

side, and by a number of other Members, and I would ask our colleagues to call my office today, or Mr. MCHALE's office, to sign up as cosponsors so that we can let this President know that while we disagree with him, he is going to give our troops the support that they need, they deserve and they warrant in terms of the operation in the Bosnian theater.

NATIONAL DEBT CONTINUES TO GROW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. LONGLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Lisa and Melinda for helping me bring out today's total of the debt. As of 3 o'clock this afternoon, the United States national debt is \$4,988,640,469,699.34. For the second day in a row, it is actually a decrease of \$125 million over yesterday.

Now, to reassure anyone who might think that we have suddenly reversed course in Washington, I want you to know that, unfortunately, that is not the case. In fact, the debt will fluctuate on a daily basis, but overall, during the current fiscal year, we can expect that the Federal debt will probably increase by another \$200 billion. In short, we will pass the \$5 trillion mark at some point in the next 6 or 7 months.

Having said that, again, I rise before this House, Mr. Speaker, to point out the incredible burden that this debt presents, not only to this generation, but to the generation represented by Lisa and Melinda and other generations that will follow us in the future. The \$5 trillion is almost 40 percent of every nickel and dime that the Federal Government will spend over the next 7 years.

Now, one of the reasons that I think it is important that this number be brought to our attention on a daily basis is that I think we have a hard time as a country realizing that this is not some abstract number that has no meaning to the way we live our lives.

During my campaign for office in 1994, I campaigned on a theme of pay-roll taxes. Specifically, I would talk in various troops around my district about the fact that if I went into a store in Maine and bought a pack of cigarettes, I would pay three taxes. If I bought a can of beer, I would pay four taxes. And we call those taxes on beer and cigarettes sin taxes, because they are taxes designed to discourage our behavior, behavior that we consider adverse to our health.

Well, yet, then what do we say when, if I created a job and I pay or manage 9 different taxes in the State of Maine and a number close to that in other States across the country, and those 9 taxes on a job total almost 25 or 30 percent of the total cost of hiring an employee, then what do we call that? Does it become a sin today to create a job or

create economic opportunity for an individual?

I would suggest before this Chamber that there is a connection between an extremely high tax burden across the country, again 9 taxes and almost 25 percent of gross cost at the minimum wage, not at a high wage, not at some \$100,000 salary level, but at a lousy \$4.25 an hour. In fact, the minimum wage today really is an appropriate term to describe the problem that men and women have when they find a job. The real issue today is take-home pay, not minimum wage. When you look at the difference between the two, it is staggering.

Now, I mentioned yesterday that I have been criticized by a columnist in a local paper back in my district that this was a waste of time.

Specifically, this editor had objected to the fact that I was faxing the debt total out to him and other editors throughout my district on a daily basis. In fact, he criticized me and he said, "Congressman LONGLEY should consider his own contribution to the national debt by his wasting of our tax dollars on faxes such as this, which cost paper, employee time, computer time, et cetera."

The editor went on to say, "I intend to let him know that we do not need to see a new fax each day or ever again. Thank you."

Now, the irony is that these several paragraphs were maybe less than 20 percent of a column describing the need of the local community to look ahead in planning the use of their downtown.

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I point that out, and in some sense this is humorous but there is also a very serious point that needs to be made and this is fundamentally the problem that we must confront as a Congress and we must confront as a country, is that Washington has become so remote from day-to-day life in America, from what goes on in our town halls, and in our State governments, that we have ceased to realize that the debt is actually a tangible factor that affects the way we live our lives, and when the editor of a prominent local paper suggests, when talking about downtown improvements, that the city cannot afford to just keep chugging along not particularly worried about the future, it would not hurt to think again.

Again, this is the ultimate issue. This debt not only is a monument to an incredible level of spending but it represents the fact that Washington has gone beyond a high level of taxes, it has gone beyond a high level of spending, and it has actually spent far more than it has taken in and it is now threatening to leave a \$5 trillion stone around the necks of our children and our grandchildren and the future of this country.

In my opinion, with all due respect to this editor, there is no issue more im-

portant than once and for all coming to grips with this national tragedy.

SUPPORT VOICED FOR PRESIDENTIAL VETO OF RECONCILIATION BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. VENTO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I seek this time today to voice my support for the President's veto of the reconciliation measure that was returned to the House with a long message yesterday that was read into the RECORD.

In that message, of course, the President touched on, I think, the elemental points of equity, of fairness, of the Congress' responsibility to try to achieve laws that in fact provide for the needs of the people that we represent. That in doing so in terms of attempting to achieve a balance in the budget that we also balance the responsibilities and the sacrifices that are expected in a fair way to provide for our success as a Nation today and into the future.

In fact, of course, today as we look at the economy and the progress that has been made in this administration, it is, I think, encouraging, that since 1993 there are 6 million new jobs that have been created, the deficit on an annual basis is on a glidepath, that does not mean that we can stop in terms of our work, that in fact we must continue to deal with attempting to achieve savings.

There are, of course, today 150,000 fewer Federal employees than there were when the President took office. So we are making some success.

But the President pointed out in that deficit message specifically the type of inordinate cuts that are being proposed in Medicare. The President, of course, has been foremost in his responsibility and advocacy for health care reform. In fact I think the first 2 years one of the major shortcomings that occurred was the future, of course, of a health care reform proposal, an effort to rationalize the system.

Today I think the President, too, would not argue that his plan was the only plan in terms of health care reform but that it was necessary to rationalize that system to bring these costs into control and the services in a way that would inure to the benefit of the people that we represent.

So that similarly when the President points out the types of cuts in Medicare, I think he does it, in a sense, standing on the high ground because of the work that he has done. Similarly the significant cuts in Medicare. In fact, half the cuts in the budget proposed by this new Congress, this Republican Congress, have been in the area of Medicare and Medicaid cuts.

Furthermore, of course, the President indicated his opposition and concern to many other elements in terms of the welfare reform.

But one of the other areas that I thought needed special attention is the issue dealing with the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This area is a very important area. Obviously in trying to achieve a balanced budget, a fiscal budget, we also need to maintain an environmental balance.

I think what has been lost in the enthusiasm and the controversy that surrounds many of the policies with the environment has really been a lack of understanding and a recognition of what the consequence of many of these actions are.

It is as if, Mr. Speaker, that we have moved back to the 19th century era of the robber barons and we are trying to put into place policies that maybe were right, and I do not even think they were right in the 19th century, in the latter part of the 20th century.

The Arctic Plain, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, really represents an area that is a window on the Ice Age. Since the retreat of the great Ice Age, this area has been the home of the caribou calving ground of 160,000 herd caribou, the porcupine caribou herd today.

What is being proposed here is to take it out of that protected status that it has enjoyed, to permit it to be open to oil and gas exploration.

In order to understand the impact of this, this is not just any piece of land. It really is an arctic desert. It is an area that has very little water on it. The vegetative mat is about as deep as the podium that I am standing in front of today speaking and it has taken 20,000 years of accumulated growth for that organic mat to form over the polar ice area.

Of course, while the oil development and gas development may not occupy much of the surface, it would in essence, of course, have a profound impact on this 1.5 million-acre area. Incidentally, it is the only part of the arctic plain on the Beaufort Sea that is in fact not open to development today, and that is the irony, because there are so many areas of Alaska, so many areas of that plain that are already open to oil development. And so just feeding this, or letting the speculators bid on it, would not deliver us a great change in terms of our deficit but it would I think destroy forever a pristine area and create an environmental deficit.

As my colleagues tonight are noting, the Republican budget reconciliation bill decimates programs for people such as Medicaid and Medicare and replaces them with a new type of welfare—aid to dependent industries and special interests. This is especially evident where environment issues are concerned. Over and over again, the interests of the mining, timber, oil, and gas industries take precedence over public health and the rights of future generations to inherit a healthy planet are adversely affected by the provisions of the Republican reconciliation measure especially as it impacts the environment.

I'll make just a few points to illustrate my point. First, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is destroyed.

The bill permits oil and gas exploration supposedly to secure \$1.3 billion in Federal revenue and in my view the Treasury will never receive that much because the economic assumptions are faulty and the bill assumes a 50–50 split between the Federal Government and Alaska, even though Alaska can and probably will sue for 90 percent under the Alaska Statehood Act.

