

to ignore it in September? That is all I am asking.

What we are doing today is just showing good intentions, and that is what it is all about. We could vote for eliminating disease. We could vote against war and for peace. And that is good and I will vote with the gentleman. But I just do not want people to believe that what we are doing today means that we are under any legislative obligation to fulfill what the gentleman is stating.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to answer the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill. Now, the gentleman has a long and very stellar career in this Congress and I know the gentleman knows full well the difference between a resolution, a proclamation, and a bill. Because a bill can become a law.

That law can be changed, the gentleman is correct, but it is a law and it is a law that must be followed by the Treasury. It is a law that must be followed by the Congress. It is a law that must be followed by the President unless or until that law is changed. And that law can be changed in the fall, the gentleman is correct, but it will be a change of law and a change of priority. It will be the juxtaposition between spending and Social Security.

If they want to spend more money, they can. If the Congress wants to spend more money, it can. Certainly it can raise taxes. It can dip into Social Security. It can decide not to do any debt reduction. But we are deciding today that that choice must be made instead of waiting, as the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) pointed out, until the very end of the day on the very last legislative opportunity to see if there is any money left over.

We are saying it is a priority. And interestingly enough, not only are the Republican majority joining together today to say it is a priority but last month 419 Members of this Congress, including the very respected gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and the very respected gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), joined with us in that tact.

Now, I understand that there might be some ridicule on their side because they have never been in a position to reduce debt. We believe it is an important priority. We appreciate the fact that the gentleman joined with us in this regard, and we would hope that they would be slightly more enthusiastic as a look at a possible third debt reduction bill in the fall.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I think that we all have to be in support of this once the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) ac-

knowledges that the same Congress that makes the decision today as to what it is going to attribute to reducing the deficit is the same Congress that is going to come back and say what they think is in the national interest.

It defies reason and common sense why the majority party can come to this House and tell the American people and our colleagues that they do not trust their ability to control spending. But, in order to do this, they have to pass a law to prevent them from doing what they say they do not want to do.

We are going to help them all that we can and we are going to help to reduce the Federal debt. We are going to try to stop them from these outlandish tax cuts that they tried to do in the last session and was vetoed.

When that \$792 billion tax cut was vetoed, the majority did not even try to come together and try to override the veto because they never expected that tax cut to pass.

As a matter of fact, I think the good wisdom of the Republicans in this House is that they do not expect any of these tax cuts to become law. They do not even bring them to the floor unless they promise to veto. And they are never discussed, anyway. And so, if they want to call this the Republicans' bill to control itself from excessive spending, why would we not be able to support them in that effort?

□ 1645

You are the majority. You are in charge. You set the agenda. You set the appropriations bills at the spending level. You come in and ask for your tax cuts. And then in the middle of the night you smell a surplus that we never had before in all of the Reagan-Bush years. We never really had a chance under Republican Presidents. Even though we had the majority, we did not know what a surplus was until we got President Clinton and Vice President Gore. So this is new to us. And so it is obviously new to you, as well.

We are enjoying a surplus, but we still have this tremendous, close-to-\$6 trillion national debt, and it has to be reduced and it has to be reduced by discipline. I would suggest, since it is too late in this session, that maybe the first thing that we should do next year is that Republicans and Democrats set aside their party label and start to talk with each other as to what is in the best interests of the people of the United States. Maybe then we will not have Republican bills and Democratic bills saying, Please stop us before we spend some more. Maybe we can have bipartisan bills that will be able to show the American people that we are serious.

And so in an effort to show you my sincerity, I stand here tonight and join with you and say, let us do this. Why?

Because it is the right thing to do. And with it I pray that you in the majority can control your urge to spend unnecessarily and depend on our support.

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

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I understand that the minority will try and stop us to reduce the taxes on the American people and to reform those taxes, but we will try and stop you from dipping into the Social Security trust fund yet again, the Medicare trust fund yet again, to add to our debt, to add to our deficits as you did for 40 years. We will and we will succeed.

But there is one factor that you left out and that is the fact that the Congress is not the only one in control. Every eighth grade government student knows that the President has to sign the law. I hope he signs this law; and I hope we reduce the debt for my kids, for your kids and grandkids and for all of America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4866, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1710

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) at 5 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4810. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 103(a)(1) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2001.