

week, my colleagues and I on the Judiciary Committee's Crime Subcommittee completed 2 days of hearings on this bill.

These hearings, which featured law enforcement officials from across the country, revealed how desperately this legislation is needed. There is an overwhelming sense in this country that violent crime has robbed the citizens of a sense of safety and security that they have a right to enjoy. That is what my crime bill will help accomplish.

Not too long ago, a popular preventive crime ad campaign encouraged citizens to take "A Bite Out of Crime." After decades of one Democratic-controlled Congress after another jawboning the problem of crime with lots of taxpayer money but little to show in the way of results, we are finally on the way to passing a crime bill with real teeth.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Miss COLLINS of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss COLLINS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the balanced budget amendment House Journal Resolution 1. I support fiscal responsibility. However, I do not think an issue such as balancing the Federal budget should be handled too hastily. The current proposal for a balanced budget amendment as outlined in the Republican Contract With America is a knee-jerk approach to a complicated and multifaceted problem.

For instance, if Social Security is not specifically exempted, this measure would allow for drastic cuts in Social Security. We must not forget our responsibility to provide for our Nation. To make Social Security subject to this measure will result in devastating results that will be felt in the years to come.

During this year alone, Social Security will take in \$31 billion more than it pays out in benefits. Social Security is not the cause of our national debt. To cut Social Security because it is a significant portion of the national budget is an easy way out for those who simply want to achieve their political goals by any means necessary. We should not put ideology before people.

THE TRAGIC EARTHQUAKE IN JAPAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, my district in San Francisco, indeed the entire State of California, is blessed with a very large Japanese-American population. On behalf of my constituents, the Japanese-Americans, and indeed all of them, I rise today to extend my sympathies to the people of Japan now

that we are in day 7 of the tragedy that struck Kobe last week.

As you know, last Tuesday Japan was struck by the deadliest quake in more than 70 years. Today's AP wire has an update on some of the tragic statistics. The death toll is topping 5,000, with more than 100 people still listed as missing. More than 26,000 people were injured, 300,000 people were left homeless, and 56,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed. There are 1,000 relief centers trying to house the 300,000 people left homeless. Indeed 2 million survivors of the earthquake in that area have been impacted very negatively as well.

Mr. Speaker, today, Monday in Japan almost yesterday now, there have been strong aftershocks in buildings in Japan. They had three aftershocks at about 4.0, and I have been told aftershocks of up to 6 points on the Richter scale are possible.

In addition to that, there is the physical toll, in addition the personal toll. Japan has different construction standards for highways and for buildings. The huge pillars supporting raised roads consisted of concrete cores surrounded by vertical steel rods that are then wrapped with vertical steel hoops and surrounded by another coat of concrete.

Mr. Speaker, just as a sign of how fierce this earthquake was in Kobe, many of the structures ruptured and the reinforcing rods snapped like matchsticks.

The economic toll is great. Kobe is a major manufacturing center, the country's busiest container shipping port and an important transportation hub for moving component parts to factories throughout Japan and abroad. That is having a tremendous impact on the economy there.

Estimates of the economic impact vary widely. The Transport Ministry estimated it would cost \$4.12 billion to repair damaged railway lines and stations alone. The head of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce estimated the overall cost of the quake would amount to more than \$100 billion.

Of course, these are staggering statistics, but the worst of all is, of course, the personal toll. Today's AP wire carries a story about a father who lost his daughter in the earthquake. He says, "My daughter's voice, 'Dad, dad, please help me,' sticks in my ear." He lost his teenage daughter when their house collapsed. "It just doesn't go away," he said. "I just couldn't save her."

Mr. Speaker, that is just one of many, many similar stories. Another, of a young man whose house collapsed, his mother was in the house. The neighbors and others decided to help where they heard voices, and they were able to save the lives of some. But since they heard no sounds coming from his house, that did not become a priority, and his mother—he said, "I wanted to save my mother, but was not able to."

The list of these stories goes on and on.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow—of course, in our area, Mr. Speaker, we had the experience 5 years ago of the Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco, and just eerily, just 1 year before this earthquake, the Northridge earthquake shook Los Angeles. So we all have our own memories of personal devastation and personal loss from earthquakes. That is why we have so much sympathy for those in Japan.

