.

□ 1400

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, well I hope the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LEWIS), when he is doing all that research about the Republican majority, would just check the records and find out that they have so tried to protect the vested special interests that they have added 1,543 pages to the Internal Revenue Code. That is not exactly pulling it up by the roots.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN).

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the action of the Republican leadership reminds me of a quote from Marie Antoinette, "Let them eat cake."

The American people are crying out to us to improve health care, education, housing, and Medicare; but this Republican Leadership keeps giving them what I call reverse Robin Hood, robbing from the working people and the poor people to give tax breaks to their friends.

As we debate the Marriage Penalty Act today, programs that serve millions of Americans are being ignored. The Older Americans Act, which provide meals, transportation, and service to our most vulnerable seniors, have yet to be reauthorized. The Ryan White Care Act, which provides counseling and medical treatments to those poorest children suffering with AIDS, has yet to be reauthorized. The Patients' Bill of Rights, which would finally give the American public some control over their health care, died in conference.

Tonight, thousands of American war heroes will go to bed on the streets, millions of American children will go to bed hungry, and millions of Americans will go to bed wondering how much longer their bodies can fight against AIDS, cancer, diabetes, lupus, and hundreds of other curable diseases.

As I speak, delegates to the International AIDS Conference are deciding how to deal with the 4.2 million South Africans infected with HIV while this Congress sticks its head in the sand. Unfortunately for those people, today on this House floor we are once again debating a tax bill that helps only a few and ignore the real problems we are facing as a Nation.

I can only hope that my colleagues do not suffer the same fate as Marie Antoinette. Maybe I hope they do.

Support fair marriage tax relief. Vote yes on the substitute, and let us get back to working for the people that sent us here to do it.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) that, if she chooses to vote against our bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, that she would be voting against 6 million senior citizens who benefit from the legislation to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. But specifically, she would be voting to deny 89,000 married taxpayers in the 3rd District of Florida relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair. I invite her to join with us in a bipartisan effort, rather, to join with the 48 House Democrats who broke with their leadership and voted in an effort, in a bipartisan way, to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA).

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding me this time. I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for his efforts in championing this issue in this Congress and really fighting on behalf of the American taxpayer. The gentleman should be commended for his efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to reject the substitute very simply because it is bad for the people I represent. Very often, there are those here who underestimate the people of this great country. They underestimate that the people of this country work hard, that they are out there toiling in the fields or working back home where I am proud to represent in Staten Island and Brooklyn every day, 5, 6, 7 days a week. When they send that check to Uncle Sam, it is okay to send a little bit back.

So for those who underestimate the American people, it is understandable how they are here justifying keeping more money here in Washington.

I and others who will vote for this legislation have a very simple principle, I think, in mind; and that is the people that we represent work too hard to be taken for granted, that when we have the opportunity to do so, like give them some of their money back, we should take advantage of it.

So when I go back home this weekend and I see the cop who is married to the fireman or the cop married to the teacher or the nurse married to the small business owner, and they ask me, How did it go this week?, I can say, Do you know what, we voted for legislation that will give you almost \$1,000 or \$1,500 more in your family's pocketbook. That means that you, you the people of this country will have the freedom to choose what to do with their money.

Folks right now are contemplating going on vacation. Some are saying, what if we had a few more bucks, we can go away for a week or 2 weeks this summer. Some of them cannot do it. Maybe with this money they can. They are going to send off their child to kin-

dergarten this September or to college. They are contemplating, where are we going to get the money from for Johnny or Lisa's education. Well, with this money, they can do it. Or they are contemplating buying some new clothes for their kids. Right now they cannot do it. With this money, they can.

There are those who are doing work on their house. They say, we would really like to put an extension on the back or put a deck on the backyard or perhaps get a swimming pool. Right now, they cannot do it. With this, they can.

So I feel very confident in knowing that the American people who have worked so hard to achieve this surplus, that too many in Washington are taking credit for, those individuals, the people that I represent, I can go back home, the constituents of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), he can go back home, and say, Do you know what folks, you have earned this.

Let us vote for true marriage tax penalty relief.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it could be that the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) is reading an entirely different bill than the Republicans have been really pushing, because any editorial people who understand the bill have called it a fraud.

Certainly this is not a question of giving the taxpayers back their money. We have a responsibility to pay down the Federal debt. When one does that, that is giving back money. To protect the Social Security system, that is a responsibility we have. God knows, if one goes to the town hall meetings and sees the people that work so hard to make this country as great as it is, and they cannot even afford to get prescription drugs, that is our responsibility.

So just because one wants to help the rich, one cannot hide behind it and say it is their money. America has an interest in making certain that all of our citizens are protected, and not just the wealthy few.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, since I came to Congress, I have been fighting to eliminate the marriage penalty. But we need to do it in a way that eliminates the marriage penalty's impact on the AMT. We need to do it in a way that provides the earned income tax credit for low-income married couples.

We need real marriage penalty relief. In fact, the Democratic substitute does more for those who deserve and need real marriage penalty relief than does the more expensive Republican plan. It is more generous, the Democratic substitute is, to those who pay a marriage penalty, and somewhat less generous to those who are getting a marriage bonus, actually paying less taxes because they are a married couple.

