This lady writes very eloquently to say she had been in the insurance business 19 years and her letter calls for us to protect a prescription drug benefit under Medicare for our seniors. She tells the story about her mother who died last November at the age of 87. As she was going through her mother's papers, she knew, of course, her mother had been on prescription medicines. I think, for about 20 years, the last 20 years of her life. She was going through all her bills, seeing what she had spent on medicine. She came across a credit card bill that had a balance owe of $6,000, and she was just shocked. She could not believe her mother, as frugal as she was, would have run up a $6,000 credit card bill and not taken care of it.

So she wrote letters to Visa. She found out she owed all these charges. It turned out all of them were for prescription medicines. Her mother had been spending about $300 a month on prescription medicines, and her Social Security check just was not enough for her to get by and take care of those medicines. The lady wrote me, she says, I think my mother understood that when she died, her home could be sold and I could pay off that $6,000 Visa bill for her. But she said my mother was a very proud woman.

No senior in this country should have to struggle like that to pay for their prescription medicines. We have seniors who are breaking their pills in half trying to take their medicine and being able to afford it. I have seniors that told me at a meeting that they routinely just take one every other day. A pharmacist was standing there. He said, “For some medicines, that can be extremely dangerous for you to do that.”

I had seniors come up to me and tell me that they actually have to make a choice every month of whether to buy groceries or to go fill those prescriptions. In a country as prosperous as we are today and as compassionate as we like to say we are, I believe we can do something about the problem of a prescription drug crisis for our senior citizens.

We talk about this big surplus that is going to arrive here over the next 10 years. I hope it does. I am not sure it will, but I hope it does. Some as we know on the other side of the aisle have proposed that we cut taxes to the tune. I believe Governor Bush says, of $1.6 trillion when we only have an estimated, hoped-for $2 trillion budget surplus. But I think if we are as compassionate as we like to say we are that surely we could set aside 10 percent over the next 10 years of that $2 trillion surplus and provide our senior citizens with a meaningful prescription drug benefit.

I know everybody wants tax cuts. I know everybody enjoys getting their taxes lower. But the truth is there is a basic need here that should not be ignored. And I think the vast majority of the American people agree with that. This is what we should do. This is the base examination of the Democratic prescription drug proposal as compared to the Republican proposal that the overwhelming majority of our seniors and of all Americans would be in favor of a prescription drug benefit under traditional Medicare as the Democrats propose in this country.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentleman. I think we are running out of time. The last point the gentleman made is so important. I really believe that one of the reasons why Governor Bush has proposed this scaled-down prescription drug plan that really only addresses some of the problems for low-income people is because he has proposed using so much of the surplus for this grandiose tax cut plan, which primarily benefits the wealthy and corporate interests, and so he does not have enough money left to pay for a Medicare prescription drug program along the way the Democrats have proposed. And so that has actually forced him into some ways to propose this more scaled-down version that will only help some low-income people. That is unfortunate, because if we have a surplus, and you and I both know are worried about these estimates and whether the level of surplus that is being talked about will ever materialize, but there is certainly enough that we could provide the prescription drug program along the lines of what the Democrats have proposed. I would hate to see that not happen just because of Governor Bush’s tax proposals and the tax proposals that the Republicans have put forward, which I think really do not help in any significant way the average American.

I just want to say we were here again tonight as Democrats because we believe strongly that this is a major issue that should be addressed in this Congress, that is, providing a prescription drug program under Medicare. We are going to continue to be here every week until this Congress adjourns demanding that this issue be addressed.

NIGHTSIDE CHAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETTERSON of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Until the end of Congress, I am going to be here to rebut the gentleman from New Jersey who employs the doctrine of fear. He likes to get up here in front of the microphone and speak to all of you and give these misstatements, misleading statements, inaccurate statements. Less than 5 minutes ago, I just heard the gentleman from New Jersey say, and I quote, The Republican leadership, speaking of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Salt Lake, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMY), the majority leader, they used the word “cruel,” they throw a few buckats at the insurance companies. And then these Democrats talk about the drug companies. We are going to be caught in this wonderful net, and all of your needs, your prescription needs, your medical needs will all be met by this Democratic Congress and by this Democratic Gore plan. Have you ever heard of the proposition. You don’t get nothing for free? Somewhere somebody has got to pay for it. You better figure out what the problem is. I think we can agree on the problem. The Democrats that were up here, they would like you to believe that they are the only ones that understand that there are prescription service problems out there in our society and that they are the ones with the solution and their solution is very simple.

