

and dividends and taxes on savings because again, remember, we're going to tax income only one time. Businesses could expand and create jobs. Personal savings would increase.

How many times we hear it said over and over again, Americans don't save enough money. Americans don't save enough money because when they put some of their hard-earned money into savings, half of the interest earned goes away to Federal income tax. It's taxed as ordinary income. Where's the incentive in that? We ought to incent savings in this country, not punish it, not grind the saver into the dust when, in reality, if we increase savings in this country we might not face some of the problems that we face today.

Without the heavy corporate income tax which is currently the second highest in the industrialized world; let me say that again, the second highest in the industrialized world, companies would have less incentive to move their headquarters out of the United States and, more importantly, less incentive to offshore their earnings.

Recent polling by American Solutions show that 80 percent of Americans favor an optional one page tax return with one rate. After all, who could complain about making something easier, especially a process that comes at a high cost.

Former Speaker Gingrich said in this body over and over again, real change requires real change. Americans agree the Tax Code is unfair and should go. Let's take a cue and translate this agreement into real change. After all, fundamental tax reform is a worthwhile goal, and this Congress, this Congress should take it up and pursue it for the benefit of the American people.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to be before the House once again. As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we have been coming to the floor now for some 5 years to not only share with the Members but also with the American people on what's happening here in the Capitol.

I'm going to do a short segment because we have other Members that need to come to the floor. And the hour is late, and tomorrow we're going to be working pretty hard past this hour tomorrow, I'm pretty sure. And we want to make sure that everyone is able to make it home and do the things that they need to do to prepare for that day.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I just would like to say that we've been in debate now for a couple of hours on the bud-

et, the 2009 budget. And I can tell you, Federal budget, as it relates to the House version, I can tell you what I've read and seen of the President's budget, we have a lot of patching up to do in that budget.

Tomorrow we will have a number of different caucuses coming to the floor presenting their budget, their ideas. Some of them came before us today to talk about some of those issues to be considered before the full House, and I'm glad that we are providing that opportunity for the Members to participate in that process; also, to be in debate with the Republicans on Democratic new ideas, moving in a new direction. And I think it's so very, very important not only for the Members of the House to be a part of that exercise, but also for the American people to witness that exercise so that they will know, firsthand, who has the best priorities for the working American people that are out there, and those that are retired and those that are yet unborn, preparing this Nation to be able to bring them up in a way and to be able to have the resources in place so that they can see the kind of strong America that I witnessed when I came about.

Now, let me just share a little bit about this budget. And it supports fiscal responsibility and also accountability on government. I think a lot of the frustration with so many Americans right now is based upon a lack of accountability, a lack of oversight, a lack of restraint as it relates to spending. And I think when you have accountability, you're going to save money. I don't think it, I know it.

Now, 13 years in public service, and 8 years at the State level, I think it's important that we embody that. And this budget, it brings the budget back to balance by 2010, and our House budget, unlike the President's budget that he has proposed, not only to the House, but to the Senate, also the budget follows PAYGO rules which you say pay as you go, something that we adopted in our rules to say if we're going to spend it, we're going to show how we're going to pay for it. And I'm glad to see that we're still embracing not only that rule, but also that philosophy as it relates to the American people, of what they ask for.

The administration also continues in the fiscally irresponsible practices. And in this budget we bring it back to being responsible. And it's a real contrast, because since January 2001, a \$5.6 trillion, 10-year surplus has been converted into a record deficit. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor almost every night to share how that deficit has crippled America and hasn't allowed us to be able to do the things that we need to do back in our districts.

I think we look at the wasteful spending; this administration is lit-

tered with examples of wasted spending and lack of accountability. And I'm glad that Chairman SPRATT of South Carolina has embraced that in his budget that he's bringing to the floor. Our budget that we're bringing on the Democratic side, we're looking at not only strengthening the economy, but creating jobs and at the same time energy, education, jobs, infrastructure and innovation will be the watchwords as we move through this process as basic principles. And so many Americans can, and also the Members, can go on www.budget.house.gov to look at the Democratic budget because I think it's important that we have that level of transparency so that they can take a look at the proposals that we are going to put forward.

So many of my constituents and so many Americans are challenged by the cost of energy. And we do know on January 22 of 2001, gas prices were at \$1.47. And now, today it's at \$3.13 per gallon. And I know many of my constituents and many of the Americans that are paying attention to the proceedings here on the floor, they're saying, well, Congressman, you're a little bit off of that \$3.13, because as I moved around Washington, D.C. today I saw it as a lot greater.

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We provide, with our budget, as it relates to dealing with some of these gas issues, it provides a \$6.1 billion funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency and other energy programs, which is \$1.1 billion, 21 percent more than the 2008 level.

So we are moving in that direction making those kinds of investments, and some may translate that into saying that we are pulling ourselves out of Iraq, out of the Middle East and investing in the Midwest and trying to not only push private sector but also Americans in the direction of being more energy efficient so that we don't find ourselves continuing to depend on the big oil companies.

If I can have my big oil company chart, I would appreciate it, because I think it's important to be able to reflect on it. Also, it rejects President Bush's budget cuts of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, including the cuts to solar energy power, and also what the President did in terminating the weatherization-assistance program. We are replacing all of that, and I think it's important for Americans to understand what is happening here.

These big oil companies have reaped record profits under the Bush administration, and as you can see here in 2002, it was first \$30 billion in record-breaking profits. It then kicked over \$59 billion, \$82 billion, \$109 billion, \$118 billion and \$123.3 billion of these oil companies raking in these profits. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, we have moved legislatively to make sure that we call

back some of those giveaways that the Republican Congress gave these oil companies.

