

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

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

□ 2230

REVIEW OF CONTRACT WITH AMERICA AND OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 104TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURTON of Indiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. WICKER] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, this Friday marks a very significant day for me and many of my colleagues and, most importantly, for millions of Americans. This Friday, September 27, is the 2-year, is the 2-year anniversary of the signing of the Contract With America. When more than 300 Republicans gathered on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in 1994 to sign the Contract With America, it was not some kind of campaign gimmick. It was a commitment that we made, a signed contract with the people of the United States.

At this point the pages are bringing a copy of that contract to the well to place by my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT].

We promised if we were elected to the majority 10 broad legislative proposals would be debated, discussed and voted on by the full House of Representatives. For years, many of these issues had been bottled up in committee, never making it to the floor, never seeing the light day, the positions of our elected officials never examined by public scrutiny.

We set out to change that by making a solemn promise to the people of America, not an empty promise. The American people deserve much more than that. That is why we put our promise in the form of a signed contract.

All too frequently in today's political arena, promises are made and then not kept. Representative government, our government, Mr. Speaker, is not well served when our elected officials say one thing at home on the campaign trail, but then take office and come up here to Washington and do something other than that which they promised. This dishonest practice undermines the very fabric of our government's integrity and further promotes the negative cynicism with which Americans view Congress.

The Contract With America was the first step in changing that negative perception of Congress. We put forth a positive agenda, an agenda that sought to help make this great country an even better place to live, work and raise our children.

Mr. Speaker, we campaigned on a positive agenda, and we were elected to

a majority on that agenda. We changed the direction of debate in Washington through that agenda. No longer are people talking about a larger Federal role. The discussion and debate now in Washington, DC, is how we can make government more efficient, how we can make the Federal role small, and emphasize individual responsibility and State and local control. And, best of all, we kept our word to the American people.

At this point, I want to quote a story written by columnist David Broder, dated April 9, 1995. True words then and just as true today. David Broder said this: "It is healthy for our politics and politicians, regardless of affiliation, when the public sees elected officials doing what they promised."

Mr. Broder goes on to say, "The greatest threat to our system of government is rampant cynicism. The best cure for cynicism is to demonstrate that campaigns and elections really matter," and Mr. Broder then says, "The House Republicans have provided such a demonstration."

For over 40 years, one party held the majority in this House of Representatives. As a result, we have high taxes. Almost 40 percent of a family's income goes to pay for government. We have mountains of bureaucratic regulations, bigger government, but we also have lower student test scores and a skyrocketing crime rate.

In 1994, Republicans summoned the courage to finally throw down the gauntlet and offer the people what they said they wanted and what they deserved, a balanced budget amendment, tax relief for families, safe neighborhoods for themselves and their children, an end to the lifelong dependency on welfare, a Congress which will be accountable to those people they serve. But in the history of American politics, there have been few occasions where something has been so misrepresented and so maligned as the Contract With America.

Our colleagues from the other side of the aisle have spent literally hundreds of hours on the floor attempting to destroy and to distort what the Contract With America means and what we stand for.

Just to provide you some examples, Mr. Speaker, a colleague of mine from the other side of the aisle took the floor the other day and said the Contract With America would have cut Medicare, a completely false statement. There is nothing whatsoever in the Contract With America about Medicare, much less cutting Medicare. That it would have cut environmental protection, cut education, all to give tax cuts to the wealthy. Four completely erroneous statements in the space of one sentence. It is enough to take your breath away, Mr. Speaker.

Another quote from the Boston Globe: "Republicans' Contract With America failed to capture the hearts and minds of the average American family, especially that new breed, the Reagan Democrats."

And then the would-be Speaker, our current minority leader, said earlier this year, "This was supposed to be the Congress of the Republican contract and somewhere along the line we've got a lost contract there."

I will tell you where the contract is, to my distinguished colleague from Missouri, the contract is 65 percent signed into law right now. Sixty-five percent of the items that we voted on in the Contract With America have not only been passed by this body, but have been passed by the U.S. Senate and signed into law by the Democrat President of the United States.

Under the Contract With America, the 104th Congress took the first steps toward transforming government, not only to provide a smaller, more efficient government but a better government. We passed legislation as part of the contract that moves power, money and authority from inside the Beltway to the States, communities and families.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, I am joined by several of my freshman colleagues from all across the Nation, north, south, east and west, and we are here tonight to set the record straight.

First, contrary to the inflamed rhetoric of my Democratic colleagues and much of the news media, the Contract With America was largely successful. I know that my friend from Minnesota is chomping at the bit to get in his two cents' worth, and I at this point yield to the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT]. Certainly I know that he shares my frustration when we have 65 percent of the contract passed, 74 of the separate pieces of legislation were offered, and 48 of these are part of the law of the land.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I would like to thank my colleague from Mississippi and I am delighted we have a good turnout tonight of some of our fellow freshmen. I would like to talk a little bit first of all about the revisionist history. I think it was Mark Twain who said, "Truth is incontrovertible. Ignorance may deride it, jealousy may attack it, but in the end there it is."

I think if the American people will take just a few minutes to examine what we promised 2 years ago tomorrow, and what this Congress actually delivered for the American people, I think they will come to the conclusion that first of all we meant what we said, we said what we meant, and that in the end I think their will has been done by this Congress. For the first time in 40 years, we have a Congress that not only has listened to the American people but has responded as well.

I don't want to take too much time tonight, but I do want to share a couple of observations and memories of those days, and those days that I remember, the most remarkable days of all, were those glorious days and the first was on September 27, 1994 when we signed the contract. It was a glorious day. In fact, if you recall, it was kind of cloudy early in the morning but as we approached the Capitol steps, and there

were over 300 of us there, the sun began to shine and it was almost like it was providence or prophetic that the sun came out on America again and that there was going to come a day when the sun would shine here on this Capitol and inside this Capitol building as well.

The other day that I remember that was so glorious was election day. I don't know if ever I told this story or not, but when we were watching the returns back in Rochester, Minnesota, I think it was Dan Rather, he announced that it appeared that I was going to win the 1st Congressional District seat, a seat that had been held by the Democrats for 12 years, and in the next breath, he said, "It now appears that the Republicans will have enough votes to control the United States House of Representatives and that NEWT GINGRICH will be the next Speaker of the House."

Well, that was certainly a glorious day for me and I think for all of us here. But again I think it was a glorious day for all Americans. And then of course the other glorious day was the day that we were all sworn in and for the first time in 40 years the power of the United States House of Representatives changed hands.

I will never forget the very next day, DICK ARMEY, our majority leader, I was standing behind him and he was interviewed by a reporter, I think, from the New York Times, and the reporter asked our majority leader, the reporter asked, "How does it feel now that the American people have given you this power?" And he said something incredibly important then. He said, "The American people haven't given us power. They loaned us power. They gave us responsibility."

And so we began on the Contract With America and on that very first day, I remember 2 days before, I was called by the leadership and I was asked if I would take the leadership role on the adoption of the rule for the very first bill, H.R. 1, the Congressional Accountability Act. I sort of thought about it a minute and I said, Well, I'm not certain that I can handle that much responsibility on my very first day on the job but I said yes. And the interesting thing was that the leadership had enough confidence in this freshman class that they let us take the lead on the adoption of every rule of the first 10 items of changing the rules of the House the very first day on the job here in the House of Representatives.

We marched through it that night, we passed the Congressional Accountability Act, we passed the Congressional Audit Act, we made, as I say, the House live by the same laws as everybody else. We ended the idea that chairmen of committees could serve forever. We put term limits on chairmen. We opened up the committee process. We eliminated proxy voting. All of that happened on the very first day and what a glorious day it was.

And it was as if almost that the dam had broken and we had begun to change the course of history.

And then we marched on down through the rest of the contract and again I was very proud of this House, because every day, I will never forget as well when we started the House sessions, we would read the Contract With America and it kept us on message, it kept us in focus, it kept us doing what we said we were going to do.

So it was a very positive time in American history and I was very proud to have played a part of it. I know we have got other freshman colleagues and I know they have got a lot of other observations, but I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for asking for this special order and I am thankful that I have had an opportunity to participate.

Mr. JONES. If the gentleman will yield, I really appreciate the opening remarks by the gentleman from Mississippi, my southern friend. But the gentleman from Minnesota talked about the first day and I think that is so important because again it was the beginning of the Contract With America. You mentioned the fact that chairmen were restricted on committees. I believe I am correct, please correct me if I am wrong, that a chairman will serve for 3 terms, meaning 6 years. The Speaker of the House would only serve for 4 terms, 8 years. And that was a drastic change in the operation of the House, because there had been chairmen that served for 15, for 18, for 20 years and Speakers that go back to John McCormack from Massachusetts who I think served for like 20 or 25 years.

So that very first day, as you well stated, was the beginning of listening to the American people, that we were going to change the way that the Congress, the House of Representatives, operated. I think that set the tone for a very successful 104th Congress. I just wanted to commend the gentleman on his comments.

Mr. WICKER. If I could simply add to that point made by my friend from North Carolina, it might seem to some Americans that perhaps those first day reforms were inside the Beltway, inside Congress reforms, but actually everything we have done with the Contract With America, everything we have stood for with the Contract With America has been to help the lives of individuals out there running their businesses, getting their kids off to school, and even those first day reforms affect the lives of local citizens all across the 50 States. When Congress agrees finally for the first time in the history of this Republic to abide by the laws that it has foisted off on the rest of the American public, I think everyone agrees that we are going to see better laws passed, that we are going to see more responsible regulations. When we as Congressmen now know that when a regulation is passed on that plumber in Tupelo, MS, that we have to abide by that same wage and hour law ourselves.

I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

□ 2245

Mrs. SEASTRAND. It was great to meet all of you 2 years ago on the steps of the Capitol. We were excited and I still am about what we accomplished in this 104th. I know we all came to Washington to try to move the money, the power, the influence out of this place, and rush it to the folks back at home, the ones that we represent.

But what was interesting, after signing the contract, I just want to remind people that what our promise was was that we were going to bring 10 items up for consideration on this floor, items that were gridlocked in committees, never saw the light of day. They were simple things, things that people back home wanted to have debated.

I would like to remind people what some of these are. We talked about changing the way this place was run, but let us take a look.

