

binge of the past which mortgages the future of America's most precious resource—her young people—because we are unwilling to exercise restraint needed to forego immediate gratification.

We have a solemn duty to provide a better world for future generations. Will Allen Dromgoole, in his poem "The Bridge Builder," describes an old man's effort to cross a river flowing through a vast, deep, and wide chasm. Even though the old man never had to repeat the treacherous journey, he built a bridge over the river. A fellow traveler asked the old man why he was wasting his strength building a bridge he would never use. The builder lifted his old gray head and responded:

There followeth after me today
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm, that has been naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.

Mr. Chairman, I implore all Members to be like the selfless bridge builder and vote for this legislation which will build a bridge to a better world for those who follow.

THE 7 YEAR BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2491) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 105 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1996:

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Chairman, I come to the well today to speak in favor of the Republican plan to allow seniors to increase their earnings without being penalized. Senior citizens made this country strong with their long and arduous labors year in and year out. They taught me and my generation how to profit from a strong work ethic. Yet, we need to stop punishing them for their desire to remain active. We need to recognize that many seniors want to work longer. We need to reward those who continue to work or operate a business. We can no longer force them to choose between an active and productive life and Social Security benefits.

Under current law, seniors between the ages of 65 and 69 lose \$1 in benefits for every dollar they earn over \$11,160. This earnings test amounts to an additional 33 percent marginal tax rate. This marginal rate is on top of the taxes they already pay on their earnings. This draconian test punishes seniors who want to work beyond the age of 64.

It is unconscionable that in times of shrinking fiscal resources at the Federal level, that we would punish seniors who seek to remain financially independent. With so severe an earnings limit we essentially force them to become more reliant on Government spending and congressional action. Such an unhealthy reliance undermines the self esteem of seniors and makes the governing role of Congress more difficult.

Our proposal today, would raise the earning potential of seniors to \$30,000 over 5 years

and more immediately they can earn \$15,000 beginning on January 1, 1996. This change goes a long way to providing equity to the hard working seniors of this great country and I am proud to be associated with it.

THE 7 YEAR BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. RONALD D. COLEMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2491) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 105 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1996:

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Chairman, Republicans have not only targeted the sick, disabled, elderly, and women in this Congress, but now they are targeting children. Children do not have a voice in the legislature, but trust us to protect their interests. This Congress has betrayed that trust by waging an all-out war on children in the budget.

The battle has been waged on a number of different fronts: health care, disabled assistance, education, nutrition, and social safety nets.

In Texas, Medicaid coverage for as many as 206,641 children will be eliminated under Republican proposals by 2002. Currently, 20 percent of all children in Texas rely on Medicaid for their basic health needs. Medicaid pays for immunizations, regular checkups, and intensive care for about 1,407,000 children in Texas.

There are 148,287 El Pasoans who are eligible for Medicaid. Of those eligible, approximately 57,000 are children between the ages of 1 and 14.

The Republican budget also repeals the Vaccines for Children Program, putting at risk at least \$1.5 billion over 7 years that would otherwise provide immunizations for children in Texas and across the Nation. In the last few years, El Paso has been the site of several outbreaks of serious diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis. Without vaccines for contagious diseases, the health of the border region would be in great danger.

Children with disabilities are at risk as well. The Republican welfare plan denies as many as 54 percent of all disabled children in Texas SSI cash benefits in 2002.

Texas education programs are vitally important to sustain a good economy, and my Republican colleagues are set on destroying our educational system. In Texas, Head Start would be denied to 12,512 children in 2002 under the Republican budget. The cuts would also deny title I funding to 100,100 children in Texas.

Not only are we reducing funds in assisting education, but we are reducing the ability of administrators to keep their schools safe. The Republican budget cuts funding to the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program which supplies funding to 1,043 out of 1,053 school districts in Texas who use the money to keep crime, violence, and drugs away from the children in their schools.

Not only does the budget limit the opportunities students have, but it limits the opportuni-

ties they will have outside of school when they try to enter the work force. The budget will deny approximately 3,000 young people in Texas the opportunity to serve their community through AmeriCorps. And over 7 years, the Republican budget eliminates summer jobs for 297,437 youths in Texas.

