

report on H.R. 1836, the Economic Growth and Tax Reconciliation Act, because it fails to reflect the priorities of my constituents.

This tax cut has been sold to the American public as a cure for an astonishingly wide variety of ills, from a possible recession to spiraling energy prices. The unfortunate truth, however, is that this package offers nothing to guard against an economic downturn in the near term. Instead, it provides a series of back-loaded tax cuts, overwhelmingly skewed to the wealthiest Americans, while jeopardizing our ability to fund other priorities.

Equally worrisome is the fact that this legislation creates the very real possibility of a return to deficit spending should the projected surpluses fail to materialize. Just this week, in fact, the Congressional Budget Office has made a significant downward adjustment in this year's surplus estimates, virtually wiping out the "contingency fund" that has already been promised to a variety of needs, including increased military requirements and a prescription drug benefit. We are kidding ourselves and our constituents if we believe that this is not a sign of worse news to come.

To fit this 10-year tax cut under a \$1.35 trillion budget ceiling, the conferees have provided for the entire package to sunset at the end of 2010. While this ridiculous gimmick allows the tax cuts to meet budget restrictions on paper, in reality, the agreement will substantially exceed these targets when all of the costs are factored in. In the meantime, we are left with an increasingly complex tax code whose provisions are phased in and then repealed largely at random, making it difficult for taxpayers to understand, and impossible for them to rely upon as they plan for their families' futures.

In addition, the agreement leaves out major provisions whose enactment is widely viewed as inevitable, such as extension of the research and experimentation credit and measures to address serious problems with the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). By sunseting the tax cuts before the end of the eleven-year budget period and simply omitting foreseeable costs, the conferees have distorted the final cost of the tax cut and used the "extra" money to throw even more last-minute provisions into the final package.

Currently, 1.5 million taxpayers are subjected to the AMT. Under this conference agreement, over 30 million more would be subject to the AMT by 2010. That is double the number of taxpayers who would be affected by this provision under current law. Consequently, these tax cuts will in effect increase tax liability for many households and may result in even greater income disparities in the future.

Some 30 percent of American taxpayers—roughly 51 million people—will not receive the full amount of the tax rebate included in the conference report. I am strongly in favor of providing immediate tax relief to hard-working families, but this legislation will leave out many of those families who need short-term relief most urgently. In so doing, the rebate will also fail to jump start a flagging economy, as the Administration continues to claim it will do.

For example, sixty-two percent of those taxpayers who make less than \$44,000 a year will get less than the full rebate amounts, with

42 percent of these taxpayers receiving nothing at all. In Rhode Island, 44 percent of taxpayers—over 123,000 individuals—making less than \$40,000 a year will receive no rebate. Although these taxpayers may not have the highest income tax liabilities, they incur a disproportionately high payroll tax liability, which is not figured into the rebates.

I am also frustrated with the conferees' decision gradually phase out the estate tax—culminating in its repeal for only one year before the bill sunsets and the estate tax is again in full effect—instead of providing an immediate and permanent increase in the exemption, which would protect the vast majority of families, small businesses and family farms from estate tax liability. The provision contained in this agreement would allow the wealthiest two percent of our population to pass wealth to their heirs without taxation, while hard-working families would continue to be taxed on every dollar earned. It would also have a devastating impact on charities, foundations, universities and other philanthropic organizations.

Additionally, I am disappointed that the conferees have failed to provide immediate marriage tax relief for couples. The agreement before us does not even begin to address the marriage penalty until 2005, and relief will not be fully phased in until 2009. Married couples who have been contacting my office seeking relief from this unintended consequence of our tax code will surely be disappointed when they realize that their wait will continue for at least four more years.

This tax package will cause enormous revenue losses and threaten our ability to address national priorities like extending the solvency of Social Security and Medicare, reducing our national debt, implementing a prescription drug benefit for seniors and improving education and health care for all. Furthermore, the agreement will jeopardize resources and programs that are absolutely vital to our nation's small businesses, workforce, environmental protection, energy efficiency and housing needs. We should use our current prosperity to enhance those federal programs relied upon by some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Without a doubt, American taxpayers deserve a substantial tax cut. But they also deserve a strengthened Social Security system, a Medicare program that covers prescription drugs, a military that is equipped to protect our nation, a quality health care system that is affordable and accessible to every family, and a world-class educational system that prepares our children for the 21st century. These needs are great and they must not be ignored. They will require additional spending by the federal government, but this tax cut leaves room for no such investment. I urge my colleagues to reject this ill-advised tax cut, which will jeopardize our future fiscal security, while doing nothing to address immediate economic needs.

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST DIAGNOSED CASE OF ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2001

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the 20th anniversary of the first diagnosed case of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the United States. The past twenty years have heralded many medical advances, especially in drug treatment therapies for AIDS patients. However, despite an increased understanding of the disease and an improved quality of care for patients, more than 438,000 people have died from the disease since the early 1980s in the United States alone.

Efforts towards prevention and education have helped decrease the magnitude of the epidemic, however there are currently more than 750,000 people living with AIDS in the U.S. Among new infections, the fastest growing segment is women and children. In fact, national statistics indicate that AIDS is the seventh leading cause of death among youths between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. Surveys also indicate that approximately 87 percent of young Americans do not believe that they are at risk for contracting HIV. A growing number of cases of infection in youths clearly demonstrates a need for a greater emphasis on education, and prevention. While the AIDS scare of the late 1980s and the early 1990s appears to be over, the persistence of this insidious disease is not. Complacency about this disease and its reach must not be allowed to grow.

Among the federal government's programs and legislation addressing the issue of AIDS, one of the most effective is the Ryan White Care Act, which was signed into law in 1990 and reauthorized in 2000. The ultimate goal of this act is to improve health care and make it more accessible to patients and their families. In order to achieve this, the Ryan White Care Act provides funding to states as well as non-profit organizations that develop and organize the distribution of necessary health care and services to patients and their families.

This act has been helpful to residents with HIV/AIDS in my home state of Colorado, where there were 6,761 reported cases of AIDS in 1999. During the 2000 Fiscal Year, the state of Colorado qualified for over \$4 million under Title I of the Ryan White Care Act, which provided funding to improve health care in metropolitan areas disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. Title IV appropriated over \$600 K in additional dollars to fund programs focusing on women, infants, children, and youth in Colorado.

This funding has been put to good use in Colorado, as it has not only helped children receive better care, but has also improved their access to necessary treatment. Considering that children are one of the fastest growing groups affected by AIDS, we must do all we can to stem the tide of its growth. We must continue to support measures that insure all patients receive adequate care, and continue

our efforts to protect and educate our youth, since they are the future.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE WELLNESS ACT OF 2001

HON. MARK FOLEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2001

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join today with my colleague Sander Levin to again introduce the Medicare Wellness Act. This legislation makes common sense reforms to the Medicare program to help ensure that our seniors are living longer, healthier lives.

The focus of the Medicare program since its inception in 1965 has been on sickness—once people are ill, the Medicare program steps in to treat that illness. But medical technology and treatment options have come a long way since 1965. Sadly, the Medicare program has not kept pace with those advances.

The new focus of Medicare should be on wellness. We can, and should, prevent seniors from getting sick, and promote good health. This focus not only has health benefits, but is also fiscally responsible. Hospitalization is one of the most expensive benefits provided under the Medicare program, and often, hospitalization is the only option. However, if the Medicare program can be reformed to help prevent instances of hospitalization we will not only have healthier seniors, but we will utilize Medicare's resources in the most effective way.

The Medicare Wellness Act of 2001 not only increases screening and preventive services, based on the recommendations of the National Preventive Services Task Force, but includes mechanisms that will help promote healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and encourage a change in personal health habits.

Congress began adding these needed benefits in 1997's Balanced Budget Act by adding four initial preventive benefits. We have since added to those benefits, and improved many of them. As we discuss adding other new benefits, such as a prescription drug plan, to Medicare, we cannot do so without facing the fundamental need for reform of the program. Incorporating these common sense benefits is a necessary component of any true reform package.

I would urge my colleagues to support this measure, and look forward to its inclusion in any Medicare reform legislation considered by the Congress this year.

HONORING MURRAY EILBERG

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2001

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who will be greatly missed by all who knew him. A man who served his country proudly in its hour of need, and a man whose love for his work and his life are only eclipsed by his immeasurable love of family. It brings me great sadness to report that Murray

Eilberg of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, passed away last night at the age of 77.