I want to reduce taxes on married couples now. The Democratic substitute has one tremendous advantage over the Republican bill. It will be signed into law. It is real legislation. In contrast, the Republican bill is a good press release for some. They know it will never be signed into law. It will never save a single married couple a single penny.

What we need to do is pass the Democratic substitute now. Then we can come back in September. By then, hopefully, that estate tax repeal bill will have been killed; and we will know at that point that we can afford to provide an additional increment of tax cuts to married couples while at the same time protecting Social Security and Medicare, paying down the debt, and providing a real prescription drug benefit for our seniors.

I hope the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) would join me in voting for the motion to recommit to protect the 92,571 seniors in his district that urgently need real pharmaceutical coverage. These seniors deserve his help. Join with us, not in providing those seniors with some phony plan that invites them to pay an arm and a leg for a phony Medigap policy. Join with us in providing the seniors of the gentleman's district and mine with real pharmaceutical drug efforts.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) that 6 million senior citizens will benefit from our bipartisan efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. I also note that, if he chooses to vote against our bipartisan efforts to eliminate marriage tax penalty, that he will deny 123,000 married taxpayers, including seniors in the 24th district of California relief from the marriage tax penalty. That is just not fair.

I invite the gentleman from California to join with us, join the 48 House Democrats who broke from their leadership and voted in a bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY).

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the base bill, H.R. 4810, and in opposition to the substitute that discriminates against many married folks, homeowners, and charities alike, and offer my congratulations to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for fighting this great fight.

In fact, this is one of the reasons why I ran for this office, because I really feel strongly that this Tax Code is unfair. It is voluminous. We cannot understand it. It needs to be reformed. It needs to be reduced to something that is simple and fair.

Let us talk about fairness, because that is what this base bill does. Now,

let us remember what the marriage penalty does. It taxes working families. It taxes when both parents have to work to support their families. That is fundamentally unfair that married people have to pay more in taxes than if they were single.

So what do we do? This bill treats all married folks equally. That is part of what fairness in tax codes are, not discriminating against some in favor of others, but treating them all fairly. That is what this legislation does in creating the standard deduction, doubling it for married folks, and increasing the gap in the 15 percent.

We are helping the people in most need, like good friends of mine that I grew up with, both work in not-good-paying jobs. They certainly are not the wealthy folks that we hear demagogued on the other side of the aisle, but just hard-working folks that work hard to have a good house in a decent neighborhood, supply a house and a roof for their children. Yet they will pay as much as \$1,400 more in taxes. Working class pay about \$1,100 more in taxes.

Now, that is money that they can use to spend quality time with their children, to take vacations that they do not take now because both are working so hard. I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this fair bill.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, life is about choices and priorities. Like a lot of Democrats, and I am not one of those 48 and I am proud of it, that supported the Republican plan, I do support eliminating the marriage tax penalty. But there is a reasonable way to do it. That is one choice we can make. That is a priority. It is not the only priority we have on this floor.

Sometimes I think the majority forgets that these days are not days in an end. We have to look at the whole picture. But one cannot have it both ways. One cannot increase the defense spending like they want to do, provide veterans benefits that we all want to do, to provide health care, do what we need to do about education, providing smaller class sizes and actually buildings that are safe, provide prescription drugs for our seniors and not a fake plan that just gives them an insurance policy, and really safeguard Medicare for the next generation. One cannot do all that and still promise the world in tax cuts.

One cannot do it without going back to the deficit spending that they all say they are against. One could go back to that spending that says we are going to spend \$200 billion more a year than what we are doing, than what we are taking in.

That is what is wrong with the Republican plan for marriage tax penalty. We need to eliminate it. We need to

eliminate it on a reasonable basis. But we need to make sure we continue our priorities as not just tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts.

Now that we have a budget in balance and actually a surplus, we need to make sure we take care of what the American people want us to do. Those same people that the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) said a while ago have a few bucks in their pocket, they want to take maybe an extra vacation. I will tell my colleagues what they would rather have is prescription drugs for their parent than maybe have that money in their pocket, because those are the choices we are making on this floor today.

We need to make sure that we provide education for those children that the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) wants to take care of, veterans health care, prescription drugs for seniors. Maybe they ought to listen to their Senator from Delaware who wants to make it part of Medicare. Medicare providers need assistance, Mr. Speaker. Life is about choices and priorities, and hopefully we will make the right one today.

□ 1415

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say to my good friend from Texas that if he chooses to vote against this bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, he will be voting to deny 92,000 married taxpayers in the 29th District of Texas relief from the marriage tax penalty, and that is just not fair.

And I want to extend an invitation to my good friend to join us and join those 48 House Democrats who broke with their leadership to vote in a bipartisan way to give marriage tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and for his great leadership on this issue.

I have been listening to the debate here over the last several minutes and it occurred to me we are hearing a lot of argument from the other side as to how we cannot do this because we have to pay down debt and we have to protect Social Security and Medicare and we have to keep the budget balanced, and I thought to myself, I was not here in the last 40 years but when the other side controlled this Congress, there was not any of those things that were accomplished.

We are now paying down debt, we have balanced the budget, we have walled off Social Security, and we intend to do it for Medicare. Those are all things that are happening as a result of the leadership of the Republican Congress.