It is with great sorrow I convey on behalf my constituents, both Japanese-Americans and others as well, to the Japanese ambassador the condolences of the people of San Francisco and wish for him to convey our condolences to the people of Japan, especially those affected by the earthquake, but to all the people of that area. They must be assured that they are in our prayers.

A BIPARTISAN BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. PAYNE] for 60 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on Friday of last week there was a press conference held. That press conference was to talk about an important event, important because for the first time in the history of our country we know there are enough people in the House of Representatives who are committed to vote for a balanced budget amendment to ensure that a balanced budget amendment can be passed.

This press conference was among the Democratic Caucus, and some 66 members of our Caucus signed a letter to our Speaker. The Speaker was notified that 66 Democrats were prepared to vote for a balanced budget amendment this week, and the 66 Democrats, along with the Republican Caucus, would give you enough votes for the required two-thirds' majority or the 290 votes to pass this balanced budget amendment.

□ 1540

I think this is good news in that we have a bipartisan agreement now so that Democrats and Republicans alike can do what is best for America. This comes at a time when our debt is now \$4.7 trillion, when our interest payments will equal \$300 billion as a nation; \$300 billion we paid last year alone as interest on our national debt. This is money that, had we not had debt and we balanced our budget for many years before this, we would have had that same \$300 billion to use to cut taxes. We could have used that money for other purposes such as fighting crime, such as improving education. But instead we do not have that, and in fact we are spending more money each year than we take in, and last year we spent \$300 billion in interest payments.

Now this balanced budget amendment, as my colleagues will hear from

others today, is extremely important to the future of our country and to the future generations, but it is also extremely important to all of us today because it is all of us that pay this interest, and last year for every American more than \$800 in interest was paid, and to the extent that we can find a way to balance our budget and to begin then to reduce our debt, that is the only way that we will ever begin seeing less interest paid in a timely fashion.

So at this time it gives me a great deal of pleasure to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS], who has worked very hard over the years on this balanced budget amendment.

Mr. EDWARDS. I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. PAYNE] for allowing me the chance to talk about the balanced budget amendment, and I want to express my gratitude for the strong leadership of the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. PAYNE] over the years in keeping this issue alive before this Congress and the American people.

Mr. Speaker, this week the House will vote on the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. I believe this issue is the single most important issue that the 104th Congress will face. Why? Because the balanced budget amendment is not just about this year's deficit. It is about saving our children and grandchildren from drowning in a sea of national debt.

I am proud of the fact that 66 Democrats have now committed to voting for the Schaefer-Stenholm balanced budget amendment. For the first time in the history of our country we now have a two-thirds vote in this House to pass a constitutional balanced budget amendment if all Republicans in this House will vote for it. The fate of the balanced budget amendment now lies in the hands of our House Republican colleagues with whom many of us have worked for many years.

Mr. Speaker, I will most likely vote for the Barton amendment as well, the amendment which requires a three-fifths vote to increase taxes, because I see nothing greatly wrong with the idea of making it more difficult for this system to raise taxes on our voters and our constituents. But let no one in this body or in this country be misled. There clearly are not enough votes to pass the Barton budget amendment in this House. My Republican friends know it. My Democratic friends know it. House Members know it. Senators know it. And the American people deserve to know it. For anyone to suggest otherwise is simply pure partisan politics.

Mr. Speaker, opponents of the balanced budget amendment constantly say, "Why do we need to put this budget amendment in the Constitution?" I would like to begin by offering two answers. The first is very simply: Nothing else has worked. It has been since 1969 that the Federal Government saw a balanced budget. It has been over 25

years since this body passed a balanced budget. Twenty-five years of debt is simply too long, and we cannot stand for it.

Second, I think the balanced budget amendment is about an important issue, an issue no less important than the fundamental right of property rights, but by requiring a balanced budget amendment we are basically saying we want to protect the future property rights of our children and grandchildren from being spent by today's Congress. In the history of the writing of our Constitution few rights could have been considered more important then, or even now, than the protection of property rights. Clearly the protection of the property rights of our grandchildren deserves a sacred place in our Constitution.

