

THE \$50,000 TAX DEDUCTIBLE DINNER

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

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, the American people have a right to know—just who is coming to dinner tonight?

And what will they be getting in return for their \$50,000 tax deductible contribution to Empowerment TV?

This is the same tax exempt TV network that carries Speaker GINGRICH's college course.

The same tax deductible course that is the core of the Speaker's soon-to-be-very-profitable book deal.

Mr. Speaker, these interlocking networks of special interests—multi-million dollar think tanks and political action committees, many of them subsidized at taxpayer expense for personal or partisan political gain—is casting a long ethnical cloud over this House.

Is it any wonder that Public Citizen, Common Cause, and others have joined the chorus calling for an independent, nonpartisan investigation into the ethical charges surrounding the Speaker?

It is time for an outside counsel to untangle this web.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the more we delve into President Clinton's budget, the more we will find in it that we like and can support. As we heard already this morning, this budget will not be dead on arrival.

If the President has some good ideas that we can support while being consistent with our goal of smaller, less costly government, we will gladly incorporate some of his ideas into the budget.

But I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that upon initial examination the President's budget proposal is not very bold. In fact, it merely treads water.

Mr. Clinton constantly reminds us that he is the first President in memory to cut the deficit 3 years in a row. Well, that is a start, but it is not an end in itself. Under the President's own projections, the budget begins its upward path again next year.

We Republicans are committed to balancing the budget by the year 2002. If the President wants to help us, fine. But if he wants to remain wedded to the politics of the past, then we will act alone. However, one way or the other, rest assured, we will get the job done.

A \$50,000 A PLATE FUNDRAISER

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, tonight National Empowerment Television, the taxpayer-subsidized station which broadcasts Speaker GINGRICH's college course, is holding a \$50,000 a plate fundraiser. But it is the Speaker, not the filet mignon, that is the main course.

This lavish dinner speaks volumes about who Republicans represent. They are dining with the elite, at the same time Republicans are opposing a minimum wage increase for American workers. A full-time minimum wage worker would have to work 5¾ years to buy a seat at Mr. GINGRICH's table tonight.

Those lucky enough to have a spare fifty grand to buy a ticket for tonight's fundraiser will be rewarded with a nifty \$19,800 tax break. You see, National Empowerment Television operates as a nonprofit, even though it is the only TV station devoted solely to a particular political ideology. Like tonight's dinner, this is another example of the commingling of politics and special interests that has led to the calls for an outside counsel to look into and investigate Mr. GINGRICH's political and financial dealings.

RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW TO SOCIETY

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

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a former Federal prosecutor to discuss a topic that this body will soon debate: crime reform.

Crime in this country has reached epidemic proportions. It is time we as a body get serious about restoring the rule of law to our society.

Alexander Bickel of Yale University once said:

No society will long remain open and attached to peaceable politics and the decent and controlled use of public force if fear for personal safety is the ordinary experience for large numbers.

Yet sadly, today 8 out of every 10 Americans can expect to be the victim of a violent crime at least once in their lives.

It is apparent that the debate over these crime bills embroils us in more than simply an exchange of competing partisan ideas.

The coming debates will engage us in a struggle that affects the very core and future of American society.

As the discussions begin, I urge my colleagues to take swift and strong action on behalf of the well-being and safety of a nation's people.

APPOINTMENT OF OUTSIDE COUNSEL NEEDED

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the clouds of scandal once again are gathering above the House of Representatives. The Wall Street Journal has been running daily accounts of the special favors that the contributors of GOPAC and the contributors to the Progress and Freedom Foundation that are controlled by the Speaker have sought and received.

According to the Wall Street Journal, 10 percent of the contributors to the Progress and Freedom Foundation are makers of drugs and medical devices, whom we now learn are the same people who have sought special legislation and are now seeking to gut the Food and Drug Administration. What we as Members of the House are witnessing is very strong suggestion that the House of Representatives is somehow for sale.

This cannot be allowed to stand. We as Members deserve better, and the people of this Nation deserve better. It is imperative that the House Committee on Ethics and its chair, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, NANCY JOHNSON, move to appoint outside counsel. Given the ramifications of these stories and the fact that GOPAC and the Progress and Freedom Foundation are controlled by the Speaker, the committee has no other choice. It owes it to the people of this Nation to do so, and I urge my colleagues to call upon the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON] to appoint outside counsel.

ANOTHER CONTRACT WITH AMERICA ITEM PASSES HOUSE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, imagine going to the grocery store to buy your daily fruit, vegetables, and meat, and when you go through the counter the clerk reaches over and sticks some caviar in your grocery cart. And you say, "I don't want any caviar." And he says, "Tough, you want your meat and potatoes; you have to buy my caviar. And if get too sensitive, I am going to throw in some Twinkies."

Well, that is what the Congress has been doing to the American people and their President for too many years. But as of yesterday, with the passing of the line-item veto, we, the American people, can have our President stop it.

Item three on the Contract With America has now passed the House. Call your Senator, ask him or her to support the line-item veto, and then we can have that lean, green, grocery shopping machine that we all want. Cut out the fat, Mr. Speaker.

