

1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Personal income increased at an annual rate of 6.7 percent in April. The Treasury Department is reporting the highest annual tax receipts ever. The Federal budget deficit is \$38 billion lower today than in May 2003. Last month Republicans approved a tax conference agreement that will continue this economic boom, and once again, the Democrats fought to stop it. In fact, if Democrats had their way, we would all face a massive tax hike.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans will continue to hold the line on spending and extend tax relief for all Americans. We know that these for-growth policies work, and they will continue to foster economic growth.

REFINERY PERMIT PROCESS SCHEDULE ACT

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, it is beginning to sound like a broken record around here: another week of record high gas prices, another Republican bill that benefits oil companies without helping consumers. Five years of Republicans' failed energy policies have resulted in Americans paying twice as much at the pump as they did in 2001, while big oil companies make triple the profits.

To distract Americans from this fact, Republicans have put forth the pro-oil company bills like the current Refinery Permit Process Schedule Act which they claim will lower fuel costs for consumers by allowing oil companies to drill more freely. Instead, the bill simply offers yet another needless handout to large oil companies in the form of weakened local regulation where any local public health and environmental concern could be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, instead of taking initiative and moving forward with real solutions to the growing fuel crisis in our country, Republicans offer more of the same. This is just another handout to Big Oil, which is exactly what got us into this mess. Democrats have put forth a real plan for energy independence by 2020. Americans know it is time for a change.

BROADCAST DECENCY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the effort to bring real decency standards to our airwaves is taking a major step forward this week. A couple of weeks ago, the Senate passed the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act ending months of inaction by that body on the issue, and the House had passed its own version earlier last year.

While there are differences between the two bills, they both send a clear message: If you violate decency standards over broadcast airwaves, you will pay a price, a big price. Under current law, fines are limited to \$32,500 per violation. The bill we will vote on today gives the FCC real teeth to enforce decency standards by increasing fines to 10 times that amount. Broadcasters will think twice about airing obscene material if they know it will cost them more than a quarter million dollars to do so.

Mr. Speaker, common decency is under attack in our society. The airwaves often lead the charge. Broadcast decency legislation seeks to do something about that. I applaud my colleagues in the House and Senate for acting on the issue, urge the Members to vote for the bill, send it to the President for his signature, and once again, enforce broadcast decency laws in our country.

□ 1230

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFIDENCE DAY

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the first National Women's Confidence Day. This is a joint effort of YWCA-USA CEO Peggy Sanchez Mills and superstar Queen Latifa, and I am absolutely thrilled that they are able to join us today in the gallery. Thank you so much for coming.

Today and every first Wednesday in June hereafter will be National Women's Confidence Day. This event is a reminder to women everywhere to have self-respect and to empower themselves with confidence every single day, an opportunity for women to get involved in helping other women to live a more confident and fulfilling life and a tribute to women who help other women gain self-confidence and self-esteem.

The goal of National Women's Confidence Day is to raise public awareness and celebrate the positive impact of confidence on women's personal and professional lives. This is one that I support and applaud. I invite everyone to join us in encouraging all women across America to have the confidence to make change.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that it is against the rules to introduce guests in the gallery.

HONORING OUR MILITARY MEMBERS

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from Iraq where I had the privilege of spending Memorial Day with our troops from Florida. I went to Iraq for two reasons: First, to say thank you to our troops for their service; and, second, to see for myself how things were going in Iraq by meeting with our generals, our soldiers, and the Iraqi leaders.

The day I was there was quite hot, 115 degrees, and it was violent. Forty people were killed while I was there, including one U.S. soldier and two CBS news employees. I was so impressed with the bravery of our soldiers. For example, one soldier had his helicopter shot out of the sky. Upon landing, he replaced the blades in the helicopter with brand-new blades and went right back into battle.

Regardless of how you feel about the war in Iraq, realize that our troops are in harm's way, they are performing very bravely, and they deserve our support 100 percent in the U.S. Congress.

TIME FOR A NEW AGENDA IN WASHINGTON

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I feel a great injustice is being done to our Nation. It seems that our Republican colleagues decided to place the concerns of the American people aside so they can continue to divide us. Mr. Speaker, our country needs solutions to problems. Unfortunately, the majority is so out of touch with the average citizens of this Nation, they refuse to see the true important issues. Americans are worried about how they are going to pay for their children's college tuition. That is why we have a plan on helping parents better afford college by doubling the amount they can write off for their children's tuition.

America is worried about how they are going to pay for their high energy bills. That is why we need an energy package that ends our dependence on foreign oil.

These are issues that are important to all our citizens. We need a change from the "no solution" rhetoric of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. The American citizens are tired of the division of our Nation. We need to unite our Nation and begin to govern not just for the few but for all. That is what we have been elected to do and that is what we should demand of ourselves. It is time for a new agenda here in Washington, one that focuses on the issues of all Americans, not just the few.