

USA Today says, "How would you like to raise a family on \$8,800 a year?" That is what we get with the current minimum wage. We ought to raise it. I am appalled when I hear my Republican colleagues who make over \$100,000 a year say that they will fight a 90-cent increase in the minimum wage with every fiber in their body. It is absolutely shocking.

We need to maintain a high minimum wage so that we can have the high standard of living in this country. The current minimum wage is \$1.10 less than the poverty level. People cannot exist on the current minimum wage.

If we increase the minimum wage, 12 million Americans will benefit. And do not let the Republicans tell us they are just teenagers. Thirty-nine percent of those Americans, 39 percent of those 12 million, are breadwinners, heads of households.

Mr. Speaker, the equation is very simple. Decent minimum wages mean less welfare. The people who are getting welfare are there because many of them cannot get a decent wage even though they work.

GIVING STATES AUTHORITY WILL ENHANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow on the statement that was made eloquently by my friend from Cleveland about the issue of the environmental commitment of the 104th Congress.

I come from a State which is very sensitive to environmental concerns. In fact, the district which I represent has had the highest number of first stage smog alerts in the Nation. We have very serious groundwater contamination problems.

The fact of the matter is, this Congress is committed to moving in the next several weeks with very important legislation, the Safe Drinking Water Act, which continues to be a top priority. And as my friend said, this concept of one-size-fits-all regulations emanating from right here in Washington has failed.

In fact, we have seen improved environmental quality in spite of, not because of, the bureaucracy that has existed here. Every shred of evidence demonstrates that we will, in fact, be able to enhance environmental quality in this country and in my State of California if we are able to give the States the kind of authority that is desperately needed. That is the commitment that we have.

REJECT GET-GREEN GIMMICKS

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have recently attempted to improve their environmental image to the public at large. They know that the American people want our environment protected, and they have felt intense heat for their relentless attacks on our public health and safety.

But we know better than to believe their get-green gimmicks. This Congress has the worst environmental record in 40 years. We have fought attacks on public health standards, meat inspection regulations, national parks, endangered species, and pesticide protections, to name only a few. And now, while these attacks in Washington continue, we are subjected to their pro-environment rhetoric. We can expect to witness them planting trees, adopting highways, or volunteering to clean up a river or lake in order to polish up their image.

As we prepare to celebrate Earth Day, we cannot stand for this hypocrisy. We must protect and cherish our environment, both in the laws we write—and in the lives we live.

POLLUTERS, NOT TAXPAYERS, SHOULD BEAR COST OF CLEANUP

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

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the celebration of Earth Day it behooves us to take the time to see what we have done to our planet. The Superfund Program helps us accomplish what we must, clean all polluted sites. Superfund is based on the principle that the parties responsible for the pollution should pay for the cleanups.

Unfortunately, some Members want to shift cleanup costs from polluters to taxpayers. Whose interest does it serve to shift this burden off the polluters and onto the backs of the public?

A high percent of the Superfund sites currently listed on the national priorities list involve human exposure to hazardous substances or threats to drinking water. Over 70 million people live within 4 miles of one Superfund site. In my district, more than 168,000 people get their drinking water from aquifers over which a site is located.

H.R. 2500, the Superfund reform bill, rejects the polluter-pays principle and undercuts responsible remedies, allowing polluters to walk away from sites. H.R. 2500 caps the national priorities list at 125 sites, while States have testified that there are 1,700 Federal caliber sites. Under this plan, responsibility for 1,575 sites would be left to the States, whether they have resources to clean them or not.

Although the program has been criticized for the slow rate of cleanups, 349 site cleanups have completed since the program started in 1981. Nearly 60 percent of these cleanup have been completed under the Clinton administration.

Under the last Democratic Congress, a compromise Superfund reform bill received the support of three committees and was supported by the Clinton administration, State governments, and environmental groups. The compromise dealt with reducing litigation, speeding cleanups, and narrowing liability.

As we celebrate Earth Day we should not allow lobbyists to rewrite out environmental laws in ways that benefit polluters and hurt the health of our good citizens. Let me pledge to seek new opportunities so that we can be proud to pass along a safer and healthier planet to our children.

A SERIOUS PLAN FOR WHAT AILS THE DISTRICT

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post front page story this morning is an urgent action alert for this Congress "In Threadbare D.C., Hopes Wear Thin."