It tracks the Canadian health care plan. It is nationalized health care. It is socialized health care. The Republicans and frankly some conservative Democrats are saying, Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Before we jump into this pool of nationalized medicine, what you tried to do with Hillary Clinton about 6 or 7 years ago, 7 or 8 years ago, let’s take a look at what the ramifications are; let’s study other nations that have jumped into the same pool that you want us to jump into, for example, Canada, and take a look at what the Canadian system has that is better than our system.

That is what I propose you do. Before you jump into the pool, take a look at what the unintended consequences are. Maybe there are some things in the Canadian health care system that are better than the American system. But I would tell you this, that in America you still get the best health care anywhere in the world. When they like to come up here and talk about the uninsured Americans, remember that there are different categories. You may have somebody that is uninsured; but no matter where you are in America, you can never be denied emergency care at a hospital if that hospital receives government funds. And I do not know any hospital that I am sure there are a couple of them out there but not very many more that do not operate on government funds.

The fact is, the prescription drugs in this country, the prices that are being charged for them are outrageous. There is no question that the angel here is not the pharmaceutical companies. But let me tell you, there is also something to be said about the research that these pharmaceutical companies are doing so that we have better medicines.

You take a look at the kind of medicines we have today, just in the last
few years. I can remember 3 years ago when you got diarrhea, you drank that junk, that pink junk, you drank it. You drank the whole thing of it to try to get rid of the diarrhea. Today you buy a little packet about this big with little pills, you pop one pill and that is it. Our country is the country that makes advancements. We have got to do something about the outrageous prices for medicine, but frankly it appears that there is some gouging going on out there.

But before my colleagues addresses that problem, take a very careful look at what the Democrat, the liberal Democrat approach is, because I assure my colleagues in the long run, first of all, they promise it will only be 10 percent of the surplus and a much, much smaller percent of the budget and nothing will grow and grow and grow; and it is the open door for socialized medicine in this country, for a national health care, and there are a lot of people who, in my opinion, will suffer under a national health care plan. So in summary on this health care plan. We are not going to get anywhere with a nationalized health care plan. We are not going to get anywhere with socialized medicine.

Remember, every time, and I cannot say this strong enough, every time the government assumes one of your responsibilities, it makes it a burden of theirs, they take something with it. It comes with a price. Somewhere we are losing a freedom. Somewhere we are going to lose the ability to have choice in the future.

So in summary on this health care plan, let me say, I am discouraged by the comments that were made previous to my speaking here this evening. We do not get anywhere, and I direct my remarks at the liberal Democrats. Look, we are not going to get anywhere with a nationalized health care plan. We are not going to get anywhere with socialized medicine.

Why do you not sit down instead of something for nothing. And they are getting this cruel conspiracy going on by throwing a few bucks at insurance companies? Why do you not put the election-year rhetoric aside and sit down with us and help us try and figure out what a solution to that problem.

Every day that we use that kind of rhetoric, there are people out there who are suffering because my colleagues are not willing to sit down and put their heads together to come up with a solution. And there is a solution.

I am optimistic that we can have a solution. We do have a great country, and we have made wonderful strides in health care. But clearly we have got some problems in that system, but we can fix it without having our health care provided by the United States of America, which means they are going to oversee what doctors you see. They are going to oversee what kind of prescriptions you get. They are going to oversee what kind of treatments you get. They are going to oversee how often you are going to get to see this doctor or that doctor. Socialized or national medicine is not the magic answer it appears to be.

Tonight it is very easy to buy into this, very easy to buy into this, because the Democrats, the liberal side over here, not all Democrats, I stand corrected, the liberal Democrats over here, they think you are going to get something for nothing. And they are saying, look, it is easy for us to afford it, no problem. Remember, you do not get something for nothing.

Let me switch subjects and talk about something much, much more pertinent, I think, really because of the Olympics. I hope some of you have are watching the Olympics, how exciting that is, even if it is taped NBC or whoever does that. The reality of it is what we get to see clear across the ocean in Sydney and watch those Olympics, and I am very proud of those people.
I want to tell you I heard an advertisement, I will not tell you the name of the company the other day, but I heard something about the Olympics, and it said our young men and women that go over there to compete in the Olympics, they will come home heroes. And I thought to myself, you know, they will come over celebrities, I would like to have their autographs. I am proud of them.

But I think using the word heroes is somewhat of a delusion. I think the real word of heroes is used in a different type of setting. There are sports celebrities, and there are heroes.

I have a perfect example. I am not just up here talking without giving you an example. It is happening this week in Pueblo, Colorado. First of all, on my way over I real quickly grabbed a dictionary. And the type of heroes is in Hero, a mythological or a legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability, an illustrious warrior, a man admired for his noble qualities, one that shows great courage.

With that said, let me read an editorial from one of the leading newspapers in the State of Colorado, the Pueblo Chieftain. It is called Patriots Week. What is Patriots Week about? This is a celebration of heroes.

This week, we anticipate more than 110 Americans, more than 110 Americans who have been decorated with the Medal of Honor, which is the highest honor our country can give out. 110 of them will be in Pueblo, Colorado, to be honored by a city which was recently designated as one of the four finest communities to live in this country. Pueblo, Colorado, picked out of hundreds of communities. It was picked in the top gun.

This week Pueblo is hosting 110 medal of honor winners, and they are calling their week Patriots’ Week. Week is Patriots Week. What is Patriots Week about? This week Pueblo, Colorado. Let me talk about Drew Dix. I will point out Drew here. Drew right here. By the way, a special hello to his mother, a very sweet person in Pueblo, Colorado. Let me talk about Drew, Drew L. Dix. U.S. Army Special Forces Vietnam, citation for conspicuous gallantry in the action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.

Sergeant Dix distinguished himself by exceptional heroism by serving as a unit advisor to heavily armed Vietcong battalions attacked the providence capital of Chau Phu resulting in complete breakdown and fragmentation of the defenses of the city.

Sergeant Dix with a patrol of Vietnamese soldiers was recalled to assist in the defense of the city. Learning that a nurse was trapped in a house near the center of the city, Sergeant Dix organized a relief force, successfully rescued the nurse and returned her safely to the tactics operations center; but that is not all.

Being informed that now there were other trapped civilians within the city, Sergeant Dix voluntarily led another force to rescue eight civilian employees located in a building which was under heavy mortar and small arms fire. Sergeant Dix then returned to the center of the city. Upon approaching a building, he was subjected to intense automatic rifle and machine gun fire from an unknown number of Vietcong. He personally assaulted the building, killing six of the Vietcong and rescuing two Philippines. The following day, Sergeant Dix, still on his own volition, assembled a 20-man force, and though under intense enemy fire, cleared the Vietcong out of the hotel, the theater and other adjacent buildings within the city.

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE
During this portion of the attack, Army Republic of Vietnam soldiers, inspired by the heroism and courage of Sergeant Dix, rallied and commenced firing upon the Viet Cong. Sergeant Dix individually captured 20 prisoners, including a high ranking Viet Cong official. He then attacked enemy troops who had entered the residence of the deputy providence chief and was successful in rescuing the official’s wife and children.

Sergeant Dix’s personal heroic actions resulted in 14 confirmed Viet Cong killed in action and possibly 25 more. The capture of 20 prisoners, 15 weapons and the rescue of 14 United States and free world civilians. The heroism of Sergeant Dix was in the highest tradition and reflects great credit upon the United States Army.

Raymond Jerry Murphy, and if you ever go to Pueblo, Colorado, you will see Murphy Boulevard. I mean, these guys are real heroes. Their community loves them, their country has deep respect for Medal of Honor winners. Excuse me. Not winners they did not win it. Medal of Honor recipients, and I stand corrected on that.

Raymond Jerry Murphy, United States Marine Corps, Korea, citation for conspicuous gallantry at the risk of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty as a platoon commander of Company A, an action against enemy aggressor forces. Although painfully wounded by fragments from an enemy mortar shell while leading his evacuation platoon in support of assault units attacking a cleverly concealed and well-entrenched hostile force occupying an enemy-held position on hill 424, the third platoon in which Private Crawford was a squad scout attacked as a base platoon for the company. After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine and small arms fire. Locating one of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Private Crawford, without orders, and on his own initiative, moved over the hill under enemy fire to a point within a few yards of the machine gun emplacement and single-handedly destroyed the machine gun and killed three of the crew with a hand grenade; thus enabling his platoon to continue its advance.

When the platoon, after reaching the crest, was once more delayed by enemy fire, Private Crawford again, in face of continuous fire from the other machine gun, and small arms fire, skillfully maneuvering his force from one position to the next and shouting words of encouragement. Undeterred by the increasing intense enemy fire, he immediately located casualties as they fell and made several trips up and down the fire swept hill to direct evacuation teams to the wounded, personally carrying many of the stricken Marines to safety.

When reinforcements were needed by the assault elements, Second Lieutenant Murphy employed part of his unit as support and during the ensuing battle personally killed two of the enemy with his own pistol.

With all of the wounded evacuated and the assaulting units beginning to disengage, rallying and re-forming. Second Lieutenant Murphy employed part of his unit as support and during the ensuing battle personally killed two of the enemy with his own pistol.

After reaching the base of the hill, he organized a search party and again as-scended the slope for a final check on missing Marines, locating and carrying away the bodies of machine gun crew back to the hill, hilling them in a grenade. While conducting the entire force to the line of departure through a continuing barrage of enemy small arms artillery and mortar fire, he again refused medical assistance until assured that every one of his men, including all of the casualties, had preceded him to the main lines.

His resolute and inspiring leadership and exceptional fortitude and great personal valor reflect the highest credit upon Second Lieutenant Murphy and enhance the finest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.

William Crawford, our third Pueblo citizen, United States Army, World War II, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty in action, with the enemy in Italy, 13 September 1943, when Company I attacked an enemy-held position on hill 424, the third platoon in which Private Crawford was a squad scout attacked as a base platoon for the company. After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine and small arms fire. Locating one of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Private Crawford, without orders, and on his own initiative, moved over the hill under enemy fire to a point within a few yards of the machine gun emplacement and single-handedly destroyed the machine gun and killed three of the crew with a hand grenade; thus enabling his platoon to continue its advance.

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His resolute and inspiring leadership and exceptional fortitude and great personal valor reflect the highest credit upon Second Lieutenant Murphy and enhance the finest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.
This weekend I had a wonderful opportunity to spend with my wife and my parents in Meeker, Colorado, and we went to an old cemetery, an old cemetery, we were in the old section of the cemetery, and I walked by a grave and it was a young man, not much on the gravestone, had the gentlemen's name, had his birth. He was 22 years old, and all it said on the gravestone was he died for his country.

As we know, we have thousands and thousands and thousands of men and women in this country who have died for their country, and we have hundreds of thousands of men and women who have fought bravely for what this country stands for, for the freedom of this country, for the benefit of all of us.

We cannot acknowledge everybody with a Medal of Honor, so we know that there are brave and courageous individuals out there who should have received the Medal of Honor, who earned the Medal of Honor but did not receive it, but we do know we still have a group of individuals who did receive the Medal of Honor, and they truly should own lock, stock and barrel the title of hero.

**What Kind of Violence Are We Educating Our Children With?**

Mr. McNINIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on. It is election year so in the last week and a half we all of a sudden begin to hear about a problem that, frankly, I addressed over a year ago. Not that I knew that I could foresee this problem, we had a lot of people talking about it after the Columbine High School tragedy in Colorado, and that is, what kind of violence are we educating our young people with?

We know that at tender ages, at young ages, that is an opportunity, probably the maximum opportunity, to mold a young person, to influence a young person, to set him upon a direction in the life that they are beginning. Unfortunately, for example, the tobacco companies took full advantage of that. They marketed their products to very, very young individuals because they knew, frankly, that they could get them addicted. They knew what the disease was that they would cause. They knew the evils of tobacco, but nonetheless they knew their customer base had to constantly be renewed and the best way to renew it was to go into this fragile age, say 14, or maybe 12 to about 17, and get them hooked on the product that you wanted them to buy.

Well, we see the same kind of thing happening today in the video game industry. There is actually a market out there not for what I would consider bad entertainment but what I would consider trash. Now, look, I am not up here at the moment to tell my colleagues what movies like all the rest of you. I enjoy them. In fact, I watch Titanic any time I get an opportunity to. I have lots of favorite movies. So do you. There are a lot of neat things about Hollywood. In fact, I think films in America really speak freedom throughout the world. It is as America travels what kind of influence America has because there is American music in these countries, in China, for example, or when the American movie industry starts to creep into China, freedoms, personal freedoms are about. So I think Hollywood has a very strong place in our society, and I think that under our First Amendment they have constitutional privilege, and 99 percent of the product that comes out of there is good product, but unfortunately 1 percent of it is being ignored by the other 99 percent.