Murray Eilberg was raised in Brooklyn, New York. He grew up right around the corner from a wonderful girl named Jane, who would become the love of his life. Murray and Jane were married for over 57 years. Their family grew as they had three loving children, Patricia, Herman, and Joey. Devoted to his family above all else, Murray was blessed to have six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Like so many of the Greatest Generation, Murray Eilberg fought for his country when our nation called him to serve in World War II. Murray was proud to serve in the US Army Corps of Engineers as a brave member of the Experimental Demolitions Unit.

Growing up, Murray dreamed of becoming a motorman. And so after the War, Murray spent twenty-two years working for the New York City transit system as one of the city's finest motormen. Only a progressively worsening eye condition could stop Murray from doing what he loved, as no one had any doubt he would have worked another twenty-two years if given the chance.

In 1969, Murray retired and, with Jane, became beloved members of the South Florida community. Despite his blindness, he remained active as a member of the Blinded Veteran's Association, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Legion. Known for his unwavering sense of humor, Murray was an avid joke teller who would captivate an audience; even during his final days in the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, Murray Eilberg was both well-loved and widely respected by all those blessed to have known him. He selflessly served his country. His life's work was his dream. And his family was a source of admiration and great pride. Today we celebrate Murray's life which serves as a wonderful example to all who follow in his footsteps.

HONORING THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT, NEW YORK CLASS OF 2001

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, permit me to take this opportunity to congratulate the nine-hundred cadets of the graduating class of 2001 from our United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

I was gratified to once again be able to join this year's graduating class, along with our Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, and our good friend, the distinguished superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, General Daniel Christman.

Regrettably, this year's ceremony will be the last West Point graduation for General Christman, who will soon be leaving the Academy for a private life. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my personal gratitude and the thanks of this entire body for his distinguished service to our Nation, and for his commitment to our Nation's military. His guid-

ance, leadership, and spirit at West Point will long be missed.

I was pleased to listen to the poignant remarks of Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz and look forward to working with him. I am attaching a copy of his remarks for the RECORD and strongly recommend to my colleagues to review his message to the class of 2001 and to our Nation.

To all the Cadets of the class of 2001, I extend my congratulations, my best wishes, my prayers, and my continued commitment to ensuring that our Nation provides them with the support they deserve for their service to our Nation.

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS AT THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT

[Remarks by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Michie Stadium, West Point, NY, Saturday, June 2, 2001]

Thank you. Thank you, General [Daniel] Christman [Superintendent of the United States Military Academy], for a very warm introduction. Please be seated. You neglected to mention that 25 years ago, when we were very young, we were working together to persuade the Congress not to take fine Army forces out of Europe. And with the help of a lot of other people, we succeeded. Those forces stood watch in the Fulda Gap and other places around the continent of Europe, and the result was one of the great strategic victories of history of which every member of the Armed Forces and every member of the U.S. Army that participated in that effort is justly proud.

I also want to complement General Christman and the Army on the great spirit with which they said, we're going to go ahead and hold this ceremony outdoors even in this terrible weather, because it's more important to have all the families able to come than to be inside warm and comfortable. [Applause.] Coming from Washington where, as they say, no good deed goes unpunished, it's wonderful to see this good deed rewarded with a break in the weather.

Senator Jack Reed, Congresswoman Sue Kelly, Congressman and old friend Ben Gilman, Congressman Saxby Chambliss, and Congressman Charlie Norwood; Commandant [of Cadets Brigadier General Eric] Olson, Dean [of the Academic Board Brigadier General Daniel] Kaufman, distinguished staff and faculty, ladies and gentlemen, parents and family, and most of all, members of the class of 2001:

I want to thank the Class of '01 for giving me the honor of sharing with you this very special day. I went to school just up the road a ways in a place called Cornell where I studied mathematics. According to my calculations, if you take the corps of cadets and add a speech longer than 20 minutes, by the time you're done, you'll have 40% that won't be listening, 40% who will be sleeping, and 20% will be asking for their money back.

So, the responsibility of a commencement speaker is heavy indeed. Your remarks should be sentimental to please the parents, substantive to please the faculty, and short to please the cadets [Laughter.] When we say the word "short" to the class of '01, I'm told that we're talking to experts. In fact, I can see that this class is so short [audience: "how short are we?"]; you have fewer hours until you receive your diplomas than the plebes have ears to graduate. But, plebes . . . your day will come, too.

Today also marks the last time that the distinguished Army leader General Dan Christman will stand before a graduating