This Congress, which claims constitutional responsibility for the Capitol of the United States, bears a heavy responsibility for the decline and fall of the District, at least this year: the shutdown of the Government, the hold-up in the appropriation, the cuts before a plan was in place against the recommendation of your own control board.

On April 15, I introduced the D.C. Economic Recovery Act, to give a tax break to D.C. residents, to stop the hemorrhage of taxpayers out of this city. The Washington Times calls it, in a headline in its editorial, "A Serious Plan for What Ails the District."

Save the Capitol of the United States before it is too late. It is, I remind you what you always tell me, your constitutional responsibility.

DO NOT RAISE TAXES ON WORKING AMERICANS

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

Mr. TATE. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago my good friends across the aisle raised taxes on senior citizens, raised taxes on working Americans in the form of higher gas taxes, raised taxes on small business owners. But the new Republican Congress tried to provide tax relief for working Americans in the form of a \$5,000 tax credit for working Americans that want to adopt a child, tax relief for small businesses.

Now it is an election year, and my good friends across the aisle say raise the minimum wage. Well, they controlled the Congress and the Presidency for 2 years. If I look at their record and look closely enough, what the folks across the aisle truly want to do is raise taxes on working Americans. That is what they are truly interested in.

REPUBLICANS WOULD ROLL BACK ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I know that we are leading up to Earth Day next Monday. I was involved in the original Earth Day 26 years ago, and I think it is very unfortunate that now in this Congress under Speaker GINGRICH we see the worst environmental record in the history of the Congress.

In effect, what is happening is that the Republican leadership is doing their best to try to roll back 25 years or 26 years of environmental progress that we have seen in this Congress on a bipartisan basis since the first Earth Day.

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The worst part, I think, is with regard to enforcement. One of the things that I have always said is that if you do not have proper enforcement and investigation to make sure that there are teeth in your environmental laws, then you in effect do not have any environmental laws.

This continued process with the Republican leadership where they do not provide enough funding for the EPA and other agencies that are involved in environmental protection so that there are not the enforcers or the environmental cops on the beat, if you will, out there doing the investigations, catching the polluters, indicating or making it possible to impose penalties against those who violate our environmental laws, this constant effort is hurting environmental protection in this country.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule.

Committee on Agriculture, Committee on Banking and Financial Services, Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, Committee on International Relations, Committee on the Judiciary, Committee on Resources, Committee on Science, Committee on Small Business, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

LAYING ON THE TABLE HOUSE RESOLUTION 368

Mr. QUILLEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that House Resolution 368, providing for consideration of H.R. 994, the Small Business Growth and Administrative Accountability Act of 1996, be laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

TRUTH IN BUDGETING ACT

Mr. QUILLEN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 396 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 396

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 842) to provide off-budget treatment for the Highway Trust Fund, the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, and the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed two hours equally divided among and controlled by the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on the Budget. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. Each section of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. QUILLEN] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. QUILLEN. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman

from California [Mr. BEILENSEN], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. QUILLEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. QUILLEN. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 396 is an open rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 842, the Truth in Budgeting Act. The rule provides 2 hours of general debate divided equally between the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on the Budget.

The rule makes in order the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure amendment in the nature of a substitute now printed in the bill as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and provides that each section be considered as read.

This rule allows for priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD prior to their consideration, and it provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, when I first came to Congress in 1963, I was privileged to serve on the House Public Works Committee. The name has changed, but the important agenda of the committee and the dedication and hard work put forth by the members of the committee over the years has not diminished.

I've long supported efforts to take the four transportation trust funds off budget, and I commend chairman BUD SHUSTER and ranking member JIM OBERSTAR for finally giving the House an opportunity to debate and vote on this issue.

We'll hear a great deal of discussion about this bill today, and arguments will be made that these trust funds should not be exempted from budget cuts in attempts to balance the budget. But Congress made a commitment to use the proceeds of transportation user fees solely for transportation purposes. Presently, there is over \$30 billion in the four transportation trust funds—money that could be and should be used to improve our highways, airports, harbors, and inland waterways. The public is no longer being fooled by using these funds to mask the true size of the Federal deficit. It's way past time to honor our commitment and release these funds to improve our Nation's transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill and I urge my colleagues to vote for this open rule and to support passage of this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following extraneous material for the RECORD: