

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, late last month the Office of Compliance reported on its comprehensive fire-safety inspections of the three Library of Congress buildings.

After previous dire warnings over the last two years from the House Inspector General and the Compliance Office about the state of fire protection in the Capitol and congressional office buildings, I had hoped for a better report on conditions at the Library. Unfortunately, the Compliance Office found that the Library buildings suffer from many of the same deficiencies as the Capitol and congressional buildings.

I strongly believe that Congress must take every reasonable step to maximize the physical safety of the thousands who work in the Capitol complex every day and of the millions who visit every year. Congress also has a responsibility to safeguard the numerous valuable artifacts, many of them irreplaceable, which are housed in the Capitol and among the Library's collections.

In view of the Compliance Office's findings at the Library, the new Chairman of the House Administration Committee [Mr. NEY] and I have written jointly to the Architect of the Capitol, who has responsibility for maintaining the Library's buildings, asking for a detailed report on the status of his efforts to correct the deficiencies there. Specifically, we have requested detailed plans, timelines, and an identification of any additional resources needed to complete the task. We have also written to the House Inspector General, who has demonstrated substantial expertise in fire-protection matters, asking his office to participate in regular meetings with Architect and Library staff, offer whatever guidance he deems appropriate, and monitor progress, as he does in connection with ongoing fire-safety work in the House.

Last September the Architect unveiled before the House Administration Committee a staff reorganization plan that places all AOC fire-safety work under the supervision of a single senior-level subordinate, as proposed in a bill (H.R. 4366) that I introduced in the last Congress. The AOC is clearly moving in the right direction and I appreciate the progress he has made. The Chairman and I look forward to working with the Architect to ensure the deficiencies previously noted, and those just identified at the Library, are remedied as soon as practicable. I include for the RECORD the texts of our letters to the Architect and the Inspector General of the House:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, February 7, 2001.
Hon. ALAN M. HANTMAN, AIA,
The Architect of the Capitol,
The Capitol.

DEAR MR. HANTMAN: We have received the recent Office of Compliance report on its fire-safety inspections of the Library of Congress buildings. As you know, the Office found numerous fire-safety deficiencies in the three Library buildings, the same types of deficiencies found last year during thorough inspections of the Capitol and congressional office buildings. We are greatly concerned about the report and the grave danger posed to Library employees, visitors, and to the Library's enormous collection of books and artifacts, many irreplaceable, by decades of inadequate attention to fire-safety matters. We know you share our concern, and

trust that you also share our determination to see these additional deficiencies corrected at the earliest possible date.

Toward that goal, we ask that you provide us immediately with a comprehensive report on the status of AOC efforts to correct deficiencies found in the Library buildings. Please provide detailed plans for the correction of deficiencies that remain uncorrected, including an identification of any additional resources that you may need to complete the work and timelines for its completion. We also ask that you assess the level of fire protection now afforded to the Library's most valuable artifacts, and indicate how you will prioritize the correction of deficiencies related to their protection.

We appreciate the progress that AOC has made in addressing fire-safety deficiencies in the House office buildings since the Inspector General's and Compliance Office's previous reports. We hope the Library can benefit from the AOC's experience in addressing those deficiencies. In that vein, we encourage you to incorporate into your approach for the Library the use of frequent, regular meetings among AOC, Library, and House Inspector General staff, to coordinate efforts and facilitate communication. A similar approach has worked well in the House.

Thanking you for your prompt attention to this request, with kindest regards, we remain

Sincerely yours,

BOB NEY,
Chairman.
STENY H. HOYER,
Ranking Member.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, February 7, 2001.

Hon. STEVEN A. MCNAMARA,
Inspector General, House of Representatives,
Ford House Office Building.

DEAR MR. MCNAMARA: As you know, the Office of Compliance just reported on the results of its fire-safety inspections of the Library of Congress buildings. The Compliance Office found numerous fire-safety deficiencies in the three Library buildings, the same types of deficiencies that it and your office found during prior inspections of the Capitol and House office buildings. We are greatly concerned about the danger posed to Library employees, visitors, and to the Library's valuable collection of books and artifacts, many irreplaceable, by the effects of decades of inadequate attention to fire safety. We are eager to help the Architect of the Capitol reverse these effects.