In this family friendly Congress Republicans are picking and choosing what type of families they want to help. For example, the Republican welfare bill cuts foster care and adoption for vulnerable Texas children by \$359.5 million over 7 years and eliminates cash assistance for 5,260 children in Texas simply because they were born to unmarried mothers under 18. Additionally, assistance would be cut to 222,000 children in Texas simply because their paternity has not been established.

The effort to balance the budget should not include an unnecessary and harsh attack on children and their interests. They are the future of this country and we must treat them as assets, not liabilities.

THE 7 YEAR BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2491) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 105 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1996:

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this heinous attempt by the Republican majority to balance the budget at the expense of the Nation's elderly. This hysteria surrounding the mandate to balance the budget in 7 years is nothing short of a hoax being perpetrated on the American people to conceal the true Republican agenda. If the Republicans were so interested in balancing the Federal budget, would they be proposing a royalty holiday for major oil producers, many of whom are not even American companies? If the Republicans were truly interested in balancing the Federal budget, would they be proposing the elimination of the guaranteed minimum tax on corporations? Does it make sense to propose a \$242 billion tax cut if your objective is to balance the budget? How many of the American people know that the debate over balancing the budget is being conducted in an environment where half the budget isn't even on the table?

The result, Mr. Chairman, is that we have a program to revise Medicare which, like the entire Republican program, is regressive in the extreme. It gives special breaks to doctors; it increases premiums for people who can least afford it; it distorts medical financing systems, particularly of hospitals that serve the poor; it sets up dynamics that could lead to the concentration of the poorest and least healthy people in the most inadequate coverage. The Republicans have maintained that the premiums of the poorest elderly will continue to be paid, but this is just another deception. The very program which is responsible for paying these premiums is being eliminated under the Republican Medicaid reform package.

Nothing could make the true Republican intent more clear than an analysis of their approach to Medicare reform. If they had been concerned about protecting the health options of the elderly, they would have pursued comprehensive health care reform. The Republican agenda has nothing to do with protecting Medicare, or with balancing the budget. It has to do with making good on campaign promises to corporations. It has to do with eliminating, on every conceivable front, our social obligation to invest in our people. It has to do with vitiating the very meaning of this democracy. It has to do with tearing at the fabric of our social institutions so that those at the bottom of heap, who can least fend for themselves—our children, our elderly, our poor—have no chance of improving the quality of their lives. It is about redistributing the resources of our country to those that already have plenty so that they can get more.

H.R. 2425 is a bad bill. It does not address the broader issue of health care reform; it places unnecessary burdens on the elderly and the poor; it devastates medical training facilities, and is mainly a financial vehicle to balance the budget while reducing taxes for the affluent. We can do better for the elderly, we can do better for our future as a democratic society. I urge my colleagues to consider who we are to be become as a people before they vote on this measure, because it is that question that this bill puts to the test.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

HON. BILL RICHARDSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 30, 1995

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of meeting President Ernesto Perez Balladares of Panama for the first time last week. The occasion was a meeting hosted by Enrique Iglesias, president of the IDB, at which many senior level representatives of the U.S. Government agencies that closely follow the affairs of our two countries were present, as well as senior officials from the international financial institutions.

The feeling around the table was unanimous that the structural economic achievements obtained by President Perez Balladares' administration, after only 1 year in office, were considerable, particularly in terms of modernizing and opening up Panama's economy to private domestic and foreign investment.

These include modern legislation to streamline and level the playing field in terms of tax regulations and incentives; considerable flexibilization of heretofore rigid labor laws, and increased participation by the private sector in the key areas of telecommunications, energy, water supply, and ports. Increased investment in these areas are crucial for the successful implementation of the Panama Canal Treaties to which our two governments are fully committed.

Indeed, we heard as well from the Under Secretary of the Army, who is also Chairman of the Panama Canal Commission, a very positive report regarding the growing participation of Panamanians in the management and operation of the canal. I also took note of ongoing major capital investment projects de-

signed to guarantee the future of the canal, in particular the widening of the Culebra Cut. It is fully financed from increases in revenues from canal operations that have taken place made over the last few years.