Now I am not talking about entertainment that I do not like. Look, there are movies out there that I would not watch. There is music out there that I am not entertained by. I can assure you that my three children, who are all now in college, are not exactly entertained by the music that I listen to and they are not necessarily entertained by the kind of movies I like to go to. So I am not talking about music that is not entertaining to my ears or to my sight. What I am talking about is violence that is being marketed in a retail_dense clear across America.

Now some people have said, well, what should government do about it? I do not think we need what is called a recreation or an entertainment czar. I do not think we need that any more than we need socialized medicine in this country. Our country prides itself on saying to the individuals, look, you have personal responsibility. The people in America still exercise a great deal of personal responsibility. So what can the government do about this? I think we have to emphasize upon them that we have to communicate a message to the maximum amount of our constituents.

For example, I had not been in a video arcade in a long time before last year. After Columbine, I was at the Denver International Airport and I decided to go into the video arcade, and I think out of the 27 games in that video arcade in Denver, Colorado, well over half of them were games of killing somebody; violence; games of shooting each other.

Now to the credit, Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, Colorado, I called the city and I said, hey, I have just become aware of this. We do not have anything in the government that prohibits the City of Denver from leasing this video product that you wanted them to buy. We have a responsibility to our young people. This incident that occurred at Columbine High School, it did not occur because of this magazine, but let me tell my colleagues, there are some violent things out there, in my opinion, that have occurred as a result of this kind of game.

Let me show you the magazine. Let me show my colleagues. I have blown up the ad. This ad is available to our children and our constituents. Any constituent out there that has children, they can go to the store and pick one up this magazine, no problem. This magazine right here. It markets terror, it markets violence, it markets death, and it markets it in such a way that it knows that the typical 13-year-old or 14-year-old will grab this and begin to become influenced and molded by what they are seeing, and pretty soon, what they are playing when they buy the video game.

For example, on this chart here, this is a video game that is advertised in this magazine. This magazine is called Next Generation. This is the ad, a full, 2-page center-fold ad. The name of the game and the name of this ad is “You're Going to Die.” This is what is being marketed out there: “You’re Going to Die.”

Now, in the last week, Hollywood has gotten defensive, and I have heard some artists say well, you cannot impede on the right of free speech and an artist's opportunity to have free thought. “Come on. We have to have some peer enforcement. We have to exercise responsibility.”

Mr. Speaker, I happen to agree with Hollywood, I do not think the government has a right to come in and an entertainment czar. But I do think, and I would say to my colleagues that if we have constituents in the entertainment industry, that we have to emphasize upon them, look, we all have a duty, a responsibility to our young people. This incident that occurred at Columbine High School, it did not occur because of this magazine, but let me tell my colleagues, there are some violent things out there, in my opinion, that have occurred as a result of this kind of game.

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Now, take a look at this ad. This is the video game that we can buy. “You're Going to Die.” You will see right here to my left the individual, this is a person who has been shot, that red is obviously blood. Let me tell my colleagues what the game offers. It offers its player to zoom in, to zoom in...
on this game, right up here, one can zoom in on one's computer, and one can target specific body parts and actually successfully kill the victim. Even the onlookers by recruiting the gang members you want on your side. Talk to people the way you want, talk to them any way you want on the video game. Actual game play screens, built on top of the revolutionary Quake 2 engine, includes multi-player gang bang death match for up to 16 thugs. Life of crime. Unbelievable.

I pulled it up tonight. I web to the web site. Needless to say, a year ago, when my constituent came to me with this as they were discussing it, it occurred at the Columbine High School in Colorado, I was amazed.

I contacted the executives of one of the magazines that advertises this type of advertising and then too, I contacted the publishers of this game, and I asked those executives; in fact, I disclosed their names on the House Floor, I asked those executives about their own children. Believe it or not, on the web sites, on their web sites they disclosed their background, or maybe on financial documents under public corporation disclosure, they described their families.