Finally, there are many other reasons, specific reasons, why we should pass this balanced budget amendment, but let me simply say on a practical note to those American families that I cannot relate to a trillion dollar debt, and now we are facing a \$4.7 trillion debt. Let me put it terms that the average American family can understand. This year we will pay \$238 billion in interest on the debt alone. That is more than the entire Federal budget in 1972. In personal terms, for working families, every man, woman, and child, regardless of age this year, on average will have to pay \$887 in interest, in interest, and national debt. Not a dollar of that \$887 goes to building a new schoolhouse, helping a child get a better education, building roads and infrastructure in our country, or providing for our national defense. An average family of four in America, a working family, will pay the equivalent of \$3,500 in taxes this year simply to pay for interest on the national debt.

The time to pass a balanced budget amendment is now, and with the support of Democrats and House Members working together, as we have worked for years, I am confident, Mr. Speaker, and with the leadership of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM] and the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER], and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. PAYNE], and others that will speak today, I am confident we will do the right thing for the future of America and pass a balanced budget constitutional amendment.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. I will now yield to the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] who is a cosponsor of the Stenholm-Schaefer balanced budget amendment, and as well he is a co-chairman of the Caucus for the Congressional Leaders United for a Balanced Budget.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. PAYNE] for yielding me a bit of time here today, and I cannot say enough how much I have appreciated the work of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM] over the years on this terribly important issue that we are about to tangle with this week.

As the gentleman from Virginia so eloquently stated, we are in potential serious problems in this country, economic problems, if we do not handle this runaway budget situation that we have on our hands now.

When I first came into Congress some 11 years ago, I could recall very well voting on an amendment to increase the national debt to \$1.5 trillion, 1.5. Some 10 years, 11 years, later we are now at \$4.7 trillion, 3 trillion over a period of 11 years. Now what is it going to be in the year 2000? Ten trillion dollars? Pretty soon it get to the point where there is not any way that we are going to be able to come back and try to even out not only our deficit, because we have to get at that one first, but to then start to build down on the national debt.

And so one would ask, "What is the best way to do this?" Well, back in 1974, they passed a Budget Act at that time that was supposed to handle all the problems that we were going to have in the future years. We have waived it over 600 times since 1974. We could go back to 1990 where we were supposed to try and figure out a way by capping spending that we were going to balance this budget out, and what happens? Here we are today, and we do have a slight decrease in the deficit temporarily. However, if we really look at the figures, by the year 2000 it is going to be up to \$400 billion again.

□ 1550

So it is clear to me that what we have now is not working. Five times in legislation, in statutes, we said we are not supposed to spend more than we take in. But do we adhere to it? No, we do not. It is too easy to say "yes" to too many issues, and it is too difficult to say "no," and sooner or later we are going to have to start saying "no" on these particular issues.

So I again want to thank very much my Democrat colleagues who have agreed to go along with this, recognizing for the future of this country and for the future of our generations, that we do not want to give them a United States of America that is in the dump. We want to give them something they can pick up and run with over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me in these few minutes.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for all the good work that he has done as a leader on the balanced budget amendment over the years, and I look forward to working with him this week as we work our way toward a victory.

My colleague pointed out that when he first came to Congress, we had a debt of \$1.5 trillion. Now, just 11 years later, it is \$4.7 trillion. We have seen this debt explode in the last 11 years, over \$3 trillion in that period of time, and that tells the story of why we so badly need to have the kind of amendment we are speaking of here and the

kind of discipline that will force us to reach a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. PETERSON], a leader in the fight for a balanced budget amendment.

Mr. PETERSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding.

At the onset, I, along with my other colleagues, want to go on record to thank the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM] and the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] for helping us to take this through the many years and the many battles that have been fought for the balanced budget amendment.

This is not the first time this issue has been on the floor of the House of Representatives. I would remind the folks that just in the 4 years I have been here I have voted for it in various forms at least three times. We came very close. We came within 9 votes, I think, on one occasion and, I believe, 12 on the other. This time I think we are on the go-ahead. We are going to make it. We are going to make this a reality and make this a proposal for an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Why a constitutional amendment? Because it is my feeling now that we can only, through this action, acquire the discipline we need to really, in fact, balance the budget.

We have had through statute any number of budget bills that have been vacated for one reason or another, basically because the pain was too great. The pain has gotten to the point of realizing that if we do not balance the budget, we will actually explode the pain. If we do not balance the budget of these United States, the very people who we have been saying we are protecting, that is, the poor and those who have not made it out, if you will, will be the first victims. So we have got to go back and renew our fight to balance the budget. We must protect our children and our grandchildren. We must keep from borrowing from future generations. We have got to make tough decisions, and with the balanced budget process we can do that.

But I would add that the American people have to appreciate their role in the balanced budget process which we are proposing. The American people must agree to make the sacrifices and assume the pain associated with balancing the budget. We all know we have had conflicting reports from our own constituencies as to how on one hand we need new roads, we need new programs, we need this, and we need that, and at the same time they are saying we must balance the budget. It is a conflict that we cannot resolve until we get the appreciation and the assistance of our own constituencies.

This amendment that has been proposed by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM] for many years now, contains no gimmicks. There are no shell games associated with this. There

are no back doors. The gentleman from Texas knows something about that, because I do not believe the Alamo had a back door.

We have got to associate ourselves with that very fact. We have got to go ahead and make this happen with the realities and the associated pain it is going to bring through a certain process, not ultimately to the Nation, because in fact to the Nation it is going to bring strength, and we have got to have the courage to take us to that point.

The last point I want to make is that we do not want to wait until 2002 to do this. We want to start balancing the budget of the United States today with the very process of rescissions for 1995 and the very appropriations process of 1996. Failure to do that will prolong the agony and take us to the point when the pain becomes too great. I, along with many of my other Democratic colleagues, feel very strongly about that issue. It is not a partisan issue. This is a national issue of great magnitude, and it is one where Republicans and Democrats can agree and do agree that we must do the right thing and balance the budget of the United States and enhance the future of this Nation for our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his comments and also for the work he has done over the years for the balanced budget amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I will now yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. NATHAN DEAL. The gentleman is a Democratic cochairman of the Congressional Leaders United for a Balanced Budget, and he has also been a real leader in this fight to get a balanced budget passed.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia, for yielding, and I thank him for his efforts in this regard. I extend my appreciation also to the Members from across the aisle, including the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER], and I thank the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM], on the Democratic side for his leadership in undertaking this effort to pass the balanced budget amendment.

We are going to hear a lot of reasons over the next few days and into next week as to why this balanced budget amendment should be passed. Many of the Members who will speak are like me; they come from a legislative background, working in State legislatures, and most of those legislatures have constitutional requirements in their States that say that they cannot spend more money than they take in in revenue. My State of Georgia is one of those that has such a constitutional requirement, and I have had the privilege of serving on the budget committees and on the appropriation committees of our State and have faced the possibility of actually being called back

into special session after having passed a legislative budget anticipating revenue and then finding some 6 months into the legislative year that the revenues were not coming in as rapidly as we had anticipated.

When you have a constitutional mandate that you have to take in as much money as you spend, you are called back into open session, and you go back in through the budget and you decide what you can cut in order to conform with your constitutional requirement.

I think there would be nothing at all wrong with this body having to do the same.

We have heard the statistics. The last year we had a balanced budget in this country was the last year President Lyndon Johnson served, in 1969. For 25 straight budget years we have taken in less than we have spent. For 55 of the last 63 years we have not had a balanced budget in this country. The \$4.7 trillion of accumulated debt is staggering.

We will hear arguments made that we can just simply do it if we have the will power; we can do it statutorily. We have tried it statutorily. Gramm-Rudman I, Gramm-Rudman II, the Budget Act of 1990, and the Budget Act of 1993 have all made statutory efforts to try to bring this spending crisis under control.

□ 1600

But since 1985, when they first began, we have added over \$2 trillion to our national debt, in spite of those legislative efforts. With all of the little things like pay-as-you-go and sequestration, we have still not been able to bring it under control.

There have been those who argue well, we do not really need to do this because it is not that significant. I would suggest to you that it is.

As much concern and debate as you hear about people being concerned about foreign aid and spending for helping other countries, it is staggering to believe that we send \$41 billion overseas to those overseas investors in terms of interest on those foreign-held securities of our country, more than twice the amount of our entire foreign aid budget.

The situation is serious. Now is the time to come to grips with it. I am sure you have all ridden up and down the highways of our country and seen the travel trailers that have the rather humorous bumper sticker on it that says we are spending our children's inheritance. WE all look at that and laugh about it, and we think, well, that is a couple who have worked hard, they have earned money, and they have a right to spend what they have accumulated, and they do not have any obligation necessarily to pass it on to their children or to their grandchildren.

We are doing far worse than that, ladies and gentlemen. What we are doing is we are not only spending the money that goes to buy the travel trailer and

the luxuries that we are enjoying and the trip we are taking, we are asking our children and grandchildren to cosign the note with us, and at our death, as our generation passes away, they will not even inherit the travel trailer. All they will inherit is a past-due note that right now is \$4.7 trillion.

That is just not right. That is not the kind of generational attitude that we need to leave. It is one we need to begin to change. I for one believe the only way we will do it is with a constitutional mandate in the form of a balanced budget.

I look forward to the debate that will proceed this week and hopefully to the final passage of a version of the balanced budget amendment. I am one of those who likewise will probably vote for the Barton version that requires a three-fifths vote in order to raise taxes, because I don't think that is the way we should balance our budget. I think we should balance it through cutting our spending programs. But whatever version it is, and I think that the Stenholm and Schaefer version is the most likely one to have the necessary and requisite number of votes, it is important that we do it, that we do it now, that we send it to the Senate, and they in turn send it to the States for ratification.

I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. I thank my colleague for his words, Particularly the words about the future generations and how important this is certainly to them.

I now yield to someone who is a true leader in the House of Representatives in terms of fiscal responsibility, a gentleman who has fought this fight for many years, the cosponsor of the Stenholm-Schaefer amendment, CHARLIE STENHOLM, of Texas.

Mr. STENHOLM. I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding and for taking this time today to allow a preliminary discussion of a subject that I too appreciate his leadership on over the years, as we have brought ourselves again to this week where we will have a vote on whether or not to amend the Constitution for purposes of balancing the budget here on the floor of the House, and we are cautiously optimistic we will have the 290 votes to do so.

Before I do that, I want to remember a few other names for us today that go back in this battle. LARRY CRAIG, now Senator CRAIG, has been one of the real leaders in the effort that is behind House Joint Resolution 28 and Senate Joint Resolution 1, the subject of our discussion today.

Also Bob Smith of Oregon, now retired, but Bob, as you remember, worked tirelessly with us the last Congress to a futile defeat by some 12 votes. But then we have some others. Tom Carper, now Governor Carper of Delaware, was one of the original Democrats that has taken on the leadership of this effort, and now as Governor has continued to offer us encour-

agement along the lines of this bipartisan, bicameral budget amendment that we talk about today.

MIKE CASTLE, who has joined us now, MIKE from Delaware on the Republican side of the aisle, will be joining us in this effort this week. So Delaware has done their share.

JON KYL, now Senator JON KYL, OLYMPIA SNOWE, now Senator SNOWE, JIM INHOFE, of Oklahoma, now Senator INHOFE, have all played unique roles in bringing us to what we affectionally call the bipartisan, bicameral balanced budget amendment.

I would like to take now a little time to just talk about two or three major points that we are going to hear a lot about. One is that we should not be doing this through the Constitution, that we ought to be doing this the old-fashioned way, by cutting spending, to which I answer absolutely.

I did not come and do not come today to this well with a great deal of happiness as to being here suggesting that we ought to amend the Constitution. I reluctantly, in fact almost never, have supported constitutional amendments, and I have reluctantly come to supporting this for one reason, and you mentioned that in your opening remarks, and that is I am now convinced this is the only tool that we need to put in our arsenal that will help us do the job that we must do, and that is balance the budget.

I wish we did not have to do it that way, but I am convinced the only way you can do this with Congress after Congress, succeeding Congresses, is to put into the Constitution the requirement that we do live within our means.

I would remind people, and will do so over and over this week, that this year's budget is the first year's installment, and I anticipate with a great deal of confidence that the budget that this House will prepare this year will give us the first year's installment, with a 7-year projection, not a 5-, but a 7-year projection, so that we can honestly say to the people this year, we will in fact set ourselves on the course to balance in 2002, and this year is the first year, and then next year we will come back again with a budget resolution, with reconciliation, which should and I anticipate and hope will be in this year's budget resolution, that we will do so.

But then comes one of the major reasons why a constitutional amendment is necessary, because this Congress can get elected to do that. But what about the next Congress? This President can suggest we ought to do that, and we ought to have a budget on the line of getting to balance, which we have got it going in the right direction after the first 2 years of the current administration. But what about the next President? What about the next Congress? And that is where we have always run into difficulty.