I might also add that the marriage penalty when you listen to people talk

on this side about the rich, all those rich people out there, I do not know who they are talking about. I grew up in a small town in South Dakota of 650 people. I do not have any rich friends out there. We have a lot of people who are farmers or schoolteachers or small business people, and they need help paying for their kids' college education, paying the mortgage, all those expenses that are associated with their daily living. These people are not rich.

I want to give an example of that. I had a guy come into my office. He was making \$46,000 a year and his wife was making \$21,000 a year. They had two kids and were in their mid-30s. This year they paid \$1,950 more in taxes because they were married. That is flat wrong. One thing the people in South Dakota know, in those small towns and rural areas, those people who are not rich that I grew up with, they know what is unfair. This thing is unfair.

We are talking today about eliminating unfairness in the Tax Code and restoring some level of common sense so that people are treated equally under the Tax Code, so that those people who work hard in this country, those working families, are not penalized because they are married. We believe in fairness in South Dakota, and we believe in the institution of marriage in South Dakota.

The Democrat plan is not fair and it penalizes homeowners by allowing people who are itemizing not to benefit from this. We need to pass this legislation on behalf of the 75,000 couples in South Dakota who would benefit from it, and I urge the House to pass this and send it on.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just came from the Department of Health and Human Services building, where the Secretary was celebrating the 35th anniversary of Medicare, and it was a great moment to talk about when Medicare was signed. But one of the things that Secretary Shalala said, and most dramatically, was how we had to revise Medicare, make sure it was solvent, make sure it was there for our seniors and make sure there was a prescription drug benefit.

The problem with the Republican proposal is it is not necessarily such a bad idea, but it costs too much and it is a needless waste of the surplus that could be used for other things, most importantly to expand Medicare, to make sure that Social Security is available, to make sure we have a prescription drug plan.

What the Democrats are saying with the substitute is we are in favor of a marriage tax penalty change, we want to make sure people are not penalized, but let us do it in a targeted fiscally sound way. Let us make sure whatever

the surplus is, we do not spend a trillion dollars on different kinds of tax relief that is mainly going to the wealthy, and break it down in little parts like we are doing with this bill today, but rather make sure what we do first is to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are available and that Medicare is updated to include prescription drugs.

Now, what I am afraid is happening here today is that if we do not pass this substitute, and if we do not pass the motion to recommit that says that we are going to have a Medicare prescription drug benefit, then what will happen is that nothing is ever going to pass. The President already said he will not sign this Republican bill, that it spends too much money.

Well, the bottom line is if we want to get anything done here and we want to have this be a "do something" Congress rather than a "do-nothing" Congress, then why not go along with what the President has proposed. Basically what the President is saying, and what the motion to recommit says, is we will take even the proposal of the marriage tax penalty the Republicans put forth, even though it spends too much money, but we will even go along with it as long as we can have the prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

If the Republicans really want to get something done and not have this be a "do-nothing" Congress, they should go along with the substitute, go along with the motion to recommit, and then we will accomplish something.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say to my good friend from New Jersey that if he chooses to vote against our bipartisan effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty, that he will be voting to deny 128,000 married taxpayers in the Sixth District of New Jersey relief from the marriage tax penalty, and that is just not fair.

And I want to invite my good friend to join those 48 House Democrats who broke with their leadership and vote in a bipartisan way to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise in support of the base bill.

As one of my constituents said in a town meeting last month, "Marriage is penalty enough, we don't need the government penalizing marriage with this special marriage penalty tax." And yet the Internal Revenue Service pushes many couples, simply for being married, into a higher tax bracket, and generally this is targeted on the income of the second wage earner, typically the wife, at a much higher rate than if she were taxed only as an individual.

I want to give my colleagues an example. A young woman was in my of-

fice on Friday. In terms of her own tax return, it means several thousand dollars of additional taxes if she makes the decision to get married. Now, if we go with the substitute motion, then we discriminate against those who itemize. She owns a house. As a result of the payments, those are deductible, so she itemizes. Those who make a payment toward their church or synagogue as a contribution, those are tax deductible. So we would be discriminating against those individuals.

Let us treat everyone fairly. That is what the Marriage Tax Elimination Act does. It provides relief from the marriage tax penalty, a penalty that is keeping many parents from doing all they want for their children, a penalty that, frankly, is keeping many young couples from getting married because they would be pushed into that higher bracket.

Many times both parents have to work full time, when one of them may prefer to work part time and spend more time with the children. This bill will help. As I say, the average penalty, right now, is \$1,400 a year more in taxes than if they were single. Over a decade, as she pointed out to me, this young finance, that money could go toward a family car, a college education, a downpayment on a home.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of the Rangel substitute, which will assist more than 60,000 married families in my district.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there should be relief from the marriage tax penalty, but the way it's being done in this bill is wrong. Working Americans should not have to pay extra just because they want to get married. The 25 million American couples who are affected by this unfair tax should be able to use the money saved to purchase a new home, or for child care. Right now, if this bill were to pass, American married families would still be taxed at the same rate they were taxed before. The Rangel substitute fixes the flaws in this bill and enables America's married families to truly see their taxes reduced.

In my district alone this substitute will help well over 60,000 married families. It is my hope we will get past all of the politics and come together to provide a bill that truly provides fairness and equity to our American families.

I want to extend an invitation to my Republican friends on the other side of the aisle to join with us and make it a bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty in a fair and sensible way. Vote for the Rangel substitute and let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, my last Republican colleague said that marriage in itself is a penalty. I am married 22 years now, and it is not a penalty.

My colleagues, the Democrats have a real plan to eliminate the unfair marriage tax penalty within a budget that continues to pay down our debt, that protects Social Security and Medicare, and allows for a prescription drug benefit that is so important to seniors today who are being choked by the cost of prescription drugs today.

Our plan eliminates the marriage penalty, and it rewards work by strengthening the earned income tax credit. It fixes the marriage penalty, it keeps us on a course of fiscal discipline, that course that has brought us the most successful and the most dynamic economy in history. It is a responsible tax proposal and tax relief that the American public supports.

I support marriage penalty tax relief for the families of Connecticut. That is what our plan does and it does not risk our fiscal discipline. It provides \$76.4 billion in marriage tax penalty relief and an additional \$12.7 billion for working families who need the help that is provided by the earned income tax. It is a plan that ends the penalty on marriage, it rewards work, and it allows our economic boom to continue.

The Republican plan is too big. It is skewed toward the wealthiest Americans. As part of the \$800 billion Republican tax cut, it threatens Social Security and Medicare, it does not allow us to continue to pay down the debt that has brought interest rates down in this country, and it does not allow us to offer a prescription drug benefit through Medicare, which is the way in which it should go. It is not fair. It provides nearly two-thirds of its benefits to the wealthiest Americans and only about 41 cents a day in tax relief to families making less than \$50,000 a year.

It is not tax fairness. Support the Democratic alternative.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains in debate?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. WELLER. The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) has used his entire allotment?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. He has.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I would inform the previous speaker that if she chooses to vote against our bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, she will be voting to deny 110,000 married taxpayers in the third district of Connecticut relief from the marriage tax penalty.

I want to extend to my friend from Connecticut an invitation to join with us and to join with those 48 House Democrats who broke with their leadership to vote in a bipartisan way to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 545, the previous question is ordered on the bill

and on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 198, noes 228, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 390]

AYES—198

Abercrombie	Gutierrez	Neal
Ackerman	Hall (OH)	Oberstar
Allen	Hall (TX)	Obey
Andrews	Hastings (FL)	Olver
Baca	Hill (IN)	Ortiz
Baird	Hilliard	Owens
Baldacci	Hinchey	Pallone
Baldwin	Hinojosa	Pascarell
Barrett (WI)	Hoefl	Pastor
Becerra	Holden	Payne
Bentsen	Holt	Pelosi
Berkley	Hoolley	Peterson (MN)
Berman	Hoyer	Phelps
Bishop	Insee	Pickett
Blagojevich	Jackson (IL)	Pomeroy
Blumenauer	Jackson-Lee	Price (NC)
Bonior	(TX)	Rahall
Borski	Jefferson	Rangel
Boswell	John	Reyes
Boucher	Johnson, E. B.	Rivers
Boyd	Jones (OH)	Rodriguez
Brady (PA)	Kanjorski	Roemer
Brown (FL)	Kaptur	Rothman
Brown (OH)	Kennedy	Roybal-Allard
Capps	Kildee	Rush
Capuano	Kilpatrick	Sabo
Cardin	Kind (WI)	Sanchez
Clay	Kleczka	Sanders
Clayton	Klink	Sandlin
Clement	Kucinich	Sawyer
Clyburn	LaFalce	Schakowsky
Condit	Lampson	Scott
Conyers	Lantos	Serrano
Costello	Larson	Sherman
Coyne	Lee	Shows
Cramer	Levin	Sisisky
Crowley	Lewis (GA)	Skelton
Cummings	Lipinski	Slaughter
Davis (FL)	Lofgren	Foley
Davis (IL)	Lowey	Fossella
DeFazio	Luther	Fowler
DeGette	Maloney (CT)	Franks (NJ)
Delahunt	Maloney (NY)	Frelinghuysen
DeLauro	Markey	Galleghy
Deutsch	Mascara	Ganske
Dicks	Matsui	Strickland
Dingell	McCarthy (MO)	Stupak
Dixon	McCarthy (NY)	Tanner
Doggett	McDermott	Tauscher
Dooley	McGovern	Taylor (MS)
Doyle	McIntyre	Thompson (CA)
Edwards	McKinney	Thompson (MS)
Engel	Meehan	Thurman
Eshoo	Meek (FL)	Tierney
Etheridge	Meeks (NY)	Towns
Evans	Menendez	Turner
Farr	Millender	Udall (CO)
Fattah	McDonald	Udall (NM)
Filner	Miller, George	Velázquez
Ford	Minge	Watt (NC)
Frank (MA)	Mink	Waxman
Frost	Moakley	Weiner
Gejdenson	Mollohan	Wexler
Gephardt	Moore	Weygand
Gonzalez	Moran (VA)	Wise
Gordon	Nadler	Woolsey
Green (TX)	Napolitano	Wu
		Wynn