The best the Nation would get is enough oil to fuel the America's energy needs for 200 days—That's the most optimistic forecast. But most importantly the unique and fragile Arctic ecosystem would be destroyed. ANWR is home to more than 200 species of conspicuous and many more inconspicuous species of fauna and flora. The porcupine caribou herd uses the northern coastal plain for calving and post-calving activities. It is the biological heart of this arctic wilderness. The Native American Gwich'in people who rely on the caribou for subsistence would of course be adversely affected. Public opinion opposes oil drilling in ANWR in fact 70 percent favor the preservation of this area. Furthermore, this new policy of using asset sales for deficit reduction sets a bad precedent. The loss of resources offsets potential gains in terms of dollars.

Second the mining provisions of this measure enshrine the rights of speculators in law at the expense of the U.S. taxpayer. The mining law of 1872 permits mining companies to acquire public land and mineral rights for a fraction of their value, this so-called reform remains blind to the mineral value of the land. The mining industry now buys mineral rich land for as little as \$5 per acre. And we should not be blackmailed in the reform process to give away the minerals to the mining interests. Within the past week, the Secretary of the Interior was forced to turn over 3 billion dollars' worth of copper and silver for under \$2,000 because of the 1872 Mining law.

Meaningful reform of this budget-busting 19th century mining law is needed today. The Republican budget fails to provide real reform. Federal mineral rights will be sold at their market value, which means the value of the surface land, not the minerals underneath. This would be like selling Fort Knox for the price of the parking lot and building. The American taxpayers are getting ripped off again under the Rubric of reform—some reform; Republican reform.

Third, other provisions in the Republican budget continue the special interest benefit under a mantra of budget balancing such as Park concessions change that gives incumbent concessionaires huge advantages over the competition. Grazing provisions that further reduce the already scandalously low fees paid by ranchers. Continuation of below cost timber sales—as the taxpayer pays the cost and loses in American legacy and congressional mandates the transfer of a Ward Valley, CA site for a low level radioactive waste dump with no public or scientific safeguards.

In conclusion, this budget bill regards land and conservation policy will revive the era of the great robber barons, who exploited and degraded America's natural resources during the nineteenth century and into the 20th century. Isn't it time to correct such policy for the 21st century. This Republican budget bill would destroy natural monuments like ANWR and in essence build new monuments to greed and the special interests. This budget bill fails in terms of politics and public opinion, science, economics, and morality.

President Clinton was right to veto this budget reconciliation ("wreckonciliation") bill—we owe it to future generations to protect their rightful legacy and uphold this veto and more importantly balance the budget without creating a massive environmental deficit or a human deficit.

IN MEMORY OF GENERAL MAX THURMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to remember the life and the contributions of a great American. Gen. Max Thurman had his final battle with leukemia end 1 week ago. His remains were laid to rest earlier today at Arlington National Cemetery.

During almost four decades of military service, Max Thurman found his duty offered him diverse challenges, from Vietnam, the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, ultimately to commander of our forces during Operation Just Cause in Panama, an operation for which he delayed his retirement from military service.

His devotion to duty was so intense that he earned several nicknames during the course of his military career. Indeed, one of those nicknames, I suppose, speaks volumes to those who served under his command, for they came to call him Maxatollah. But that devotion to duty, that intensity, that ability that Max Thurman brought to the U.S. Army served that fighting force well in a massive transition from a conscripted army to a volunteer force.

Max Thurman faced a challenge not only on the field of battle but among those who would make their livings trying to influence Americans on Madison Avenue, for it was Max Thurman who worked just as tirelessly in his recruiting command to fashion a message to young Americans, to reshape and rethink and rearticulate a call to duty. It was Max Thurman who worked with those from the civilian world to encapsulate a phrase that spoke not only to the promise of youth, not only to the promise of this great country, but to the promise of service in the U.S. Army, for it was Max Thurman who helped to coin the phrase "Be all that you can be."

Indeed, his reputation won him a certain celebrity. The story goes that once upon a time, in the airport, I believe, in Chicago, a lady approached him and simply said, "General, are you the 'Be all you can be' man?"

And Max said, yes, he was that man.

But he was far more. Those privileged to serve with him, both on the field of battle and in other commands, talk of his reputation, of his intensity, of his dedication to service, of that commanding voice but, yes, also that distinctive walk that would reverberate in the Marshall Corridor in the Pentagon, as if this were a man born to command.