

is finally starting to reach through the cacaphony, right now, again, 65 Democratic yeas votes on the bill today to eliminate death taxes, and that now maybe we can move on to other important aspects of public policy.

Let us go ahead and try to bring the Patients' Bill of Rights to fruition. Let us try and bring prescription drug coverage to fruition. Let us meet on the educational needs of our children around America, rather than just talk about it for campaign purposes. Let us make certain that every American is benefited by the debate and the dialogue here on the floor, that ultimately it is not about who runs this place.

God forbid we have that kind of fight. Let us not worry about who is in charge next year. Let us do something on behalf of the people. We have a chance. We can do it.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to refrain from personal references to individual Senators.

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#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TODAY'S VOTE ON THE ESTATE TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, might I take just a moment to add my appreciation and congratulations to this first class of Pages of the millennium. Clearly, the eloquence of the words said by my colleagues cannot be matched in the short period of time that I have to simply say thank you, thank you, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciated hearing the words of my colleague, and enjoyed the fact that we have the opportunity to work on a number of issues together. I truly believe that when we debate an important issue that has gotten the attention of the American people, it is important to come forward and tell the truth.

I campaigned and worked with constituents around my district on the issue of allowing them to retain the hard-earned dollars that they have worked for in their family farms and their small businesses. My district is an urban district, so I do not have that many small farms, but I have those beneficiaries who have small farms of their relatives in rural areas of Texas.

So I likewise am concerned about those who would want to benefit from this Nation's recognizing their hard-earned dollars.

I think that today's debate did not fully tell the truth. Death is final, and the suggestion that what we voted on today, the repeal of death taxes, is final is really untrue. It is untrue be-

cause unlike the suggestion that we have done this in a bipartisan manner, we have not. This bill that was passed today is destined to be vetoed by the President of the United States.

Legislation only passes when this House passes it, when the Senate passes it, and when it goes to the President's desk.

Many of us wanted to join in bipartisan legislation, but it was not to be heard of by the Republican majority. It seems that there was an effort to really play to the headlines the repeal of death taxes.

But really, under current law, there is a \$1.3 million exclusion from the estate tax for interest in farms and closely-held business. Did they not tell us that the substitute that was offered, that I did vote for, that would be supported by the President of the United States and the Senate, gave a \$4 million exclusion per family for farms and closely-held businesses?

I wanted to be sure that this would pass both Houses and be signed by the President of the United States, so I did not just take my impressions to the floor of the House when I voted, I spoke to the Secretary of the Treasury, representing the administration, and the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, representing the administration. They fully appreciate the back-end balloon of burden that we will have with this bill that was passed today.

Deputy Secretary Eisenstadt said the administration is committed to passing relief on death taxes for closely-held businesses and, as well, family farms. The legislation that the President will sign, that will go into law, was the vote that I made today to support the legislation that would give a \$4 million benefit to those closely-held businesses and family farms.

In fact, the substitute would provide a credit of \$1.1 million right now, and in 2006 have a further increase of \$1.2 million.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the repeal that the Republicans are talking about has to be phased in, whereas the vote that I made today, the \$1.1 million exclusion, is effective in 2001.

It is important to tell Americans the truth, and the fact that we take \$28.5 billion in estate taxes now, over 5 years a repeal will result in \$104 billion being taken out of the government's revenue source. That money will come just at the time that the baby boomers will be reaching the age of depending on social security, and how will we make the choice of the amount of money that we lose from the estate taxes and not being able to pay social security?

Sometimes it sounds like a cycle that is being said over and over again, but the government does have its responsibilities. I am certainly someone who applauds the strength of the economy right now. I applaud that so many

Americans have found their way to the Dow Jones and NASDAQ, but as we look at Wall Street, may I also suggest to those who are investing that we have watched the roller coaster go up and down and up and down.

That means that the government still has its responsibility to deal with social security.

Might I close, Mr. Speaker, to simply say that if anybody thinks that what we did was to help the bulk of the American people, this is the pie documented by the Joint Committee on Taxation and Treasury, and that pie says that for non-taxable estates that will be impacted by this bill today, it is 98 percent that will not be impacted.

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Only 2 percent of those businesses and family farms, if even that, will be impacted. The Democratic alternative responds to all of those who need relief.

In Texas, there would only be 1,900 businesses that would even be impacted. Why not give a responsible relief? And the Democratic alternative will be turned into law; this only creates headlines today. I am not willing to vote for headlines. I want to vote for Americans.

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#### SWEET NEWS

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have sweet news. The General Accounting Office just released a report today on the United States Sugar Program. This is an update of the 1993 report, and the report says that the United States program supporting sugar prices increases user costs while benefiting producers.

The bottom line in this 100-page document is that the sugar program in the United States costs the American consumer, the American economy, \$2 billion a year. \$2 billion a year.

Mr. Speaker, this is the General Accounting Office. This is the independent, nonpartisan office here in Washington that works for Congress. The head of the agency has got a 15-year term. So there is no partisanship in this. This report was requested by Senator DIANE FEINSTEIN, the Democrat from California, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), Democrat, and myself, a Republican from Florida.

This is not a biased report coming from the Agriculture Department or the sugar growers, but the most authoritative source; and it shows that the sugar program costs \$2 billion a year. The sugar program is bad for consumers, bad for the environment, and bad for jobs in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let me briefly explain what the program is first. The program