NOES—228

Aderholt	Gilman	Paul
Archer	Goode	Pease
Armey	Goodlatte	Peterson (PA)
Bachus	Goodling	Petri
Baker	Goss	Pickering
Ballenger	Graham	Pitts
Barcia	Granger	Pombo
Barr	Green (WI)	Porter
Barrett (NE)	Greenwood	Portman
Bartlett	Gutknecht	Pryce (OH)
Barton	Hansen	Quinn
Bass	Hastings (WA)	Radanovich
Bateman	Hayes	Ramstad
Bereuter	Hayworth	Regula
Berry	Hefley	Reynolds
Biggert	Herger	Riley
Bilbray	Hill (MT)	Rogan
Bilirakis	Hilleary	Rogers
Bliley	Hobson	Rohrabacher
Blunt	Hoekstra	Ros-Lehtinen
Boehlert	Horn	Roukema
Boehner	Hostettler	Royce
Bonilla	Houghton	Ryan (WI)
Bono	Hulshof	Ryun (KS)
Brady (TX)	Hunter	Salmon
Bryant	Hutchinson	Sanford
Burr	Hyde	Saxton
Burton	Isakson	Scarborough
Buyer	Istook	Schaffer
Callahan	Jenkins	Sensenbrenner
Calvert	Johnson (CT)	Sessions
Camp	Johnson, Sam	Shadegg
Canady	Jones (NC)	Shaw
Cannon	Kasich	Shays
Castle	Kelly	Sherwood
Chabot	King (NY)	Shimkus
Chambliss	Kingston	Shuster
Coble	Knollenberg	Simpson
Coburn	Kolbe	Skeen
Collins	Kuykendall	Smith (MI)
Combest	LaHood	Smith (NJ)
Cook	Largent	Smith (TX)
Cooksey	Latham	Souder
Cox	LaTourette	Spence
Crane	Lazio	Stearns
Cubin	Leach	Stump
Cunningham	Lewis (CA)	Sununu
Danner	Lewis (KY)	Sweeney
Davis (VA)	Linder	Talent
Deal	LoBiondo	Tancredo
DeLay	Lucas (KY)	Tauzin
DeMint	Lucas (OK)	Taylor (NC)
Diaz-Balart	Manullo	Terry
Dickey	Martinez	Thomas
Doolittle	McCollum	Thornberry
Dreier	McCreery	Thune
Duncan	McHugh	Tiahrt
Dunn	McInnis	Toomey
Ehlers	McIntosh	Traficant
Ehrlich	McKeon	Upton
Emerson	Metcalfe	Visclosky
English	Mica	Vitter
Everett	Miller (FL)	Walden
Ewing	Miller, Gary	Walsh
Fletcher	Moran (KS)	Wamp
Foley	Morella	Watkins
Fossella	Murtha	Watts (OK)
Fowler	Myrick	Weldon (FL)
Franks (NJ)	Nethercutt	Weldon (PA)
Frelinghuysen	Ney	Weller
Galleghy	Northup	Whitfield
Ganske	Norwood	Wicker
Gekas	Nussle	Wilson
Gibbons	Ose	Wolf
Gilchrest	Oxley	Young (AK)
Gillmor	Packard	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Campbell	Forbes	Vento
Carson	McNulty	Waters
Chenoweth-Hage	Smith (WA)	

□ 1450

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska and Mr. CANNON changed their vote from “aye” to “no.”

Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KANJORSKI and Mr. MOLLOHAN changed their vote from “no” to “aye.”

So the amendment in the nature of a substitute was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. RANGEL
Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. RANGEL. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. RANGEL moves to recommit the bill (H.R. 4810) to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill insert the following new section:

SEC. 5. TAX REDUCTIONS CONTINGENT ON MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT AND NO ON-BUDGET DEFICIT.

Subsection (f) of section 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as amended by section 3 of this Act) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(9) LIMITATION ON TAX REDUCTIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The benefits of paragraph (8) (and the benefits of sections 2 and 4 of the Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000) shall be allowed for taxable years beginning in any calendar year only if the Secretary of the Treasury certifies (before the close of such calendar year) that each of the conditions specified in subparagraph (B) are met with respect to such calendar year.

“(B) CONDITIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the conditions specified in this subparagraph for any calendar year are the following:

“(i) NO ON-BUDGET DEFICIT.—Allowing the tax benefits referred to in subparagraph (A) to be effective for taxable years beginning in the calendar year, when added to the cost of the coverage described in clause (ii), would not create or increase an on-budget deficit (determined by excluding the receipts and disbursements of part A of the medicare program) for the fiscal year beginning in such calendar year.

“(ii) PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE.—Coverage for outpatient prescription drugs is provided for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare Program on a voluntary basis at all times during the calendar year with—

“(I) the premium for such coverage being not more than \$25 per month (adjusted for cost increases after 2003) with low-income assistance for Medicare beneficiaries having incomes below 135 percent of the Federal poverty level and phasing out for such beneficiaries having incomes between 135 percent and 150 percent of the Federal poverty level,

“(II) no deductible required before such coverage is provided,

“(III) the amount of the benefit being at least 50 percent of prescription drug expenses not in excess of the coverage limit (as defined in subparagraph (C)),

“(IV) a \$4,000 limitation (adjusted for cost increases after 2003) on out-of-pocket prescription drug expenses of electing Medicare beneficiaries, and

“(V) all Medicare beneficiaries entitled to receive the discounts (otherwise available to large prescription drug purchasers) on their purchases of prescription drugs.

“(C) COVERAGE LIMIT.—The coverage limit is \$2,000 for calendar years 2003 and 2004, \$3,000 for calendar years 2005 and 2006, \$4,000 for calendar years 2007 and 2008, and \$5,000 for calendar year 2009 and thereafter (with adjustments for cost increases).