Many times people say, oh, well, you all thought of that in some back smoke filled rooms. No, these items were brought into being because the folks at home across America were interested. They wanted to see these items debated. Like the balanced budget amendment, line item veto, stopping violent criminals by having them really have death sentences for violent offenders, definitely saying if you do the crime, you are going to do the time. Welfare reform, protecting our children by giving parents greater control over education and forcing child support payments, getting tough on child pornography.

And they the issue of tax cuts for working families, to say that if you are going to have that American dream, we want to give you the ability to save some dollars, buy a home and send the kids to college. A strong national defense. By golly, if we are going to send our men and women across to different countries, they are going to serve under their Commander in Chief, our President of these United States, and to wear the red, white and blue, and not some symbol of the United Nations.

To raise senior citizens' earning limits, to say to our seniors, you are going to keep what you make. We want you to keep more of what you make. To roll back government regulations, so that in our districts across this Nation, those that are in a small business can make it. And they can hire perhaps one or two more people so we can have job opportunities for people.

Naturally, common sense legal reform, because we have those frivolous lawsuits, the overzealous lawyers. And, as I said, congressional term limits. These were items important to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to break in here and remind people, not only changing the rules, with term limits for chairmen and such, but we wanted to change and bring about things not discussed on this floor.

I would agree with the gentleman from Mississippi with revisionism in history, because here I pick up one of the newspapers from Capitol Hill, Wednesday, September 25, and here is the opening statement: On Friday, House Republicans will convene on the Capitol steps to celebrate a 2-year anniversary of a document that they no longer talk about and an agenda that was never fully enacted.

Well, you know, when I am at home, some of the people that oppose what we are trying to do will say it is a failed contract, and I chuckle. Every time I speak to the Rotary, to the Lions, the Kiwanis, meet with the League of Women Voters and such, I talk about balancing the budget, line item veto, welfare reform, seniors keeping more of what they earn. It is just interesting to me, because somehow, the message is out across this land that the contract has failed.

I am so pleased that you have brought that pie chart to show how even our Democrat colleagues supported the Contract With America, those items Americans wanted us to bring up. And I think we should take it as a compliment that at the Democratic National Convention, the President of these United States, Bill Clinton himself, took credit for many of the accomplishments. Whether it was tax cuts for small businesses, the line item veto, the Congressional Accountability Act that says Congress has to live under the same laws we all have to live under, unfunded mandate reform, the Personal Responsibility Act, the welfare reform bill, and long-term care insurance deductions. All of those were in the Contract with America.

I was pleased, I guess that if the best form of flattery, when someone takes your ideas and says that they are theirs, or they belong to the President.

So I am just pleased to join my colleagues from across this Nation, freshmen, very eager freshmen, when I first met you. And, you know what? You still are. We are going to be excited to come back and continue with many of these reforms that we worked on.

So, gentlemen, congratulations. I am going to see you again on the steps of the Capitol come this Friday, and we are going to have a great celebration. I do not know about you, I am going to tell it from the roof tops of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties in California and talk about our successes, our accomplishments here in this 104th. I think the people of this country are going to be proud of us, they are. They are always telling me to hang in there, and we are going to see them once again on November 5, telling us they are pleased with our accomplishments.

Mr. WICKER. The gentlewoman from California is not only one of the most principled and determined Members of our freshman class, but also, as you can see, she is one of the most articulate advocates for a common sense conservative point of view with the Contract With America.

We are joined by my colleague from Maryland, Mr. EHRLICH. Welcome to this conversation.

Mr. EHRLICH. I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Mississippi, and the gentlewoman from California. It has been great serving with you. I look forward to another 2 years.

The gentlewoman from California, the gentleman from Minnesota, and the gentleman from North Carolina have talked about this new opportunity agenda that was brought to Washington in 1994. But I was just standing here thinking about, this is substance. This is statute, this is regulation, this is law. This is what we get paid to do. And I submit, we will talk about this, and I think it is equally important to talk about the new mindset that this group brought to this town. I think that is of equal importance, and certainly as important as the substantive agenda that we have all talked about.

We come to this floor every day, and we hear, particularly Republican freshmen, characterized as extreme and dangerous, whatever adjective you can think of. And you know what? They are right. In this town, this new mindset is extreme and dangerous and unique and unprecedented.

Think about it. A group of folks all over the country who actually have a concrete set of principles that they actually believe in, actually lived in their own lives in the private sector, banding together on the steps of the Capitol and saying to the American people, if you elect us, we will bring these initiatives that we actually believe in to the floor of the House for a vote. Having these same folks get elected, come to this floor, and actually do it.

No misrepresentation, no politics as usual, not the old political con. Actually having people of principle come to this town and do exactly what they said they would do during the course of the campaign, real follow-up, promises made, promises kept, and that is extreme and dangerous and unprecedented and unique. And I submit that this town has not seen a group like this in many years.

The gentleman from North Carolina, my good friend, Mr. BURR, has a comment on my comments, and I welcome the gentleman. I will just close with this point: This opportunity agenda, and the gentlewoman from California just read portions of this opportunity agenda, I had my first debate the other week, and my opponent talked about the Contract With America and running from the Contract With America. Running from the Contract With America. These principles define not only this group, but the majority of Americans, a majority of Americans who work and have a stake in this country and in this country's future. That is this agenda, two-thirds signed into law already, 20 percent vetoed by this President. We have some problems. We have made a great start. We have a long way to go. It has been my pleasure

to serve with you during these first 2 years.

The gentleman from North Carolina. Mr. BURR. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Mr. EHRLICH's comments remind me of a story shortly after finishing the Contract, when a journalist came up to me and said, "Congressman, many people in this country consider you to be extremist and radical. What do you think about that?"

I think Roger was in the room with me when the question was asked. I leaned across the table, and I said to this journalist, "If you think I am radical and extremist, you ought to see the people that elected me." And the reality is when we talk about the mind set change in Washington, what we are a reflection of is the people who sent us here. They sent us with a very clear message. And I am like Bob: The label of "extremist" and "radical," that does not worry me, because I still carry the Contract. And I challenge any person who wants to debate policy to look at the Contract and tell me what is extreme, what is radical? What would you not attempt to achieve for the American people and/or families across this country? Because the reality is maybe we did not name this right.

Maybe it should have been "The Common Sense Contract With America," because in fact that is what it reflects. As our dear colleague from California discussed, the reality is that this was not too tough to come up with. The reality is that these 10 points were probably items that all 87 Republican and Democrat freshmen came here with a conviction and a commitment stronger than anybody here to accomplish this task, to bring common sense to Washington.

Mr. JONES. If the gentleman would yield on that point, would you please remind us of how much during the President's speech at the Democratic National Convention, how much he tried to take credit on the issues that were in the Contract With America that we passed, and now he is trying to take credit for, that we the Republicans passed? Would you please remind me of that figure?

Mr. BURR. The gentleman has a good point, and I have always learned that math is calculated differently in Washington than it is in the rest of the country. But by North Carolina arithmetic, he hit on 7 of the 10 points of the contract that he highlighted as successes of this administration. I believe that in fact 58 percent on average of the Democrats in the House of Representatives supported Contract items.

Mr. WICKER. That fact is supported by the chart in the well there.

Mr. BURR. It is supported by the chart. And the reality of it is this was not a contract that had a political face. It did not have partisan leanings. When laid out and debated on the House floor, which every item was, 58 percent of the Democrats agreed with the common sense initiatives of the Contract With America. The realities are that

when you look at the American people and you ask them about the importance of the issues that we discussed, we debated, and eventually we passed many of them, the reality is that the majority of Americans are in agreement with us.

So maybe if in fact we are extremist or radical, so is America. But I think we knew before we came that the American families were fed up with business as usual in Washington. And I think when you look back on the record, our good friend from Minnesota pointed out very clearly that on the first day, a historical event happened: Congress went to work. And as we stand here tonight, I do not think that we have had a break since then, it seems like.

But the reality is we have accomplished a lot, not only with the contract, but with very important environmental legislation, with health care reform, with issues and legislation that no other Congress in the past 6 to 8 years has been able to move through this body. In fact, the accomplishments of this Congress I think will be historical. Not by the standards of the Contract With America, but by the standards of what this country needed and the right policy that we promoted.

Mr. ENSIGN. If the gentleman will yield, let another Westerner jump in on this fun conversation you all are having here tonight, just to make a comment. Based on what the gentleman from Minnesota probably saw that day standing on the steps of the Capitol when the sun broke through coming from Minnesota, that might have been a rare sight. Coming from southern Nevada, we see it will about 365 days a year, so it probably was not as spectacular a new sight for me.

I am on the Committee on Ways and Means. I was one of the three freshmen appointed to the Committee on Ways and Means, because our leadership had confidence in this freshman class, actually the first Republican freshmen appointed since George Bush back in 1967. And I think that the freshmen have done well on the committee.

My two colleagues, JON CHRISTENSEN and PHIL ENGLISH, I think they have performed in an outstanding manner on the Committee on Ways and Means.

As a representative of the tax writing committee, which is the primary responsibility for the Committee on Ways and Means, let me enlighten all of you to not only some of the things that we brought up in the part of the Contract With America, but actually we have been talking about, actually items that have been signed into law. That is the bottom line. It is great to debate all these items, but it only affects people's lives once you can get them into law.

First of all, we had the small business tax relief. We increased the amount of money the businesses can deduct as far as depreciation is concerned, instead of depreciation, actually expensing them, up the \$25,000 per

year. Small business people around the country understand that means they will be able to buy more equipment to make their employees more productive, to be able to pay their employees more money.

We also have a spousal individual retirement account. If you have a spouse that is living at home right now, they are not allowed to have an individual retirement account, an IRA. Our legislation allows you, enacted into law, now for your spouse to get an IRA as well.

□ 2300

We also have long-term care incentives. Right now in America, senior citizens are deathly afraid that they are going to have to lose everything that they have to be able to go on Medicaid, to be able to get good long-term care, skilled nursing facility type care in this country. We are not putting in tax incentives to buy long-term care insurance, for one, but also to deduct long-term care expenses off of their tax return.

What this does is it keeps more people off of Medicaid, off of the taxpayers' backs, but also gives them more control over their lives.

We also raised the Social Security earnings limitation. We are raising it over a 6-year period to \$30,000. Right now you get penalized if you are between 65 and 69 years of age, penalized for every dollar you earn over \$11,280. You get penalized on your Social Security. That is unconscionable.

We are taking some of the people with the most experience and wisdom in our society and saying do not work, we want you to retire, and most of these people want to stay productive, and we are saying we are going to penalize you if you do. That is wrong and we repealed that.

The adoption tax credit. Everybody talks about abortion. They talk about all these other things and they say, why do you not encourage adoption? This Congress is now encouraging adoption by giving a \$5,000 tax credit to offset adoption expenses for families that make up to \$75,000 a year.

Now, there were a couple of items in the contract that were vetoed and it is unfortunate, too, because the average American family pays more in taxes than they do in food clothing and shelter combined.

Yes, the \$500 per child tax credit was vetoed. Yes, the marriage penalty relief was vetoed. The American dream savings account was also vetoed. And also economic growth tax cuts, known as the capital gains tax reduction of 50 percent, was also vetoed, which would have been a huge boost to the economy and to economic growth in this country.

We are now in a global economy. We have to realize that when we are passing laws in this country. We need to make American business competitive once again. The cost of doing business, the cost of borrowing money, the cost

of capital plays into how competitive American business is in a global economy.

We could have helped make American business more competitive by giving capital gains tax relief. And, by the way, of all of the taxes that we proposed, tax cuts that we proposed, they talk about it was for the rich. Between 70 to 80 percent of the tax relief we passed as part of the Contract With America were for families making less than \$75,000 a year.

I do not know about my colleagues; districts, but in Las Vegas \$75,000 a year is definitely not rich. And in Southern California most people cannot even afford to buy a house if they make \$75,000 a year.

We saw working families struggling and we tried to help them and I was proud to be part of this freshman class that truly changed the scope of things.

Mr. JONES. If the gentleman from Nevada would yield for a moment.

Mr. ENSIGN. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. JONES. I have great respect for the gentleman from Texas, BILL ARCHER, who is chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, and I compliment you as well as the other committee members.

One of the contract items that was absolutely vital to the future of this Nation, and Mr. ARCHER was out in front on it as well as many other Members, was welfare reform. I saw him on talk show after talk show defending what we were trying to do to help citizens that were on welfare become productive working citizens.

I want to ask the gentleman this, and if he will respond, then I will stop. Mr. ENSIGN, is it not true that welfare has cost the American people, since the mid 1960's, the years of the Great Society, \$5.3 trillion? And it is not also true that Bill Clinton, when elected as the President of the United States, for 2 years had a Democratic Senate and Democratic House and never a welfare reform bill introduced until the Republicans became the majority? Is that true or not?

Mr. ENSIGN. Not only is that true, I think that one of the reasons maybe people do not believe us up here is because we do not give credit when credit is due. I think we need to give President Clinton the credit for raising the minimum wage. He brought this Congress fighting, dragging and screaming and everything to raise the minimum wage. Now, we had to do that, but the only way we would do that is by giving small businesses tax relief along with that, so we improved the bill. But we should give him credit for raising the minimum wage.

The President does not deserve credit for welfare reform. He is taking credit for it but he does not deserve credit for welfare reform, because, frankly, it was this Congress that did welfare reform. We recognized that welfare was destroying families. Illegitimacy rates are incredibly increased and a big factor in that is welfare.

We tell a teenage mother, we say, if you get pregnant we will get you an apartment. You can move away from your parents, get you an apartment. You can have any man live with you except for the father of the child. Do not get a job. You cannot save anything. And, by the way, if you want more money, have more children out of wedlock. If that is not a morally bankrupt system, I do not know what is.

And this Congress, with all of us working on it together, finally did the most sweeping social policy change in 60 years of this country, and we now have a true welfare reform bill that this President now signed into law because he was forced to.

Mr. WICKER. Reclaiming my time for just a moment. As my colleagues can see, the gentleman from Nevada being on the Committee on Ways and Means is on a committee that has a wide range of jurisdiction, from all the tax measures that he mentioned on to welfare reform.

I am sure some of my colleagues will want to join in this debate on tax relief, because a great part of the Republican Contract With America is tax relief. But what the gentleman from Nevada has just outlined in the items that passed dealing with tax relief, the item on small business, we know that most jobs created in the United States today are created by small businesses, so that tax relief package is a job creation package. It is going to create jobs for people where they live out in the 50 States.

The gentleman mentioned the spousal IRA, which is very important to many, many women around this country. A tremendous achievement. Tax issues dealing with health, dealing with senior citizens, allowing them to retain more of their earnings, and then certainly the adoption tax credit.

I know the President mentioned on television how delighted the First Lady was when we passed the adoption tax credit and sent it to the President for his signature. And I am sure there are other people that want to talk about the issue of tax relief for the American people. And I would be happy to yield at this point to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I thank the gentleman. I think sometimes our critics here in the House, and some of the folks in the media, sometimes have tended to say that, well, we cannot balance the budget and provide tax relief at the same time. And I think the beauty of the budget plan that was put together by the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. KASICH, and others, was that it demonstrated that if we do it over 7 years and we limit the growth in entitlements and make some cuts in domestic discretionary spending while we freeze defense spending that we can balance the budget in 7 years and allow American families to keep a little more of what they work for and what they earn.

Sometimes we do have to bring this all back. What does it mean? What does

a balanced budget and reduced taxes mean to the working families of Minnesota? What does that really mean to them? Well, it means that more of the power is being returned to them.

As Senator PHIL GRAMM says, I know the family and I know the Federal Government and I know the difference. And every Sunday American families sit around their kitchen tables or their coffee tables and they clip 120 million coupons from their newspapers worth an average of 63 cents. That is how families balance their budget every single week.

Now, when is the last time my colleagues saw a Federal bureaucracy clipping coupons? As a matter of fact, what happens at the end of their budget cycle is they try to figure out how to spend every last penny so they will not be cut next year.

Let me just say that it ultimately means a balanced budget and tax relief for working families so that they can afford new homes and new cars, and so that there will be more jobs for the folks who need them. It means more security for our seniors and it ultimately means more opportunity for our kids.

I think, in the end, that is really what this debate is all about, it is about more accountability in Washington and more responsibility and authority and resources being returned to the American families. And that is where it should be, because they know how to balance the budget, they know how to get the job done.

It is not a decision about whether we are going to have more money for children or their nutrition or their education, it is a debate about who gets to do the spending, and we believe in families.

Mrs. SEASTRAND. If the gentleman will yield, he talked about those families sitting around the kitchen table trying to figure out how they are going to meet their expenses. I know they pinch pennies. I have been in that position, so I know what it is like to see how to make ends meet.

I thought it was interesting. I think all of my colleagues would agree with me, that very first day we were sworn in we were given our key to our office and we opened the office to see if we would have a desk and a phone connected, but I remember almost stumbling over a bucket. Do my colleagues remember that, a plastic bucket filled with ice cubes?

We did not have time to worry about that. I think someone threw the ice cubes in the sink and that was it. But what was amazing is that afternoon there was another bucket, and then there was this ritual for a week or 2 weeks. And I kept saying, what is this all about? Where is this coming from?

And it is interesting because that is what we came to, a place that was still delivering ice twice a day to each of our offices when we have refrigerators, our own little personal refrigerators, or we can run down to the cafeteria and get a Coke with ice in it. And many other times the ice just melted.

And what did we do? We went to work, this freshman class went to work to see how we could pinch pennies. Where is this coming from? Who is doing it? How much is it costing?

I thought it was amazing to find out that it took 14 people to produce that ice, deliver it twice a day, and it also meant that it was costing the taxpayers, those families around that kitchen table, \$500,000 a year. Well, we put a stop to it, and that is \$500,000. And in the scheme of trillions of dollars, I think there was that old Senator that said, you know, you take a dollar here and a dollar there, and you add it up and it winds up to be a lot of money.

But I want to point out that not only on that first day did we slash and cut different things here in this building, but I think that ice bucket is symbolic of what we have tried to do in this House.

We cut the number of committees, we reduced staffs and budgets by a third, we slashed Members' mail budgets by a third, we reduced administrative staff and operating budgets, we closed the in-house printing and folding services, we privatized mail and postal operations, we ended a lease on a warehouse that just—do my colleagues remember that—held obsolete furniture and equipment, and then we ended a lease on an unneeded parking lot, where we found out that many times lobbyists parked in, and we opened up another parking lot for the public so that they could come and use this parking and know that they could get to their House.

We also did some things like privatizing the beauty and the barber shop and the shoe shine operation, all of this adding up to millions of dollars. Again, pinching pennies, symbolic of that bucket of ice, the way families all across America have to pinch their pennies every month to make ends meet.

Mr. EHRLICH. If the gentlewoman will yield, I apologize for changing the course of this discussion somewhat back to the philosophical, but I have a question for everybody.

There are an awful lot of Americans watching us right now, and that is good and that is part of democracy and that is a wonderful part about being in this House. It is very important that folks across the country hear this discussion, and I know that my colleagues all have the same experience I do when I go back to my district.

I am fortunate. As my colleagues know, I get to go back almost every night, and that is not the case with the other folks in front of me, and I apologize for that. It is a great part of being from Maryland.

I hear one question repeated over and over again, and I want to hear my colleagues' opinions concerning how they would answer this question, and the question, in various forms, is: Well, BOB, I love the agenda the gentlewoman from California just articulated, I love the fact you have cleaned

up the House, I love the fact you have cleaned up the process, I love the fact you all have principles and you have maintained those principles in the House of Representatives, I like this agenda, I like this opportunity in society that you want to create in this country, I really like welfare reform and capital gains and the whole nine yards, but why is the message not out there? Why do some people believe that these are actually tax cuts for the rich?

□ 2315

The gentleman from Mississippi earlier stated that slowing the growth in Medicare was not even part of the Contract With America. What is your answer?

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, I referred to the fact earlier that I found when I got to Washington that they add and subtract differently here. Inside the beltway an increase of 3 percent a year is in fact a cut because it is less than somebody wanted. In fact, anything less than what you want in Washington is considered a cut.