Your office has considerable expertise in such matters, and you continue to oversee the Architect's efforts to correct fire-safety deficiencies in the Capitol and House buildings. We write to ask that you similarly monitor the AOC's work to correct the fire-safety deficiencies at the Library, offer the AOC and the Library whatever guidance you may deem appropriate, and keep the Committee apprised of progress. As work progresses, should you have any concerns, please bring them to the Committee's attention immediately. To coordinate efforts and facilitate communications, we have urged the Architect to incorporate into his approach at the Library a plan to conduct regular, frequent meetings among AOC staff, Library staff and your staff, as he has done in the House.

Thanking you for your attention to this matter, with kindest regards, we remain

Sincerely yours,

BOB NEY,

Chairman.
STENY H. HOYER,
Ranking Member.

BUDGET PRIORITIES AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the most important issue facing this Congress is the amount of the tax cut that has been proposed by the President and by the majority party, and a majority of Americans apparently think that this tax cut would be in their best interests. Today I would like to make five points why I disagree, and try to explain why I think a cut of this proposed magnitude is potentially disastrous.

The five points that I would like to make are, one, CBO's 10-year surplus projections are highly unreliable; secondly, the tax cut is skewed to benefit those who need the assistance the least; third, I believe that this tax cut is fiscally irresponsible in that it is substantially understated; fourthly, the tax cut ignores the financial catastrophe that we know is going to occur when the baby boom generation retires in another few years; and, fifth, it does not address what I believe is our highest priority, which is to pay off our public debt before we do anything else with the surplus.

On point number one, Mr. Speaker, the projections upon which we assume that we can afford the tax cut are highly dependent upon economic performance that is, at best, uncertain in the near term, and really has no credible basis over the long term. CBO has increased their estimates from 2.8 percent to a little above 3 percent annual growth, but if they are off by as much as eight-tenths of one percent, \$4 trillion of the surplus goes away.

GAO Comptroller David Walker testified before the Congress that "no one should design tax or spending policy pegged to the precise numbers in any 10-year forecast." He also said it is important to remember that while projections for the next 10-year period look better, the long-term outlook looks much worse.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, it is important to understand that the effect of the tax cut applies primarily to those who in fact pay the most taxes. But the top 1 percent, people whose incomes are over \$320,000 a year, now pay about 21 percent of the taxes. One percent pays 21 percent of the total Federal taxes; yet they would get 43 percent of the benefit. Eighty percent of the population would receive less than 29 percent of the entire tax cut benefit.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, while the tax plan proposes a \$1.6 trillion cut, it does

not include the additional interest costs that are incurred because it is not applied to paying down the debt. It also raises the number of people who will be subject to the alternative minimum tax from 2 million today to 27 million households by 2010. Virtually everybody over \$75,000 over a year in income is going to get hit with the alternative minimum tax. They are going to be screaming at the time, and we are going to have to fix it at a substantial cost that is not factored in here. I should also say the estimates do not protect military retirement nor civil service retirement.

Fourthly, the baby boomer crisis. Once the baby boom generation that was born right after World War II starts to retire, we are going to be in the position of only three workers for every retiree. That creates a situation that is untenable. So after we get out past 2011, when all these estimates are pegged, we are going to find that for the next life span we are as much as \$22 trillion short in Social Security and \$12 trillion short in Medicare.

The best thing we could do right now is to currently fund that unfunded Social Security liability. If we put \$3.1 trillion aside, as we would do if we were facing this in our own family or in a private corporation, we could fund that unfunded liability and not leave that burden to our children and grandchildren to do so.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, let me say that our highest priority should be to pay down the debt. That is the best way we can invest in our future, and that is the best gift we can give to our children and grandchildren. We do it in our own family; we ought to do it in the Nation's best interest as well.

THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to be here today to talk about something I think that is critically important to the future of this country. I want us to look, if we will, deep into the 21st century, and I think we start that by looking back historically and seeing where we have come from. I want to talk a little bit about the economic future of this country.