“(D) TRANSITION RULE.—For calendar years 2001 and 2002, the conditions specified in subparagraph (B)(ii) shall be treated as met if the Secretary of the Treasury certifies that coverage described in such subparagraph will be available as of January 1, 2003.”

Mr. RANGEL (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to recommit be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk today about bipartisanship. We do have unanimity on trying to remove an inequity that exists in the Tax Code. And we are fortunate that because the economy has been kinder to us that we can do something about it.

Bipartisanship to me means that the majority has to work with the minority and work with the President of the United States and not legislate and pass laws that they know that are going to be vetoed, but, rather, see how we can come together as Democrats and Republicans and do what is not best for our respective conventions but what is good for the people of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, to explain this more fully, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the distinguished minority leader, to close out the motion to recommit with a suggestion that would allow us to make law and not politics.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that today's debate on this bill is a chance for us to begin to talk about a compromise that will achieve a lot of the ends that our friends have on the other side of the aisle and a lot of the ends and goals that people on our side of the aisle have.

Our discomfort with their version of the bill is not about the fact that they are trying to deal with the marriage penalty. I think the vast majority of Members believe that we need to do something to fix this problem of the marriage penalty. We think there is a way to do this that costs a good deal less than the bill that they are presenting today. We say that with all respect and humility. We think there is a way to work our way to a common conclusion that will really attack this problem of the marriage penalty and

cost about half, maybe a little less than half of what their bill costs.

We think that is important because at the end of this year, we are likely to be talking about a number of tax measures, some of which we have already voted on, others which we will vote on in the next weeks. The President sent to us, when he did his reestimate of the budget, this pie chart. This pie chart sets out \$500 billion of the surplus in a reserve to frankly be decided by the next Congress and Congresses after that. We think that makes sense. But this budget also puts money into Medicare solvency and debt reduction, money into a Medicare prescription drug benefit plan, a lot like the one we presented 2 weeks ago, and \$263 billion for targeted tax cuts.

If we do as much as they are asking to do today for the marriage penalty alone, it means other good tax cut ideas that there is a lot of support for will fall by the wayside. So we believe it is important that we try to work together to come to a series of ideas for tax cuts that we all can support that will fit within this budgetary \$263 billion. Now, we further think their bill today is not giving the relief on the marriage penalty that we really need and that we hope that we can offer to people.

Finally, the President said 2 weeks ago that he understands the requirement and the desire on the part of Republicans to do something about the marriage penalty. He said he is more than happy to sit down and try to work out a marriage penalty reduction that he would sign this year. I think the same holds true of other tax cut ideas that have been presented. But in return for that, he wants to also be able to sit down to be able to get a Medicare prescription drug benefit plan that we all can agree with as part of settling these important issues.

Let me finally say that if you are suffering from the marriage penalty, you want relief now, this year, not next year. You do not want just a veto of a bill that results in nothing. If you are on Medicare prescription drugs, and you are having trouble paying for your prescriptions, you want relief now, this year, not next year.

My mother is 92 years old. She is doing great by the grace of God, but every time I go home, she says, What are you all doing on that Medicare prescription drug plan? I may not be alive next year.

I want to be able to tell her, We're going to get something done this year.

Let us work together. Vote for this motion to recommit. Let us work together to get this done for the American people.

□ 1500

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Does the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) claim the time in opposition to the motion to recommit?

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my good friend, the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means, as well as the minority leader, I want to just say this, and that is today we are here to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. That is our goal today.

My friends on the other side of the aisle, they have offered reasons to vote against eliminating the marriage tax penalty, and let me give one pretty basic good reason to vote against the motion to recommit.

The motion to recommit, as designed by my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle, is designed to enact zero marriage penalty relief. The Joint Tax Committee, which is a bipartisan committee, has scored this as providing zero marriage tax relief.

With all due respect, I would point out that just 2 weeks ago this House enacted a good plan, a \$40 billion plan, to provide prescription drug coverage for every senior who wants to have that coverage. That is a great accomplishment. My hope is we could do it in a bipartisan way. So my recommendation, of course, and I rise in opposition, is to vote to reject the motion to recommit.

Let us talk about the real issue that is before us today, and that issue is a basic goal of this Congress, and that is to bring about tax fairness. I represent a very diverse district, city, suburbs and country on the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs.

As I talk with my constituents, they often talk about their taxes. They complain not only are their taxes too high, but they are unfair and they are too complicated. They often ask a pretty basic question, and that is, is it right, is it fair, that under our Tax Code, that a married working couple, husband and wife, a two-income household, pay higher taxes just because they are married?

Mr. Speaker, they often ask the question, is it right, is it fair, that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more in higher taxes? Often I have come to this well, and I have talked about who benefits from our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

The district I represent, 60,000 seniors, as well as working families, will benefit. I also want to introduce Shad and Michelle Hallihan. Many of you have seen Shad and Michelle Hallihan in their wedding photo. Well, that was about the time we introduced the legislation, and because of the delay in enacting this into law, Shad and Michelle Hallihan have since had a baby, and little Ben is now their pride and joy.

I would point out that for Shad and Michelle Hallihan, \$1,400 is real money.