So let me say to those that suggest that we ought to get the cart before the horse, that we ought to have the 7-

year budgets first. We have tried that, it does not work. Let's take a 1-year budget this year, prove with good faith we are sincere about it, but let us also set in concrete the fact we cannot wiggle out of it this Congress, next year, or succeeding Congresses.

Another point that I want to emphasize over and over, I am getting a little bit put out with those who every time we bring up the balanced budget constitutional amendment seem to have the next word in their vocabulary, Social Security, and then sending convincing letters, which some group is doing to constituents in the 17th District, that if we pass the balanced budget constitutional amendment, Social Security will be wrecked. That could not be further from the truth. They ought to be saying unless we balance our budgets, Social Security is going to be wrecked, and that is for our children and grandchildren, and there is nothing in this amendment that will have one slight, negative effect on Social Security for the current recipients. Nothing in this amendment has ever, does now, or will ever have anything negative. And to those who continue to politicize and frighten senior citizens around the country, I say shame on you.

We are going to talk more about that as we get into this week's debate. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to share this hour, Mr. PAYNE of Virginia, with you and others, as we talk about the bipartisan, bicameral balanced budget amendment, the only amendment that has a chance of getting 290 votes.

I am proud to say it is Senate Joint Resolution 1, it has tremendous support on the Senate side, and now we believe that we have the votes on the House side, and I believe that after the debate this week, we will be able to prove that. But I am a great believer in not counting our chickens before they are hatched. Therefore, I commend you again for taking this hour to talk, so that all of our colleagues, those not in the House today, will begin to focus on the merits of what we are to talk about.

Thank you very much for allowing me this privilege.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. Thank you very much, and thank you especially, CHARLIE, for all the work you have done on the balanced budget amendment, and thank you for mentioning all of those, both Republicans and Democrats, over the years who have gotten us to where we are today in terms of being able to pass the balanced budget amendment this week.

I now yield to my colleague, MIKE DOYLE from Pennsylvania, a new Member just elected in November, but already has joined in the fight and has proven himself to be a leader in this fight for a balanced budget amendment.

□ 1610

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in this special order supporting House Resolution 28. I have joined scores of my colleagues in cosponsoring this resolution because it is the only bipartisan, bicameral balanced budget amendment, and I would urge all of my colleagues to vote for this resolution when it comes up later this week because we cannot wait any longer to address this country's budget deficit.

I signed on as a cosponsor of this balanced budget amendment last month while I was still a member-elect because I already considered this issue a priority for my first term in Congress. As I spoke to people throughout Allegheny County, PA, while I campaigned for this office last year; their message came through loud and clear. They felt the Congress must undertake significant measures to address our country's expanding budget deficit. The vast majority of my constituents believe a balanced budget amendment is the proper, and most effective means to tackle this deficit problem and that the Congress should not wait any longer to exact this measure.

It's no wonder that the folks back home—in all of our homes—feel such a sense of urgency. The statistics are not unfamiliar to anyone, but certainly warrant repeating. Our national debt currently exceeds \$4.3 trillion—17,495 dollars' worth for every man, woman, and child in the United States. It is any wonder people feel a sense of urgency?

The last time this House voted on a balanced budget amendment was last March when the amendment was narrowly defeated. Unfortunately, a near miss is not close enough and the debt has continued to skyrocket, increasing by more than \$160 billion since last March. Is it any wonder people feel a sense of urgency?

And as the debt increases, the interest payments on this debt increase as well. Interest payments that continue to devour larger and larger portions of the budget—from 6 percent in 1960, to 14 percent of the entire budget today. The gross interest payments on this debt cost us \$816 million dollars per day. I ask again—is it any wonder that people feel a sense of urgency?

These interest payments, by consuming more and more of our annual budget, are crowding out funding for discretionary programs. This is the insidious nature of our deficit debacle. Unless we take control of this problem now, we will cripple the ability of future generations to make the investments in discretionary programs that are necessary to keep this country moving forward.

My constituents back home in western Pennsylvania certainly understand this need. Many of the communities I represent have not recovered from the severe recession they experienced

throughout the 1980's. During this time, much of the steel industry engaged in aggressive downsizing—many plants were closed and jobs were lost. The Mon-Valley needs the help of innovative and intelligent Federal programs to assist in the retraining of these displaced workers so they are prepared to join new, high-technology industries. Programs are needed to clean up the abandoned industrial sites so fresh businesses will locate there bringing with them secure jobs in growing industries. And we must improve our public education systems so future generations will have the knowledge and training they need to be prepared to work and flourish in a high-technology environment.

