

deserves the basic human right of being able to get appropriate medical care and an English-speaking doctor to review the results.

LEGISLATIVE LIMBO

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, we just had an exchange on the floor where the minority whip asked some questions about what the schedule was. I was trying to get clarification as well because I understand we are here on a daily CR at the behest of the President, who suggested we stay here on a 24-hour basis to get our work done. Now in the last 12 hours, I understand Mr. DASCHLE and Mr. GEPHARDT met with Mr. Podesta from the White House and suggested that we have a 14-day CR that has been taken up by the Senate and passed and the Senate has left town.

Now, we did not negotiate that. We did not request it. We did not ask for it. We are here working, and we will continue to work. But I would like somebody to come to the floor today and make the point whether in fact Mr. GEPHARDT and others negotiated a 14-day CR with Mr. LOTT, the majority leader on the Senate side, so we can figure out are we working this weekend, are we going to do the people's work, or are we taking a 14-day break to campaign on behalf of the minority.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

GOVERNOR BUSH MISSES MARK ON COUNTRY PROSPERITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, in a few days a great fiscal debate will be decided by the people of this country. Before they make that decision, we need to focus on some of the statements of the Governor of Texas as he tells us about his fiscal plan.

Mr. Speaker, we are told by the Governor of Texas that every American who pays taxes deserves tax relief and will get tax relief under his plan. The facts are clearly otherwise and the Governor of Texas knows better. He knows that under his plan some 15 million Americans who pay FICA tax and have it taken from their wages every day are going to get not a penny of tax

relief while at the same time the Governor of Texas will provide nearly half his total tax relief package to those who already are in the best-off 1 percent of American families. Not one penny for those taxpayers who work in nursing homes, who clean our buildings and who wash our cars; yet hundreds of billions of dollars for the wealthiest 1 percent.

We are told, also, by the Governor of Texas, and I think he does this for political reasons, that policy here in Washington is not in any way responsible for our current prosperity. Now, I can understand why his consultants, his political consultants, would tell him to try to argue to the American people that the last 8 years of the Clinton-Gore administration is just a coincidence with our 8 years of economic prosperity. But in doing so, he lays the foundation for very dangerous policies. You see, Mr. Speaker, if fiscal responsibility here in Washington did not lead to prosperity in the country, then we are free here in Washington to be as fiscally irresponsible as we like without eliminating or curtailing that prosperity.

The fact is that while the lion's share of the credit goes to the hard-working American people and their ingenuity and their dedication, they were working hard and they were showing ingenuity back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and this country was not prosperous because we did not have the fiscal responsibility brought to this town by the Clinton-Gore administration.

When the Governor of Texas tells us that what government does does not matter, then he lays the foundation for the fiscally irresponsible tax cuts that we cannot afford.

Finally, the Governor of Texas claims that he will provide over 10 years only \$223 billion of tax relief to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. He reaches this through what can only be called false fiscal facts and fuzzy figures. He does this by ignoring his promise, often repeated, to repeal the estate tax. When he repeals the estate tax, which he has promised to do, then the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans will receive over \$700 billion every decade in tax relief. The effect then is to provide nearly half the tax relief to the wealthiest 1 percent and to provide them with more tax relief than the total the Governor of Texas would have us spend on health care, shoring up Medicare, providing a greater level of readiness for our military forces, and improving our educational system. More for 1 percent than for those four top national priorities.

Mr. Speaker, the choice before America is clear. On the one hand, we can improve our schools, strengthen our military, provide a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, safeguard Social Security, pay off the national debt, and provide for continued prosperity;

or on the other hand, we can opt for nearly \$700 billion, probably over \$700 billion just for the wealthiest 1 percent. I know that we have got to make a responsible decision. I hope when we do so, we recognize that choosing a President is not a popularity contest. It is, rather, choosing a plan by which the economy of this country will be managed over the next 4 years.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, beginning on April 12, for the 21 weeks that the House has been in session, I have read 22 letters from MI seniors who desperately need help with their high prescription drug costs.

In that time, I have been pushing consistently for prescription drug coverage under Medicare. Our time is nearly up, and we still have not passed this important legislation.

Looking back through the 22 letters that I have read on the House floor, I am reminded of why it is so important to modernize Medicare and provide prescription drug coverage for seniors. I would like to share excerpts from these letters to remind my colleagues why we must enact a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

From Mary Hudson of Fenton: "Last summer, I went to a doctor . . . and was given a prescription costing \$44—which I got filled. But the other was \$90—which I would not [fill]. Who can afford these prices and pay other bills too?"

From Ethel Corn of Marquette: "Here is our prescription bill for what we can afford—and you can see I don't get all of mine."

Jackie Billion of Lansing: "Quite often I have to decide whether I get some of my prescriptions or eat. I hope and pray that seniors will receive prescription coverage."

From Louise Jarnac of Cheboygan: "The last time I got my prescription it was \$99.99 . . . this time it was \$103.49. Most of the time I can't afford it and go without until I can get it again."

BUDGET BATTLE CONTINUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it is 4:12 p.m., the House has finished its regular business for the day, the government does not yet have a budget for the fiscal year which began 1 month ago today, and no meetings are scheduled.

When the Republican leader who stood up on that side to represent the schedule to us on the minority earlier was asked, okay, where are we negotiating?, he said, well, he would try and get back to us with a room number on that. That was after they attempted to castigate this side, castigate the President and others for not negotiating in