In Joliet, Illinois, for two public school teachers by the name of Shad and Michelle Hallihan, \$1,400 is a year's tuition at a community college, 3 months of day care, it is a washer and a dryer, and, frankly, if we enact this into law over the next 17 years, they will be able to set aside almost \$25,000 if they put that marriage tax penalty into little Ben's college fund. It is real money for real people.

I would point out that the Democratic motion to recommit denies marriage tax relief for good people like Shad and Michelle Hallihan. But our bipartisan proposal, identical to the proposal that received overwhelming bipartisan support earlier this year, will help working married couples like Michelle and Shad.

We help those who do not itemize by doubling the standard deduction to twice that for joint filers for single filers. We help those who itemize, people who own homes and give money to church and charity, by widening the 15 percent tax bracket. We help the working poor by providing marriage tax relief for those who participate in the earned income tax credit, and we also protect those who need the child tax credit from the alternative minimum tax.

The bottom line is we help every one of the 25 million married working couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty. And what is it all about? Today it is all about fairness, fairness for these 25 million married working couplings.

I want to extend an invitation to my friend on the other side of the aisle. February, when we passed this legislation, 48 House Democrats joined with every Member of the House to pass this legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. I want to extend that invitation again today, to vote no on this motion to recommit, which provides zero marriage tax relief, and to vote yes on a bipartisan proposal that will.

We all know the President has changed his mind before. My hope is the President will join with us in a bipartisan proposal to eliminate the marriage tax penalty by signing this legislation into law when he receives it within the next 2 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Members, please vote no on the motion to recommit, please vote aye on our efforts, our bipartisan efforts, to eliminate the marriage tax penalty once and for all.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion to recommit the bill.

I oppose the Republican so-called Marriage Penalty Relief Act because it fails to appropriately address the problem for which it is named. Instead of addressing the needs of families who pay an actual tax penalty for being married, this bill provides broad tax relief to a host of families who are actually already enjoying a marriage bonus. It makes no sense to squander \$182 billion of our limited federal resources throwing money away in this manner. There are far more important federal priorities.

It is because of these other priorities that I rise in support of the Democratic motion to recommit. Under our motion to recommit, we would begrudgingly accept the Republican Marriage Penalty legislation, but the tax reductions would be prohibited from going into effect until a real Medicare prescription drug benefit was enacted.

Seniors are in vital need of a Medicare prescription drug benefit and the Republican sham bill passed here in the House of Representatives last month is no solution. Seniors aren't looking for the opportunity to be overcharged and under-provided for in another private insurance plan as would happen under the Republican bill.

Seniors want a drug benefit that is treated just like all of the rest of their benefits—as part of the Medicare program. They want a benefit that cannot be taken away, that will not vary if you live in a rural or urban area, that will not change if you live on the West Coast or in the mid-Atlantic states. It must offer a guaranteed benefit package and have an affordable premium and cost-sharing structure.

In order to achieve the standard of a real drug benefit, the Medicare bill must include: A voluntary outpatient prescription drug benefit; a premium of not more than \$25 (adjusted for cost increases), with low-income assistance; no deductible for those benefits; the benefit must cover 50% of the cost up to \$2,000 growing to \$5,000 over time; a \$4,000 out-of-pocket spending limit after which all costs would be covered by the government, and all Medicare beneficiaries would receive volume discounts.

Because providing seniors with a Medicare prescription drug benefit is such a vital national priority and because the Republican-led Congress clearly has no interest in passing a bill that meets the standards described above, we are willing to go along with this bloated marriage penalty tax bill.

Unfortunately, I know that our motion to recommit will fail. Republicans would much rather continue pouring money into the pockets of their wealthy benefactors than address the real needs of America's seniors and their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage.

The Chair announces that he will reduce to 5 minutes a vote by electronic device, if ordered, on one motion to suspend the rules on which further proceedings de novo were postponed yesterday, which will immediately follow the vote on passage of H.R. 4810.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 197, noes 230, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 391]

AYES—197

Abercrombie	Gordon	Napolitano
Ackerman	Green (TX)	Neal
Allen	Gutierrez	Oberstar
Andrews	Hall (OH)	Obey
Baca	Hall (TX)	Olver
Baird	Hastings (FL)	Ortiz
Baldacci	Hilliard	Owens
Baldwin	Hinchev	Pallone
Barrett (WI)	Hinojosa	Pascarell
Becerra	Hoefel	Pastor
Bentsen	Holden	Payne
Berkley	Holt	Pelosi
Berman	Hoolley	Phelps
Berry	Hoyer	Pickett
Bishop	Jackson (IL)	Pomeroy
Blagojevich	Jackson-Lee	Price (NC)
Blumenauer	(TX)	Rahall
Bonior	Jefferson	Rangel
Borski	John	Reyes
Boswell	Johnson, E. B.	Rivers
Boucher	Jones (OH)	Rodriguez
Boyd	Kanjorski	Roemer
Brady (PA)	Kaptur	Rothman
Brown (FL)	Kennedy	Roybal-Allard
Brown (OH)	Kildee	Rush
Capps	Kilpatrick	Sanchez
Capuano	Kind (WI)	Sanders
Cardin	Kleczka	Sandlin
Clay	Klink	Sawyer
Clayton	Kucinich	Schakowsky
Clement	LaFalce	Scott
Clyburn	Lampson	Serrano
Condit	Lantos	Sherman
Conyers	Larson	Shows
Costello	Lee	Siskiy
Coyne	Levin	Skelton
Cramer	Lewis (GA)	Slaughter
Crowley	Lipinski	Snyder
Cummings	Lofgren	Spratt
Danner	Lowey	Stabenow
Davis (FL)	Lucas (KY)	Stark
Davis (IL)	Luther	Strickland
DeFazio	Maloney (CT)	Stupak
DeGette	Maloney (NY)	Tanner
Delahunt	Markey	Tauscher
DeLauro	Mascara	Thompson (CA)
Deutsch	Matsui	Thompson (MS)
Dicks	McCarthy (MO)	Thurman
Dingell	McCarthy (NY)	Tierney
Dixon	McDermott	Towns
Doggett	McGovern	Turner
Dooley	McIntyre	Udall (CO)
Doyle	McKinney	Udall (NM)
Edwards	Meehan	Velázquez
Engel	Meek (FL)	Vislosky
Eshoo	Meeks (NY)	Waters
Etheridge	Menendez	Watt (NC)
Evans	Millerder-	Waxman
Farr	McDonald	Weiner
Fattah	Miller, George	Wexler
Filner	Minge	Weygand
Ford	Mink	Wise
Frank (MA)	Moakley	Woolsey
Frost	Mollohan	Wu
Gejdenson	Moore	Wynn
Gephardt	Moran (VA)	
Gonzalez	Nadler	