These are the types of discretionary programs that are being crowded out by the increasing interest payments on our debt. This year alone the interest payments will be 8 times higher than expenditure on education and 50 times higher than expenditures on job training. This is just the type of help my district needs—but as our interest payments increase, our ability to help will be severely curtailed.

It is for these reasons that I support this balanced budget amendment, House Resolution 28. Let's pass this amendment and send it to the States for ratification. During the ratification process, people throughout the country should be afforded the opportunity to closely examine how the amendment would work, and what specific actions would be necessary to achieve a balanced budget early in the 21st century. Then the people can either reaffirm or withdraw their support of the balanced budget amendment through their State legislators. But we must afford the people of this country that opportunity by first passing the balanced budget amendment on the House floor.

The Stenholm-Schaefer balanced budget amendment is our best hope for passage. It is the only version that has been offered with substantial bipartisan and bicameral support. Myself, and at least 65 other Democrats stand ready to join our Republican colleagues in voting for H.R. 28. This is the only version of the balanced budget amendment that can claim this type of support and that can anticipate receiving the requisite 290 votes needed for passage.

Because passing a balanced budget amendment is so crucial to our country's future well-being; I urge all of my colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, to join us in support of the Stenholm-Schaefer amendment because it is the best way to ensure that this House finally passes a balanced budget amendment.

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for the leadership that he has already displayed in terms of supporting the balanced budget amendment. It is much appreciated and much needed. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, this week the House of Representatives is pleased to make history when we take up the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. I, along with others who you have heard today, urge our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in supporting House Joint Resolution 28, the Stenholm-Schaefer amendment.

This bipartisan and bicameral amendment is as simple as it is vital to our Nation's future. By the year 2002, it will bring to an end, once and for all, the staggering tide of deficit spending and red ink which has so dominated Washington. It does so by placing limits on the power of the Federal Government to spend and borrow money with impunity and to pass along the bill to our future generations without a plan to pay it back.

Let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker, these sustained and uncontrolled deficit spendings in Washington pose a grave threat to American productivity and to a prosperous future for our people.

Beside me is a check, and this check is a check from the typical American taxpaying family. It is made out to the order of the U.S. Treasury in the amount of \$3,100. And this is the interest that each family of four paid on the national debt last year.

Now, this is not a total tax bill, nor is it even the family of four's portion of our national debt. Because a portion of the national debt, the \$4.7 trillion national debt for each family of four, is in excess of \$70,000. But this \$3,100 represents the interest payment for last year for a family of four.

This is money that will not be saved to buy a new home or to put into a retirement plan or for a family vacation or for the education and training of children. Nor will it be spent by the Government for health care or for public safety or education. It is money that will be used to pay investors who purchase debt obligation to the United States. Many of these investors are foreign investors. The time has come to free American families from this enormous burden of debt. The balanced budget amendment offers the best hope of doing just that.

It is a legal restriction similar to that contained in 49 of our 50 States. And it is embraced by State and local officials from my district and from around this Nation. House Joint Resolution 28, the Schaefer-Stenholm balanced budget amendment, is identical to other amendments which have narrowly failed to gain approval in the House in 1992 and again last March. This amendment has been debated and studied and written about as much as any other issue that has come before the Congress in the 7 years that I have been a Member of Congress and it has stood the test of time.

It is the one balanced budget amendment which has gained strong bipartisan support, cosponsorship by 64 Democratic Members of the House, some of whom you have heard speak here this

afternoon. It is the one amendment that has strong support in the Senate.

□ 1620

Senate Joint Resolution 1, the Senate companion to Stenholm-Schaefer, was introduced by Majority Leader DOLE and is cosponsored by 40 Senators. Of the amendments we will debate later this week, Stenholm-Schaefer clearly stands the best chance of becoming the law of the land.

Would it be better for the President and Congress to come together and agree to a balanced budget amendment without a constitutional mandate? Of course it would, but experience teaches us that this is not likely to happen.

Even since last year, last March, when the Stenholm-Schaefer amendment failed very narrowly to pass in this House, we have added more than \$150 billion to the national debt, and there is no end in sight to the red ink coming out of Washington. The American people are tired of waiting. We are all tired of waiting, and we need to support a balanced budget amendment to put us on a downward glide path to balance this budget in the year 2002.