FUNDRAISING FOR NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT TELEVISION

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, tonight the Speaker of the House is the special host of a dinner to benefit National Empowerment Television, a radical right-wing TV station devoted solely to espouse reactionary views over the airways 24 hours a day. It is appalling that there is a TV station designed not to be objective, but to brainwash, and to boot it is tax deductible.

Just as appalling is the price tag for the dinner, \$50,000 a plate.

What do you they serve at a \$50,000-a-plate dinner? First is access, a chance to rub elbows with the Speaker; second, and just as outrageous, a huge taxpayer subsidy. That is right. Unlike meals most working Americans eat, this one comes with a special \$19,800 tax break. About a dozen people are attending the dinner, for a total tax break of \$237,600, enough money for 21,000 meals-on-wheels for the elderly.

□ 1120

By the way, if you are working for the minimum wage, it will take you 5 years, 45 weeks, 4 days, 2 hours and 33 minutes to pay for this one dinner. I guess that dinner will be served in the year 2000 on December 22. The fundraiser is wrong. The price tag is way out of line. The TV station is bizarre and the taxpayer subsidy is a disgrace.

MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union Address, President Clinton made the point that a Member of Congress earns more in a month that a minimum-wage worker earns in a year. Well, perhaps a more interesting statistic is the Federal Government spends more in less than 4 days than all the 3.5 million minimum-wage earners make in a full year. Yet in his new budget, the President proposes that we spend \$50 billion more next year than this year, \$50 billion we do not have.

While the President has taken some small, positive steps, it is clear he is not up to making the tough decisions on the budget. So we in Congress, yesterday, voted to give the President a new tool, the line-item veto. We would like to have the President as a partner, but we are prepared to go it alone in balancing the budget.

We are going to improve the lot of minimum-wage earners and middle-income Americans and the best way to do it is to get the Federal budget under control and grow the economy.

Our Contract With America will do precisely that by lowering taxes, reducing Federal regulation and Government spending and increasing incentives for work and investment. The results will be a balanced budget by the year 2002, the sooner, the better.

SPECIAL INTERESTS

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, to anyone who is wondering why Public Citizen, Common Cause, and almost every other good Government group I know and many others are calling for outside counsel to investigate the growing array of special interest connections that are alleged to be gathering at the Speaker's doorstep, watch tonight. Because tonight lifestyles of the rich and famous come to Washington.

Yes, for \$50,000 you can get a dinner. Well, the steak better be good. Yes, you can get a dinner, but you can also get access. And that dinner can be publicly subsidized because you as a taxpayer are going to pay \$19,800 for that dinner. So if you are outraged by that dinner, think about it. Especially on the very same day the Speaker is quoted in the Washington Post as saying public high school is nothing but publicly subsidized dating.

Please, what is wrong? Let us get on with an outside counsel and get this cleared up.

THE CRIME BILL

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

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Speaker, I have looked forward to this moment for a long time. These are my first remarks on the floor of the House.

I have waited for this moment for an important reason. The crime bill that we are about to consider this week is one of the most important things that this Congress will do in the entire 2 years we are here.

I have said many times that the crime bill that passed last year was not an example of everything that is wrong with Congress. It was directed at an important national problem, but it did not solve that problem. It spread social spending out in every congressional district, a little bit of pork for every Congressman. It was the worst tradition of politics as usual.

This year we are going to be different. This year's bill focuses on what the Federal Government can do to solve the crime problem, including building more prisons, changing some of our procedural rules, and sending the responsibility back to the local governments to decide what to do.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here. I am proud of this Congress. And I look forward to dealing with this crime bill over the next week.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the distance between low- and high-income families is growing. We must act now to close that gap. If we do not act, the cost of basic necessities—housing, food, and clothing—may be unaffordable for these families. Those costs are rising. Earnings for low-income families are falling. An increase in the minimum wage, as proposed by the President, will help to close the gap. With no minimum wage increase, those with little money end up with less money.

An increase in the minimum wage will not provide plenty, but it can raise working families out of poverty. In 1993, high-income families averaged \$104,616 in earnings. Low-income families averaged \$12,964. Between 1980 and 1992, income for the top 20 percent in America increased by 16 percent while income for the bottom 20 percent decreased by 7 percent. An increase in the minimum wage will help low-income families, but it will not hurt high-income families. The growing income gap hurts the economy. The best welfare reform is minimum wage reform. Low-income workers are helped. The economy is helped. No one is hurt. If we want to help people, we should help them and not hurt them.

PUT TEETH BACK IN THE CRIME BILL

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, when the Democrats passed their soft-on-crime bill last year, we were assured that it would be tough on criminals and attack crime's root causes. But once the American people learned what it was—dance classes and midnight basketball, what they called hugs for thugs—they issued a very different verdict at the polls. They said the Democrat crime bill was guilty of being pollyannaish, that it coddled criminals instead of incarcerating them, and they said, "We want our streets back. We want the criminal justice system to act as a deterrent. We believe that you have got to catch, convict, and confine. That is what criminal justice is all about."

When we take up the crime bill today, we are going to put some real teeth back into it and give our police and prosecutors the tools that they need to do their job effectively. We are going to stop frivolous appeals. We are going to end the practice of letting criminals off on technicalities and build more prisons to keep them off the streets.

Our Constitution demands that we ensure domestic tranquility, a duty that we have been failing at recently. That changes, starting today.

SUPPORT OUR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LAWS

(Mr. STOKES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1