By treaty rights, Mr. Speaker, these revenues belong to Panama, and could have easily been used by the Panamanian Government for other much needed investments in social and economic development projects; instead, they have been allocated in a conscious and, in my view, responsible decision by the Perez Balladares administration, to maintain and improve the viability of the canal well into the next century.

I wish to share with my colleagues my personal congratulations to the Government of Panama, and particularly to its President, Mr. Ernesto Perez Balladares, for its courageous and decided leadership in the hemisphere; particularly on such difficult issues as the war on drugs; for I also note from very recent media and intelligence reports of continuing and large seizures by his government of shipments of illicit substances destined for our shores. These actions and other strong measures to control and prevent money laundering, I might add, are being carried out in full cooperation with U.S. Government agencies and those of other governments.

I am confident that the United States and Panama will continue to strengthen their relations as we enter delicate exploratory talks on some sort of presence of our military in the Isthmus after the year 2000. I took the opportunity to tell the distinguished President of Panama that I support such a presence, Mr. Speaker, and that the Congress will do its part to support any efforts to strengthen the ties that bind our two nations.

BUDGET CONFEREES SHOULD SUPPORT THE HOUSE-PASSED 2- YEAR EXTENSION OF JET FUEL EXEMPTION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 30, 1995

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the past 5 years our airlines have posted losses of over \$13 billion. This has caused almost one-half of those to file for chapter 11 bankruptcy with three of them closing their doors completely. Because of these financial setbacks and heavy Government mandates, over 120,000 U.S. jobs have been lost.

Therefore, I believe that budget reconciliation conferees should support the House-passed measure that extends for 2 years the exemption of the aviation jet fuel tax. This new tax was supported by the Democrats and the Clinton administration and passed as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. I believe that this new tax will further burden the airline industry by imposing an additional \$500 million in new taxes in addition to the \$6.5 billion in excise taxes they already pay. To deny this extension could prove detrimental to the future of our airline industry when for the first time in 5 years they are showing slight improvements.

That is why it is so important that our budget conferees support the House-passed jet fuel extension that would give the airlines 2

years, not 17 months, to get back on the road to prosperity. The airlines are already facing a huge tax burden that affects their ability to operate and increases, by a substantial amount, the cost of traveling for all passengers. By delaying this tax, and eventually its repeal, we will help the airlines recover from a disastrous 5 years of losses, create more jobs, and decrease the travel cost for their passengers. I hope that my colleagues and the budget conferees will support the House position and eventually push for full repeal of this devastating tax.

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TRAVEL AND TOURISM

HON. VICTOR O. FRAZER

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 30, 1995

Mr. FRAZER. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to welcome the 1,700 delegates attending the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism to Washington, DC. It is with great price and honor that I also welcome Mrs. Angela Belfon, co-owner of World Wide Travel of St. Thomas, a small business person, as my delegate to the conference.

Small businesses represent the largest creator of jobs in the Nation. The travel and tourism industry is a major employer in the Virgin Islands, consisting primarily of small businesses. This vital segment of our economy must be supported.

Government can play a major role by fostering a partnership with the private sector. This partnership recognizes the importance of the industry as well as the Government's role in monitoring and promoting the travel and tourism industry.

The White House Conference on Travel and Tourism is a good example of how Government and businesses can work together to build a stronger economy.

TRIBUTE TO GENE YODER

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 30, 1995

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to Mr. Gene Yoder of Goshen, Indiana. Gene is retiring this year as Chairman of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, a position he has held since 1993.

No one has done more to care for older Americans in northern Indiana than Gene Yoder. For the past 25 years, Gene has served as President and CEO of Greencroft, Inc., a campus of senior housing and long-term care services in Goshen.

Greencroft has provided high quality housing and health care to hundreds of senior citizens over the years. In addition to his work at Greencroft, Gene has touched the lives of thousands of older Americans who reside in more than 5,000 long-term care facilities around the country which he has represented as AAHSA's leader.

Most recently, Gene led an AAHSA delegation which met privately with President Clinton