

the consequences of bankruptcy—which can be very devastating to their credit rating, among other matters—and about alternatives to bankruptcy, as well as how to manage their finances, so that they can avoid future financial difficulties.

Other debtor protections include heightened requirements for those professionals and others who assist consumer debtors in connection with their bankruptcy cases, expanded notice requirements for consumers with regard to alternatives to bankruptcy relief, and the institution of a pilot program to study the effectiveness of consumer financial education for debtors. The legislation also addresses a problem under the current law with respect to those individuals who are precluded from obtaining bankruptcy relief because they simply cannot afford to pay the requisite bankruptcy filing fees and related charges. Under the legislation, these fees and charges may be waived in appropriate cases.

With regard to business bankruptcy reform, the bill addresses the special problems that small business cases present by instituting a variety of performance criteria and enforcement mechanisms to identify and weed out those debtors who are unable to reorganize. It also requires more active supervision of these cases by United States Trustees and the bankruptcy courts. The bill includes provisions dealing with business bankruptcy cases, in general, and family farmer bankruptcies, in particular. It also clarifies the treatment of certain financial contracts under the banking laws as well as under the Bankruptcy Code. The bill responds to the special needs of family farmers by making chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code—a form of bankruptcy relief available only to eligible family farmers—permanent.

The small business and single asset real estate provisions of the bill are largely derived from consensus recommendations of the National Bankruptcy Review Commission. Many of these recommendations received broad support from those in the bankruptcy community, including various bankruptcy judges, creditor groups, and the Executive Office for United States Trustees.

The bill, in addition, contains several provisions having general impact with respect to bankruptcy law and practice. These include a provision permitting certain appeals from final bankruptcy court decisions to be heard directly by the court of appeals for the appropriate circuit. Another general provision of the bill requires the Executive Office for United States Trustees to compile various statistics regarding chapter 7, 11, and 13 cases, to make these data available to the public, and to report annually to Congress on the data collected.

It is also important to note that the legislation includes a plethora of provisions intended to protect the interests of women and children. For example, the legislation—

Gives domestic support obligations the highest entitlement to payment in bankruptcy cases where there are assets available to pay the claims of creditors. Current law only accords a seventh level payment priority to these claims.

Establishes a uniform and expanded definition of the term “domestic support obligation”

to better protect the rights of women and children with support claims and to reduce litigation.

Prevents deadbeat parents from enjoying the benefits of bankruptcy relief without having first satisfied their spousal and child support obligations.

Ensures that bankruptcy cannot be used by deadbeat parents to interfere with the enforcement efforts of federal, state and local authorities with respect to overdue child support obligations.

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Does not allow deadbeat parents to discharge other obligations relating to divorce or separation agreements.

Requires those who are responsible for the administration of bankruptcy cases to provide important information and notices to their holders of spousal or child support claims as well as to state child support agencies.

Many professionals and organizations responsible for federal child support enforcement programs such as the National District Attorneys Association, the National Association of Attorneys General, and the National Child Support Enforcement Association (which represents more than 60,000 child support professionals across America) have enthusiastically expressed their support for these important reforms.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 333, the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2001.

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SUPPORT SALES TAX DEDUCTION ACT OF 2001

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

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of a bill that the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and myself have worked so hard on and we are introducing today that would restore the sales tax deduction to the Federal Income Tax Code. We are talking about an oversight that occurred in 1986, where seven States cannot deduct their State sales tax from their Federal income tax return, which they could do prior to 1986. This is an issue of tax fairness that has been wrongly denied to the citizens of Tennessee and six other States for 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, due to the elimination of the State sales tax deduction from the Federal Tax Code in 1986, the people of Tennessee are paying significantly more in taxes to the Federal Government than a taxpayer with an identical profile in a State that does have a State income tax. In the last fiscal year alone, my colleagues, my friends, constituents in Tennessee, paid

an average of \$727 in State sales taxes but could not deduct \$1 of it from their Federal income tax return. We are being forced to pay taxes on our taxes. This is unfair, it is unjust, and it must be corrected here in the 107th Congress. The people of Tennessee and the other States deserve better from the Federal Government.

Our bill is very simple. It would allow taxpayers to deduct their State sales taxes from their Federal income tax return. Those living in a State with an income tax would be completely unaffected, since they would still be able to take an income tax deduction as they do today. For example, a family with a combined income of \$50,000 that lives in Tennessee, for example, who are blessed with beautiful twin daughters would save \$350. That, Mr. Speaker, is a lot of diapers.

I am calling on my colleagues to take this opportunity to restore fairness and equity to the Tax Code in this Congress without making the Tax Code more complex and without abandoning our fiscal discipline. In a year when all the talk now is about bipartisan tax cuts and bipartisan tax reform, I say we come together and pass tax fairness and ensure tax equity now. Let us take this opportunity to do something about our tax burdens and not just talk about them.

In this last Congress, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and myself were able to offer it on the floor of the House, and 173 of our colleagues voted in favor of similar tax language. I would like to call on those Members of the House to cosponsor this legislation. It is a fair bill, it makes a lot of sense, and it will treat all States equal. Is that not what it is all about, when we call ourselves the United States of America?

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to have a colloquy with my good friend and a real leader in the House of Representatives, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee, and I want to commend him for his efforts on this bill and for his fight for fairness for his citizens.

It really is this simple. What we propose is to have the IRS create simple tables. A person will not have to save their receipts in a shoe box or keep track of all their expenditures. They will simply look on a simple table. On the left column is their income, the top row is the family size. They will find where that intersects and that is the amount they put on their tax form. Literally, 30 seconds to a minute for fundamental fairness, for a bill that will save the average working family, who itemizes their deductions, between \$300 to \$500 every year.