Mr. Speaker, after all, as a government, the people of this country expect us to be an economic model, to provide a structure, an economic structure, that will enable the private sector to flourish.

It has worked as well, Mr. Speaker, as any plan that has been put together in the history of mankind. We have something here in this country that is

very special. This economic model, this experiment we are on now for over 225 years, has taken us to be the most powerful Nation in the world, not only economically, but also militarily and politically.

Let us look back, Mr. Speaker, just a few short years, back into 1990. We just came out of the decade of the '80s. Ronald Reagan had served us 8 years wonderfully as our President. He had spent a lot of his time focusing on the Soviet Union and the Cold War, and actually we saw the fall of the Soviet Union in the late decade of the '80s.

But if you looked at what was happening fiscally in our country, Mr. Speaker, at that time, we were in pretty bad shape. Economically we were headed down the wrong path. If you go back to 1990, you would have found annual deficits in the range of \$250 to \$300 billion a year. You had a mounting debt that was climbing a quarter of a trillion dollars annually.

Many of us who were in the private sector at that time thought that the economic experiment that we were involved in in this country was headed for an economic disaster as we moved toward the 21st century.

But as you know, in 1990, with the leadership of President Bush, the first step was taken to change the economic direction of this country. As a matter of fact, those changes, led by President Bush, probably cost him his reelection in 1992.

Then again in 1993, under the leadership of President Clinton, another big step was taken to sort of build the wall around that foundation that President Bush had built to get us headed back in the right direction. With that economic plan in 1993, this government, this economic model that we are involved in here, began to head in the right direction and lower its deficits and head toward a day where we could actually pay our bills on an annual basis and would not be swallowed with red ink.

I know when I ran for Congress in 1996 it was the major campaign theme. The major campaign theme was balancing the budget, removing the deficits, the annual deficits that we had. So this is not something that is new, not something we just started talking about. This is important stuff for the long-term health of this country.

Under the leadership of the House and the Senate, Speaker Gingrich, Majority Leader LOTT in the Senate, and President Clinton, in 1997 a Balanced Budget Act was put into place, put into law, which was a plan, a blueprint, to lead us out of red ink and lead us into an era when we could actually pay our bills. This model we have is so wonderful that we actually achieved that goal of getting away from deficits about 5 years ahead of that schedule. The 1997 Balanced Budget Act had us balancing the budget in, I think, the year 2003-

2004, but we actually achieve that about 3 or 4 years ahead of that schedule. We have a wonderful window of opportunity here now to continue the work, to continue the job.

Mr. Speaker, the budget process is like a business plan. It is like a business plan that our businesses all across this Nation do on an annual basis. They sit down and they look at what kind of business they want to do, what their objectives are, what parts of their business they have to fund, what revenue they can expect to come in, and then they put all that together in a budget and then they go out and implement it.

Mr. Speaker, that business plan allocates, in the case of our Federal Government, limited Federal resources to our priorities that we think are important.

Mr. Speaker, the surplus is currently projected at \$2.7 trillion. That is if we do not use Social Security and Medicare. We all know the CBO, Mr. Speaker, which I have a summary here which we want to examine a little bit closer as we spend some time in this next hour, the CBO report talks about a \$5.6 trillion figure over the next 10 years, and that is true; but we know that of that \$5.6 trillion, that about half of it is money that comes into the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare Trust Fund.

So we really ought to all get on the same page and talk about the current surplus, the projected surplus, Mr. Speaker, being at \$2.7 trillion, because even just as late as yesterday this House voted, I think unanimously, to reinsert its belief that the Social Security funds and the Medicare funds ought to go in a lockbox, and they ought not to be touched for any purpose, other than those two specific purposes.

So, Mr. Speaker, we want to spend the next hour examining some of the priorities that this Nation needs to deal with as we have this debate about surpluses, about tax cuts and about our economic plan.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I am glad to recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) to spend a few minutes talking about his perspective.

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Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I thank him for taking this time today.

I hope that everyone will pay particular attention to some of the comments that many of our colleagues are going to be making. We will have the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), who will be on the floor momentarily, and will talk very accurately about the fact that we really do not have a surplus.

When we look at the Social Security trust fund, the Medicare trust fund, the