

progress toward closing this significant pay gap between military and civilian pay levels last year, more must be done, and this legislation helps address this reality.”

I further quote Charles Calkins. He says, “Petty officers and noncommissioned officers are the backbone of the military services. They deserve fair compensation.”

Mr. Speaker, I also want to read from the transcript of the television program 20/20, from June 25 of 1999. The show addresses the subject of our military families on food stamps, and the title of the show was “Front Lines, Food Lines.” The reporter was Tom Jarriel.

Tom Jarriel talked to a number of military families during this interview who are struggling to make ends meet. I want to share with the Congress part of the transcript from this show.

I first start by quoting Tom Jarriel: “Captain Elliott Bloxom presents the Pentagon’s point of view that while some families are struggling, they are the exception and not the rule.”

I further quote Tom Jarriel: “We’re talking to people who cannot buy an ice cream for their kids when the truck passes outside their home.”

Elliott Bloxom says, and I quote him, “These junior people, we feel their entry wage levels are adequate. They are very competitive with the private sector. We find that there are other complicating factors—oftentimes a larger-than-average size family—which places an additional burden on that service member to manage their finances accordingly.”

Now I go back to Tom Jarriel. Tom Jarriel says, “Still, the Pentagon has pushed for an overall 4.8 percent pay raise, up to 10 percent for selected troops—a measure now being considered by Congress. And this would be the largest military pay raise in almost 20 years.”

Now back to Elliott Bloxom: “We believe that that amount of money, in addition to other services that we provide, should go a long way towards solving the economic problems of some of our most junior people.”

Tom Jarriel: “Not so says Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER,” one of our colleagues on the floor of the House. “DUNCAN HUNTER says, ‘I think our military people have been betrayed. The pay raise will be 4.8 percent. The services are 13.5 percent below the private sector. We need at least another 8 percent pay increase to close that pay gap.’”

Tom Jarriel: “As an 18-year member of the House Armed Services Committee, HUNTER’s district includes many of those on the food lines in California.”

“DUNCAN HUNTER,” and I quote the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) again, Mr. Speaker, he says, “These are our best citizens. If we

don’t take care of our finest citizens, some day we’re going to ring the bell for war and the folks aren’t going to show up.”

Mr. Speaker, I mention that as I close to say that we in America are extremely lucky to have the men and women in uniform who are willing to die for this country. I want to encourage the leadership, both Republican and Democrat, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to join me in this effort to say to those in uniform who are on food stamps, we care about you and we are trying to help you.

PRAISING THE FLORIDA GATORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. Thurman) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am really here tonight to say how proud I am of the Florida Gators who played, I believe, their hearts out last night in the final game of the NCAA basketball tournament.

While the University of Florida lost 89 to 76 after a hard fight, they proved to everyone what they are capable of accomplishing. After all, seven members of the young team’s ten man rotation are freshmen and sophomores, and their starting line-up blows from the energy of three sophomores and one freshman.

Despite this relative lack of experience, the Gators finished their most successful season in the school’s history at 29 wins and only 9 losses.”

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Hopefully, all of these fine young men will be back to lead the Gators to victory next season but for now last night’s game showed how far the Florida basketball program has come in recent years. The Gators made their first Final Four appearance in 1994, and last night marked the school’s first title game appearance ever. No loss can possibly take away from that great accomplishment. This team has spirit and get up and go, and I know they will use this experience to gain even more ground in the future.

Following the game, Florida coach Billy Donovan summed up his team’s loss against Michigan State veteran senior players like this, he said, “You have every reason to be proud of yourselves. You lost to a better team. Let this be a tremendous motivating experience for you.”

I would like to encourage all Gator fans to attend the celebration at 7:00 p.m. Thursday night at the O’Connell Center at the University of Florida campus in Gainesville to pay tribute to this fine team. They deserve all the cheers and hurrahs they can get for their remarkable record-setting season, and we in Florida always look forward to saying there will be a next year. Go Gators.

BALANCING THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND PAYING DOWN THE FEDERAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOBSON). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask everybody to sort of hold on to their hats and prepare for a presentation that could be a little boring but very important to everybody’s future, to the future of our kids, to the future of our retirees that have already turned past 62 or 65 and maybe gone on Social Security, because what we do in this budget is going to make the decision whether or not future generations have to pay huge amounts of tax to pay for our overspending in this generation, and it is also going to determine whether existing seniors might have their Social Security and Medicare coverage reduced because of the unwillingness of the President and this Congress to face up to some tough decisions on keeping these programs solvent.

Let me start out with what is happening to our Federal budget. Our Federal budget this year is \$1.8 trillion. The debt that we have accumulated so far that we are passing on to our kids now amounts to \$5.7 trillion. That compares to \$1.8 trillion total annual spending.

Who is going to pay back this debt? It looks like every man, woman, and child in the United States owes now approximately \$20,000 to accommodate the debt that has been run up in this country.

Congress has a tendency, a propensity, to spend because usually it is to the political advantage of Members of Congress, it is to the political advantage of the President, to increase spending, to do more things to more people. So, therefore, when taxes became a negative because people did not want to pay their taxes, we started borrowing money. We have kept borrowing money.

Now, for the first time we are starting to reverse that course. Last year we had a balanced budget for the first time in 40 years. This year is going to be a truly balanced budget, and we are going to start paying down the approximately \$3.6 trillion that is owed to Wall Street.

Let me go back to the total public debt, \$5.7 trillion. Of that \$5.7 trillion, \$3.6 trillion is what we borrow from insurance companies, from banks, from investors, all the Treasury bills that you, I, investment firms, retirement firms decide to buy Treasury bills for. That is \$3.6 trillion.

Then we owe approximately \$1 trillion to the Social Security, Social Security money that over the years we borrowed and used it for other government spending. Then the rest is what