The \$500 million that Washington State taxpayers paid to the Federal treasury could have been spent on their

families, their kids' educations, and in a lot of other ways. I am sure it is true in Tennessee as well.

Mr. CLEMENT. The gentleman is absolutely right. And I have heard so many people in Tennessee say why not? We should not have been overlooked in 1986. I know neither one of us were in Congress when that happened, when they passed the 1986 tax reform, but the fact is someone did not fight for us. Someone did not fight for those seven States.

I know some of those northeastern Congressmen say, well, we wanted to make sure that if an individual lived in a State with a State income tax that they could deduct that from their Federal income tax returns. Well, treat us fairly as well, where we can deduct some taxes from our Federal income tax return, so we have fairness and equity for all in the United States.

FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES A PRIORITY WITH PRESIDENT BUSH

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

Mr. SOUDER. Earlier this week, President George Bush announced his faith-based initiatives office and different proposals that he will be sending down to Congress. Earlier today, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), who has been a leader in this effort, and Senator RICK SANTORUM, along with the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP) and myself, and Senators TIM HUTCHINSON and SAM BROWNBACK held a press conference with a number of leaders from Michigan, Florida, and other places around the United States to highlight some of these initiatives.

There are a number of questions that I wanted to address here as we prepare to analyze and hopefully report the President's package and add different things we have considered here in the House and Senate to it as well.

First and foremost, this is not a new idea. Former Congressman and Senator Dan Coats, when he was in the House, had a number of these initiatives. In the Senate, the Agenda for American Renewal. Former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp had a number of faith-based initiatives there because a lot of people would not reach out and care for those with AIDS. In the early stages of the AIDS crisis, as people were dying, there were all sorts of false rumors around and many people did not care for them. Without the faith-based communities, if the government had not reached out to the faith-based communities and involved them, there would have been many people dying of AIDS who would not have received any assistance whatsoever. Nobody objected to the faith-based communities coming and working.

Similarly in homelessness, the Federal dollars, the State dollars, and the local dollars were not enough to address the homeless questions. So, under HUD, they expanded into the faith-based organizations back in the Bush administration. That was continued under Secretary Cisneros and continued under Secretary Cuomo. It is not fair to say that these things are suddenly new and that President Bush is trying to insert religion into the national debate. It has been there. The difference is, instead of an afterthought, President Bush wants to make it a focus. He is saying that all these flowering organizations that are developed in every neighborhood, particularly those that are hurting the most, there are people making a difference and we need to tap into that.

Now, a second question that comes up is, well, these examples that are brought forth and are talked about at press conferences or that are talked about by Gene Rivers in Boston or Freddie Garcia in San Antonio, they are just exceptions. They are not the rules. We could not possibly make this program work on a large scale because, while there are a few people here and there toiling away, this cannot possibly be part of an integrated strategy. That is just false.

The largest city in my district is Fort Wayne, Indiana. I want to give an example of the breadth of what we are talking about here. Reverend Bill McGill was executive director of Stop the Madness. After one pastor's son was shot in the center city of Fort Wayne while he was sitting at a YMCA and two guys got in a gun fight, he decided to form an organization called Stop the Madness. Bill McGill headed that organization. Now he is executive director of One Church, One Offender. We have churches throughout north-east Indiana and Fort Wayne in particular who are working to adopt people who have gotten in trouble with the law and who are now coming out. Who is going to help them get a job and work with them? This is a tremendous program.

The Ewell Wilson Center was started by Shirley Woods and her husband after their boy, who was a star athlete, was shot. She has a community center now who works with kids. It is disconcerting that she has to fight for every little game unit, for every computer, for every little thing because she is not a high-powered organization. It is just a couple of people who said we care about the kids in our area. They do not have grant writers or the so-called beltway bandits. How can people making a difference at the grass roots level do it?

Reverend Jessey and Anthony Beasley came to me. They have an inner-city church and they are trying to figure out how to get a youth program started for the after-school kids

because we have a huge crack problem in Fort Wayne and a high murder rate, and they do not know where to turn to do that.

George Middleton took some of his savings out to help build a youth center, and he is building this with his private money and getting volunteers in. But he can only do so much. And when someone does not get the help, they get tired too fast. They are working 18 hours a day. Here are the people who are actually doing it in the ZIP code where they live and we cannot get the dollars to them.

Friends of mine, Barb and Lonnie Cox, had their family touched and friends touched by the drug problem, so they went to the bishop and through the parish there they formed a house to reach people who have been battling drug addiction.

There is Father Glenn Kehrman in Fort Wayne. We have an influx of Burmese come in, as they have had a conflict in that country. We have programs for people of Spanish language, often through faith-based organizations because often they are involved in the Catholic church or Pentecostal churches, but in this case, in the Asian community, we did not have any direct funds where the Catholic church could figure out how to do English as a second language to a subgroup.

This is what President Bush is talking about. We have lots of people already there; we have lots more interested, but they have not had access to it. I congratulate the President for making this a foremost priority rather than an afterthought.

HONORING THE LIFE OF OLIVE WEHBRING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Olive Wehbring. Communities are indeed fortunate to have political activists who choose to devote their time to the cause of good government after they retire from a paid career. It is rare when that commitment to public issues becomes another 30-year career. Olive Wehbring, who passed away recently in San Diego at the age of 95, was just such an exemplary citizen.

When I was a young mother and new board member of the San Diego League of Women Voters, I was delighted to meet Olive and to be introduced by her and to the intricacies of local government. She was a model for several generations of League of Women Voters leaders. Her enthusiasm was matched by tireless perseverance and sitting through long meetings, whether they be a county health committee, a regional planning meeting of the San Diego Association of Governments, or a