So I wrote them and I said, Mr. Executive, Mr. Big Corporation Executive, do you allow your children to go buy the product that you are trying to market intensely to every other child in America? I will bet any amount of money, I say to my colleagues, that not one of the executives of this company that has children to possess this game that they, in turn, are marketing to every other American family that has children the same age they have, young children. Not one of those executives puts that trash in their home, which I contacted the executives of one of the magazines that advertises this type of advertising, and Imagine Publishing, by the way, is the magazine that puts this stuff out. I asked Imagine, I talked to some of their executives about a year ago, why do you put this kind of stuff in? Well, they start to give me the freedom of speech and the First Amendment. I said, wait a second, wait a second. Why do you put this stuff in there? Would you let your own children play with it? Well, no, but that is not the point, they said. The point is that really we do not censor.

Essentially, anybody that wants to put something in one of the Imagine publications, why, this is just fine. Do they have any sense of responsibility to the community that they, maybe they ought to say no? I did not get any idea at all. I did not get any feeling that the Imagine Publishing Corporation cared at all about any kind of community responsibility to the young people that picked up their magazine called Next Generation right here and saw this ad and went out to buy that kind of video game.

Now, of course I contacted Interplay, as I mentioned earlier, I contacted Interplay, and as I mentioned earlier in my remarks, I contacted Interplay, and as I mentioned earlier in my remarks, I said to them, do you let your own children do it? Why do you go out to America, why do you go out to our communities and market this kind of crap? Why do you do it? Look at this garbage. Do you think it is a distortion of reality? Do you think that you, in effect, are brainwashing our young people, that violence is the answer? And to think nothing of being proud of the exit wounds the size of the exit wound that you create in a body, and that if you want to get around town you just steal a bike or a train, and then if you have a gang member you do not get along with, waste him, you are going to do it anyway.

So my conclusion is this, I say to my colleagues. We have to shoulder a responsibility to go into our communities. We should go and look in our local arcades. Most of the video arcade dealers that I have talked to, and prior to last year I had not gone into video arcades since my kids were that big playing pinball machines, and they have changed a lot. And my bet is most of my colleagues have not gone into their own districts and stopped just at a regular video arcade store to take a look at the games that are being played. But I have done that in the last year, and I can tell my colleagues, that most of the video arcade owners that I have talked to responded much the same way that the city of Denver responded saying, wow, we really were not paying attention to it. We will get this stuff out of here.

Mr. Speaker, I can also tell my colleagues that I went to the advertisers. I figured I was not going to get this publisher to do anything, because he wanted the cash; and, by the way, there was a she too, a she executive, and they wanted the cash in their pocket. They could care less, in my opinion, about community responsibility towards our youth and violence.

So I went to the advertisers, and I tried to encourage the advertisers not to buy advertising in this magazine. I set up meetings; it did not require Federal law, it did not require U.S. Congressional action. I set up meetings with Target, with City Market, King Super Corporation with Wal-Mart Corporation with J.C. Penny Corporation. Every one of those retailers was responsible and every one of those retailers has taken not large steps, but small steps and, in some regards, some aggressive steps towards doing something about making sure that this kind of stuff, this kind of true violence is taken off of those retail shelves, is not being offered for sale by some of these retailers.

Mr. Speaker, that is what I am speaking here tonight about. I think we have an obligation.

I know that in the last week Al Gore prided himself on taking on Hollywood. I think we have to go to the grassroots. I think each one of us, each one of my colleagues, we need to go into our communities, take it by the grassroots, just like we are doing in our political campaigns in the next 5 or 6 weeks and talk to our local video arcades, talk to our local parent-teacher organizations, talk to our local churches and say, hey, here is somebody over here, we ought to ask them to take this stuff off of their shelves. We ought to go to the local Wal-Mart or local
Target or local K-Mart, or the bookstore, and if they have this kind of stuff, we were there. They had to pay for these things, and I think we would get a pretty positive response. Because most citizens out there, unlike the executives of Interplay, and unlike the executives of Imagine, most people out there that are proprietors that have their own businesses and who are operating these businesses and have more community responsibility. After all, they are a part of the community.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we can be successful, and I do not think we need to take the kind of action that requires Federal oversight.

ELIMINATING THE DEATH TAX

Mr. M CINNIS. Mr. Speaker, let me move on to another subject very quickly. I am going to wrap up with a letter that I got after our last discussion. In our last night side chat, we talked about the death tax. We talked about the fact that the President at that time was going to veto, and has subsequently vetoed; not only supports death as a taxable event, but that the Clinton-Gore administration actually proposed this year in their budget a $9.5 billion increase in the death tax.