And this has resulted in what I talked about a little earlier, \$1.47 when the Bush administration started in January 22, 2001, and it almost sounds like an inauguration date, and what we face now at \$3.13. The barrel of oil continues to go up.

So this energy investment and being efficient is very, very important to the country, also very, very important to national security.

We also invest in hundreds of billions of dollars in new investment and green jobs, green-collar jobs. These are jobs, Mr. Speaker, that we can't ship overseas. When we make our building greener, when we make our homes greener, these are jobs that anyone who can even be a high school dropout with a skill would be able to participate in to that individual that became an engineer.

These are jobs that you just can't send overseas. And this is a real economy and not a credit card economy, not a second mortgage economy, or not an economy where one has to go out and continue to borrow to live. This is real money coming in for real working Americans that are here so that we can put folks to work and get them off the unemployment role.

I'm going to end right there, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the energy investment because there are so many other investments in here as we look at education, transportation, and infrastructure. And today, just today, the Speaker had an infrastructure meeting in the Speaker's office with many individuals that felt that they had a way to not only incentivize an economy but also build on the infrastructure of America.

So many of my constituents and so many Americans are very concerned about the investment that's going on in Iraq right now. Crumbling bridges, railways are not what they should be as it relates to moving transportation. We have trains that can move freight almost 430 miles on one gallon of diesel fuel. I mean, these are things that we have to continue to work on to not only save our environment but also create American jobs.

And that's what I'm very excited about in this budget that we are putting forward, to give us the guideposts that we need in this country to not only do away with the debt by 2010 but also get the country moving in a direction so that it can be a safer place for our children and grandchildren.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we always want in the 30-Somethings to not only hear from the Members but also hear from the American people on various issues that are facing the Congress. Next week we are going to be on Easter break for the next couple of weeks once we finish our business this week, But

the 30-Something staff continues to work to come up with the great ideas that we put forth on behalf of the American people. And we are talking about Democrat and Republican, Independent, those that are thinking about voting and those that can't even vote yet.

Our e-mail address is 30-SomethingDems@mail.house.gov.

Again, 30-SomethingDems@mail.house.gov. Or if you want any of the information that we shared with you tonight about the budget, we know that you can go on www.budget.house.gov. Again, www.budget.house.gov. And any general information that you may want, what Democrats are doing here in Congress, www.speaker.gov, and I think that's easy enough to remember.

CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be here speaking on behalf of the American people and the class of 2006, the class that was elected to Congress to change the direction of the country, and that's what we've been set upon to do during these last 14 months.

And I appreciate very much the comments of my distinguished colleague from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and the great efforts he has made week after week to address the American people on the issues that are of critical importance to them.

We are going to talk tonight about the budget resolution as well because this is, above all things, the fundamental responsibility of the House of Representatives, the United States Congress. This is how we deal with all of the tax revenue that we generate in this country and how we essentially steward the funds of the population that depend on us to make good judgments for them.

And I'm joined tonight by my distinguished colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN) who has been a frequent participant in these sessions and someone who joins with us in our commitment to making life better for all Americans, making this an economy and a society that works for everyone and not just for the wealthiest.

There are lots of ways to frame budget debates, and there's always a risk that we get much too deep in numbers and we get way too deep in the weeds, and we don't talk about the big picture because the big picture is what most Americans want to deal with. They want the small picture of how it affects their daily lives. But they also want to know what we're about here, what our goals are, what our ambitions are for

the American people, what we are trying to do as we work through this \$3 trillion budget that we have to do each Congress.

And it's been interesting to sit and to stand and to listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, those Members who have been in charge of this body and in charge of the Federal budget essentially for the last 6 years and even in the Congress before that for another 6 years, and listen to them try to frame the issues in ways that understandably try to benefit their position.

But it's fascinating to listen as they talk about our budget, and somehow, because we don't plan to keep all of the Bush tax cuts in effect ad infinitum, that that somehow represents a tax increase.

And I have to remind everyone when I talk about issues that you remember what the Bush administration did and this Congress did when they enacted these tax cuts. They basically provided a sunset. They provided in the legislation that these tax cuts would end, and the reason they did that was because they wanted to be able to project somewhere out in the future that there would be a balanced budget in spite of the fact that they knew they were destined for huge deficits.

So they put a sunset, they put an end on those dates. Just as if you were in a business and you say, Okay, for 2 days only we are going to have a sale. We are going to give you 30 percent off. And that's the terms of the deal. So you come in on the fourth day and you say, Wait a minute. I want to pay that lower price. And the store says, Wait a minute. No. This was two days only 30 percent off. So you didn't raise the prices. You can't argue that we raised the prices. This was the way the deal was set up.

So now they're trying to have it both ways. They're trying to say we provided a tax cut, most of which went to the very wealthiest Americans, and now we are going to, because you are not willing to extend that tax cut, you are going to raise our taxes. No. We are going to end that two-day sale.

But what is really more disturbing than anything else, and I listened earlier to one of our colleagues from Wisconsin, one of your colleagues, Mr. KAGEN, that when he was talking about what this budget would mean if we did not extend the Bush tax cuts, it said the average American would have their taxes raised by \$1,000 or \$1,200 or \$3,000 when, in fact, that is kind of the magic of numbers and what you can do with them. Because if you take someone who is making \$10 million a year and you raise that person's taxes by 4 percent, which would be essentially restoring the maximum tax rate, pre-Bush tax cut rate to that person, and then you average it over thousands of people, yes, you are going to get an average tax hike of \$1,000 per person. But