Is the balanced budget amendment a substitute for decisive action to reduce the deficit? Of course it is not.

Congress, 2 years ago, did approve a 5-year, \$500 billion, tough deficit reduction plan, and the House and Senate approved a 5-year freeze on discretionary spending starting in 1993, at levels using no inflation. Largely because of that legislation, our deficit has come down and the Nation has enjoyed 3 straight years of deficit reduction, the first time that has happened since Harry Truman was our President.

I supported that plan last year. It was a tough vote, but like many of my colleagues, I knew it was not an end to our deficit reduction efforts, but only one part of a larger effort to balance our budget and to restore fiscal responsibility to this Capitol.

The same is true of this balanced budget amendment. We will vote on this this week, on Thursday or Friday. We will have a vote in the Senate, and I believe that the amendment will then go to the States for ratification.

But nothing in the process changes our basic responsibility here in Congress to go back to our committees and to our subcommittees next week and to continue to achieve real savings and spending reduction. This is our responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, one of my congressional district's most famous citizens, Thomas Jefferson, once said "To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty or profusion and servitude." Although we are almost 200 years late, Congress and the States have the opportunity to affirm the truth of Jefferson's observation by adopting the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

It is an opportunity that we should seize, and I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 28, the Stenholm-Schaefer balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. We must work together in a bipartisan fashion to pass this important amendment for our country and for our future. We cannot wait any longer.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 4:45 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 4:45 p.m.

□ 1652

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. COMBEST] at 4 o'clock and 52 minutes p.m.

UNFUNDED MANDATE REFORM ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). Pursuant to House Resolution 38 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5.

□ 1652

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5) to curb the practice of imposing unfunded Federal mandates on States and local governments, to ensure that the Federal Government pays the costs incurred by those governments in complying with certain requirements under Federal statutes and regulations, and to provide information on the cost of Federal mandates on the private sector, and for other purposes, with Mr. EMERSON in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Friday, January 20, 1995, the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. TOWNS] had been disposed of, and section 4 was open for amendment at any point.

Are there further amendments to section 4?

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

As we continue debate on H.R. 5, I want to address some concerns I have about where we are going and how we are going to get there.

Mr. Chairman, last Friday we spent almost 5 hours debating just four amendments to this legislation. We have presently at least, at last count, about 160 amendments pending, and this is under an open rule, and it is an

open rule that I think is well merited in this instance. But I think, Mr. Chairman, if we proceed as we have been going at the very, very slow pace we have been going, we could be here for months on this particular piece of legislation.

I think that perhaps one of the reasons we have seen so many amendments offered is because there is a fair amount of misrepresentation and misinformation circulating about the bill which may account for some of these amendments. I do not question the motives of anybody who has introduced any amendment, although I know that there are some who in very good faith believe that this bill represents a very, very dramatic step back from where we are in terms of regulatory control.

Nevertheless, we do have these amendments, and I think there is misinformation and perhaps it might be helpful to reemphasize just some basic facts about this bill. This bill has very strong support.

The bill has very strong support, I would point out again, not only from the seven major public interest groups, but also the major groups representing the private sector, and among others the legislation is strongly endorsed by the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of Mayors, the National Conference of State Legislatures, National Association of Counties. This legislation is also endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business, the National Association of Realtors, the National Association of Homebuilders, among others.

So, Mr. Chairman, the list really does go on and on. This has very broad-based support.

The bill also, I would point out, did not arrive just sort of out of the blue. It represents many, many years of hard work by Members on both sides of the aisle, and passed by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight by a voice vote. I know there were serious concerns about the process that got us to this point, one reason that I supported the open rule, so that we would have a full and open debate on many of the issues that have concerned some Members.

But given the fact that we have this very broad support, I guess the question is: Why would there be this kind of resistance?

The problem is that there seems to be, as I say, misinformation about what the bill does and does not do. This bill does not, I would stress again, and as will be stressed throughout this whole debate, undo environmental and social legislation that is already on the books. The bill does not stop future environmental and social legislation from being passed or costs imposed on State and local governments.

This bill does not stop future reauthorizations or, indeed, it would not convert existing unfunded mandates into mandates subject to a point of