Now, it was amazing how much I heard, the rhetoric, about how the death tax only hits 2 percent of the community. It hits the entire community. Many families, many who have money that circulates within that community, and we move it from that community to Washington, D.C. to the bureaucracy and the U.S. Federal Government for redistribution. I can assure my colleagues that not a fraction of what we send in goes back to our community.

I got a very interesting letter subsequent to that and I would like to read just parts of it.

Although my own personal experience seemingly pales in comparison to the families in Colorado and Idaho who lost ranches and farms in order to pay estate taxes, I can still easily relate to the frustrations that those families are experiencing. I am just one of the growing number of middle-class Americans who feel that they have literally been "screwed" by their own government, and I encourage you to continue in your efforts to repeal our country’s death tax laws now to prevent more of us from having to experience what my own family recently experienced.

My mother fought a valiant battle against breast cancer for a few years, but passed away in 1996. Sadly, she had just turned 65 years of age. She was a retired school nurse, and also worked hard as a nurse for many years to pay college tuition for my sister and I. Dad worked most of his life for a defense contractor as an aerospace engineer. You can see that both of my parents were not farmers or ranchers, but they worked at jobs that many ordinary Americans work at. Both of my parents were known in families that survived the Great Depression, and as a result, they acquired a deep appreciation for the value of a dollar. They both worked hard and they were proud of what they did.

They were wealthy in many ways, but they certainly were not rich. When mom and dad were in their early thirties they purchased a home in a typical middle-class track neighborhood on Long Island for about $16,000. They resided there for 40 years, and last year my sister and I had to sell the house, which had more than doubled in value, what my folks bought it for, and every penny we got from that House went to the Federal Government to pay for the death tax.

Dad passed away unexpectedly. We knew that my folks had planned all their lives for retirement, but we didn’t have any idea how they really had saved all those years. They did not have an extravagant lifestyle, but they lived comfortable, as many middle-class American families do. Upon retirement, dad and mom wanted to ensure that they could continue to live in the standard of living they had to come to enjoy as middle-class Americans during their prime earning years. Unfortunately, neither one of my parents had gotten around to do the necessary planning to have their pension account, their savings or from the proceeds of the sale of their home. Rather, as I just mentioned, my sister and I were forced to sell our home to pay the death tax. This is a very punitive way of working against communities. And what bothers me the most is not, of course, the Kennedys and the Fords and the Carnagies and all those people. They have lawyers to plan to save their estate. But what bothers me the most is the small communities, where somebody who has been successful in that community and that money is working in that community, either through contributions, charity or, and if you own it, you are subject to that death tax. It is a very punitive way of working against communities.

There aren’t as many farms anymore, for many reasons. Many farmers, like my sister and I, who are now just beginning to inherit the wealth of a previous generation, were born and raised in suburban cities and subdivisions. Even here in Colorado Springs, my own kids are far removed from the rural farming communities that you had referred to in Colorado and Idaho. But, nonetheless, many city folks from previous generations also worked hard all of their lives. While they do not have farms or ranches to leave to their children, they do have other kinds of assets to bequeath.

While the estates of middle-income Americans often will not qualify them to be included among the rich and famous, these estates often will not qualify them to be in the death tax. This is middle-class America. As I said earlier in my comments, few are a contractor, all you have to do is own a dump truck, a pickup, a bulldozer and a backhoe, and if you own it, you are subject to that death tax. It has a very punitive way of working against communities.

So, you know, I know there has been a lot made about the death tax and the President says and the vice president, well, it is a tax for them. This is middle-class America. As I said earlier in my comments, few are contractors, all you have to do is own a dump truck, a pickup, a bulldozer and a backhoe, and if you own it, you are subject to that death tax. It has a very punitive way of working against communities. And what bothers me the most is not, of course, the Kennedys and the Fords and the Carnagies and all those people.

It simply can be summed up in a couple or three words: It is not fair.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to: Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE (at the request of Mr. ARMey) for today on account of travel delays.

Mr. SAXTON (at the request of Mr. ARMey) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. WAMP (at the request of Mr. ARMey) for today on account of flight cancellation.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to: (The following Members (at the request of Ms. NORTON) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material): Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PAUL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material): Mr. KUYKENDALL, for 5 minutes, today.)