I think that raises a question. The question gets back to what the gentleman from Minnesota raised earlier. That is, is it radical to believe that a family knows better how to spend their money than the Federal Government? I think that in fact the answer is, to this town it is radical to believe that Members would give up the power of more money, the power of more decision-making capabilities, more regulations, the perks of the office and that in fact it is inconsistent with much of the history of this institution.

In fact, in 2 short years we were able to turn that around.

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make him feel better. The President of the United States shares your concern and your frustration. Does everybody here remember the President's recent quote when confronted by the press with respect to the issue? The Republicans really do not want to cut Medicare at all, Mr. President. They want to slow the growth in exactly the same way you yourself advocated just 3 years ago.

And does anybody recall the President's answer? He understood the difference, but it is shorthand, it is Washington. You cannot really tell the American people what the truth is because you have to use shorthand because the attention span of the American people is only a few seconds. And it is the press's fault. The press uses the term cut. It is not really a cut, but we have to use it in this town because that is the way we do things in this town; that is, we do not take our time to explain ourselves to the American people.

I think that is what the President was saying. Does anybody remember that quote?

Mrs. SEASTRAND. I remember that quote. I might add, you are fortunate you can go home every night to Mary-

land. My trip is quite lengthy, 3,000 miles across this Nation to the central coast of California. But I do go home every weekend.

I know I have heard those same questions. You have done your work. We want you to hang in there, but why are you not getting the message out? As I stated earlier, I tried to yell this from the rooftop about what we have accomplished. Regarding the contract, we said 65 percent of it has now been signed into law.

But I will tell you one reason that I think adds to the situation of why our message has become more or less confused and foggy to some people. I am one of those freshman and I know there are several that joined us today that have been hit by big special interest groups from Washington, DC. I would just point out since April of last year, of April 1995, we just completed the contract. We are going into the budget discussion. And all of a sudden up on television in my district we had special interest ads bombarding me and bombarding me ever since then.

Over \$600,000 have been spent in my little old district of outside money coming in trying to confuse the message and saying that I cut Medicare \$270 billion, that I cut student loans, that I have given tax credits to the rich to take care of the rich. It is an outrage. I just would say that shame on those big special interest groups who claim that they speak for the working men and women. That is one of the areas that we have had to put up with because we came here, as I said, to move the power and the influence and the money out of this place back home.

And so because we did that, we supported the contract, we gave every issue, we wanted to give more power to the working families at home. Those big special interests here in Washington are very upset with you, with me and they are trying to gain that power back so that they can once again have their perks and their special powers here and to heck with the people at home.

So I think there are many reasons, but I think that is a big special reason in many of our instances where almost half of that freshman class is now being bombarded by millions and millions of dollars from those people that are upset with our trying to change the way we do business.

Mr. WICKER. The gentlewoman is absolutely correct. I think it is fair to say to my colleagues and for us to say to the American people that we need to remind ourselves that there was another party in control of this body for 40 straight years, a body that refused to bring up these items, these 10 commonsense items of the Contract With America.

Frankly, they are not too anxious to balance the budget. They are not too anxious to have tax cuts for the American people. And for 40 years, under their rule, Government got bigger,

taxes got higher. And Government got more and more intrusive. We had less and less personal freedom, less and less local responsibility. Quite frankly, they want their majority back and they are willing to say things that are not accurate about what we have been doing.

I have an example just from this morning's Congress Daily where Senate Minority Leader TOM DASCHLE contended during a press briefing that despite the passage of welfare reform, health care, minimum wage, telecommunications, safe drinking water, farm and other legislation, "by and large this has not been a very productive Congress." Senator DASCHLE went on to say, I believe this session is far short of what we have done in past Congresses. He added, because we spent almost all of our time stopping Senate Republicans from doing extreme things, I think extreme has been their favorite word for these last several months although as we have shown tonight, 58 percent of House Democrats voted for the Contract With America.

The article goes on to say, when reporters pressed him afterward to name another Congress that had passed major legislation and yet could be judged similarly unproductive, however, DASCHLE could not name one. I know there have to be several. I will get back to you on that, he said.

It is that sort of disinformation that we freshmen, we Republicans have had to come back for the duration of this Congress.

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, your last comment strikes me as something that we all heard before we got here. That was a Congress that said to the American people, I cannot answer that today, but I will get back with you later. The fact is that Mr. GUTKNECHT from Minnesota said earlier that the freshman class brought a new mindset to Washington. In fact, he was partially right. I think the correct answer is the American people sent a new mindset to Washington. In fact, why we see the situations of outside interests in California and 38 other districts around the country of large special interests and why they have an interest in that district is, in fact, the breakup of power in Washington, that there are people that feel that for 40 years they have built an empire that in 2 short years is beginning to crumble.

They will go to any lengths and spend any amount and say anything to change the trend of the American people taking back over their Congress. The reality is that, in fact, the most changes have happened in this 2-year period than probably in the 2-year period in the history of this institution. I, for one, have been proud to be a part of it.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I would simply call on my colleagues to add anything they might want to in the way of closing remarks for this special order.

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, if I went to this well every day and looked into that camera and said, folks, Mr. WICKER from Mississippi is wearing a blue tie today and I bought \$100 million of ads and ran them across the country, and I did not care about telling the truth or shooting straight or having integrity but I loved those 30-second attack ads and every one of those attack ads said, Mr. WICKER is wearing a blue tie, do you know what? I bet you by election day, some people would believe that you were wearing a blue tie tonight, Mr. WICKER, and we all know that is a yellow tie.

Mr. WICKER. It is a yellow tie with very small elephants on it.

Mr. EHRLICH. In much the same way some people will believe tax cuts for working folks are tax cuts for the rich, in a very similar way some people will believe that slowing the growth in Medicare from 10 percent to 7 percent a year is a cut and on and on and on. I will close with this: I think the American people are a lot smarter than that.

Mr. WICKER. Before I yield to the gentlewoman from California, you have mentioned taxes and tax cuts. Let us remind ourselves, I think it is important to remind ourselves that President Clinton campaigned in 1992 on a middle class tax cut. Instead, he raised taxes on the American people the very next year. And the minority leader of this House got up before the Democrat convention in Chicago just a few weeks ago and said about that tax hike that the Democrats passed without a single Republican vote, what we did was right and our President did what was right, and I would do it again tomorrow and so would Bill Clinton.

When it comes to taxes, I am afraid that is the truth. They think tax increases are good and they would do it again tomorrow if they get a chance.

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, it is just interesting, I am pleased to participate with you this evening, but as we mentioned, we were trying and we still are trying to give power back to the folks at home, move that money and power and influence from Washington, DC to each and every one of our special places; for me, to California. And I think it is really something when you think that you gave your word, you kept your word, you kept your promises and you are called an extremist for doing so.

I would just say that for doing so, I have been punished more or less with having that outside money come in. I often tell people, if you try to go to Washington and try to change the way things were, then you see why nothing was done for 40 years. Because when you step out of the box from the way they did things, you are punished with those ads and misinformation.

I think the gentleman from Maryland is right. I am hoping that the good Americans across this Nation will be able to see through this and will again go to the polls and reelect those that are trying to work for them and give them back their Government.

Mr. BURR. Mr. speaker, I would simply say in closing that I know that my colleagues agree when I say that character does matter, that conviction does matter, that commitment does matter, that where there is, quite honestly, character, there is courage, that where there is conviction, there is hope, and where there is commitment, there are results.

And if I could sum up this freshman class in the 104th Congress, it would be that we have been courageous, that we have maintained a sense of hope for the future and hope for this country and hope for the families and that, in fact, we should be judged based upon the results, the results of 2 years, not a year and a half, like some want to judge us, but the full 2 years and the impact that we have made on changing how we represent the American people.

I am proud of the change, and I look forward to serving with each one of you in the 105th Congress so that we can continue with the progress that we made in the 104th Congress.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, in the minute or two that I have remaining, I just want to remind my colleagues of why we are here this evening. For this Congress and for America, the historic Contract With America was a positive agenda to restore commonsense Government. The contract, in its intents and in its substance, has been distorted and criticized in recent months as a failure and for somehow being extreme.

Tonight we have documented that the contract has largely been a success, with almost two-thirds of its legislative items passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton. Further, we have shown that the contract was anything but extreme, with widespread public support, over 60 percent of the American people support all 10 items of the Contract With America. Much of the contract passed the House with significant bipartisan support, as I said, 58 percent of House Democrats voting for the Contract With America.

□ 2330

My colleagues have repeatedly shown tonight that the contract's legislation will have a real and positive effect on the lives of all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I want to thank my colleagues for participating in this special order.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. LOWEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.
Mrs. THURMAN, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WICKER) to revise and ex-

tend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCINTOSH, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. WELDON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. MCINNIS, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. RIGGS, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. UNDERWOOD.
Mr. LIPINSKI.
Mr. BERMAN.
Mr. VISCLOSKEY.
Mr. JACOBS.
Mr. BARCIA.
Mr. WILLIAMS.
Mr. CLEMENT.
Mr. STARK.
Mr. BRYANT of Texas.
Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island.
Mr. CARDIN.
Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin.
Mr. MILLER of California.
Mr. ENGEL.
Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
Mr. MARTINEZ.
Mr. BENTSEN.
Mr. HASTINGS.
Mr. GEJDENSON.
Mr. EVANS.
Mr. KLECZKA.
Mr. SERRANO.
Mrs. LOWEY.
Mr. POMEROY.
Mr. BONIOR.
Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WICKER) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. CAMP.
Mr. LIGHTFOOT.
Mr. NEY in three instances.
Mr. BAKER of Louisiana.
Mr. KOLBE.
Mr. CRANE.
Mr. OXLEY.
Mr. HYDE.
Mr. ZELIFF.
Mr. SHAYS.
Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut.
Mr. HORN.
Mrs. ROUKEMA.
Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky.
Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
Mr. BAKER of California.
Mr. PORTER.
Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
Mr. DUNCAN.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WICKER) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. HEFNER.
Mr. MOAKLEY.
Mr. ACKERMAN.
Mr. SPRATT.
Mrs. KELLY.
Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.
Mr. DOOLEY of California.
Mr. DIXON.
Mr. FARR of California.
Mr. BARCIA in two instances.