NOES—230

Aderholt	Boehlert	Collins
Archer	Boehner	Combest
Armey	Bonilla	Cook
Bachus	Bono	Cooksey
Baker	Brady (TX)	Cox
Ballenger	Bryant	Crane
Barcia	Burr	Cubin
Barr	Burton	Cunningham
Barrett (NE)	Buyer	Davis (VA)
Bartlett	Callahan	Deal
Barton	Calvert	DeLay
Bass	Camp	DeMint
Bateman	Canady	Diaz-Balart
Bereuter	Cannon	Dickey
Biggert	Castle	Doolittle
Bilbray	Chabot	Dreier
Bilirakis	Chambliss	Duncan
Bliley	Coble	Dunn
Blunt	Coburn	Ehlers

Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Everett
Ewing
Fletcher
Foley
Fossella
Fowler
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Ganske
Gekas
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Goode
Goodlatte
Goodling
Goss
Graham
Granger
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Gutknecht
Hansen
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Herger
Hill (IN)
Hill (MT)
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hulshof
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inslee
Isakson
Istook
Jenkins
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Kasich
Kelly
King (NY)
Kingston
Knollenberg
Kolbe

NOT VOTING—7

Campbell Forbes Vento
Carson McNulty
Chenoweth-Hage Smith (WA)

□ 1524

Mr. TANCREDO changed his vote from "aye" to "no."

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 269, noes 159, not voting 7, as follows:

Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salmon
Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaffer
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Skeen
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Spence
Stearns
Stenholm
Stump
Sununu
Sweeney
Talent
Tancredo
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Thune
Tiahrt
Toomey
Traficant
Upton
Vitter
Walden
Walsh
Wamp
Watkins
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

[Roll No. 392]
AYES—269
Aderholt
Archer
Army
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Ballenger
Barcia
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Bereuter
Berkley
Biggert
Billbray
Bilirakis
Bishop
Blagojevich
Bliley
Blunt
Boehler
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Boswell
Brady (TX)
Bryant
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Canady
Cannon
Capps
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Clement
Clyburn
Coble
Coburn
Collins
Combest
Condit
Cook
Cooksey
Costello
Cox
Cramer
Crane
Cubin
Cunningham
Danner
Davis (VA)
Deal
DeLay
DeMint
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Doolittle
Doyle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Etheridge
Everett
Ewing
Fletcher
Foley
Fossella
Fowler
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Ganske
Gekas
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Goode

[Roll No. 392]

AYES—269

Goodlatte
Goodling
Gordon
Goss
Graham
Granger
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Gutknecht
Hall (TX)
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Herger
Hill (MT)
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holt
Hoolley
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hulshof
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inslee
Isakson
Istook
Jenkins
John
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Kasich
King (NY)
Kingston
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuykendall
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lucas (KY)
Lucas (OK)
Maloney (CT)
Manzullo
Martinez
Mascara
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McCrery
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
Metcalf
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Mink
Moore
Moran (KS)
Morella
Myrick
Nethercutt
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nussle
Oxley
Packard
Pascrell
Paul

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baldacci
Baldwin
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Bentsen
Berman
Berry
Blumenauer
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Capuano
Cardin
Clay
Clayton
Conyers
Coyne
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Edwards
Engel
Eshoo
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Finer
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Gonzalez
Green (TX)

NOES—159

Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Hastings (FL)
Hill (IN)
Hilliard
Hinche
Hinojosa
Hoeffel
Holden
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee
(TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind (WI)
Klecza
Klink
Kucinich
Lafalce
Lampson
Lantos
Larson
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lofgren
Lowe
Luther
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McDermott
McGovern
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Millender-
McDonald
Miller, George
Minge
Moakley
Mollohan
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler

NOT VOTING—7

Campbell Forbes Vento
Carson McNulty
Chenoweth-Hage Smith (WA)

□ 1532

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SAMUEL H. LACY, SR. POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question de novo of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 4447.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. McHUGH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4447.

The question was taken.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.