

our efforts to help those kids do better as they get older and to help to win the war against poverty in this country.

In my community of Tucson, AZ, 70 percent of the children served by Head Start are bilingual, and through this program, these children learn English better so that they can go to kindergarten with a better knowledge to start out of their schooling on the right footing, and that helps them stay in school. That helps everyone, the kids, their parents, and the community.

Mr. Speaker, for years Head Start has enjoyed strong bipartisan support, and in these austere budgetary times, that support has continued. I urge my colleagues to continue to provide adequate funding.

WAGES IN AMERICA

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

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, everybody in America is worried about their wages. Here in Congress, the GOP leadership opposes the President's initiative to raise the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15 to begin starting next year.

The GOP leadership argues that this will have unintended consequences, therefore, let us not do it. However, what they failed to note is that paying workers more money for work performed will increase workers' purchasing power, and that will purchase more goods, more jobs will be created. This helps restore purchasing power, reduces turnover in the job place, and promotes domestic tranquility.

I think that is what this country is all about, is about paying people for work performed. Paying more to the lowest wage earner in the country, the lowest, the lowest, not the middle, not the highest. Are there not the same workers we are trying to help with struggling to keep their heads above water? Why is it the GOP wants to end welfare but does not want to pay those who work for being hard workers?

TRIBUTE TO HEAD START

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

Mrs. SEASTAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a program which I believe has had a significant, positive impact on children and their families. Head Start empowers the entire family, not just the young child. Head Start assists parents in carrying out their roles as the primary nurturers of their children. Parents assist in Head Start classrooms and sit on parent councils that have a say in how the program is run. Research shows positive impacts including improved parental awareness, and enhanced parental employment and educational status.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 750,000 children currently involved in Head Start programs, and the many more children who would benefit from them, I call upon my colleagues in this chamber to fully fund Head Start for the next fiscal year. Though government cannot provide solutions to all of our Nation's problems, it can, when employed judiciously and efficiently, help poor children and their families overcome some of the hardships of life.

Let us make an investment in this Nation's future. Every dollar allocated for Head Start will save us many more dollars and much heartache in the future.

A HEAD START FOR OUR NATION'S CHILDREN

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call our attention to one of our Nation's most cost-effective and productive programs: Head Start.

Head Start is a comprehensive program aimed at preschool age children of low-income families. In addition to providing education, it also includes nutritional services, health screening and treatment, and social services. One of Head Start's strengths is its emphasis on involving parents in their children's education.

The idea of Head Start is simple. If you help children prepare for school, and if you work with their parents, they will enter kindergarten better able to learn, develop, and compete. Head Start invests in child development as the core of an antipoverty strategy.

In a time of declining resources, our country should protect its most cost-effective programs, especially those that invest in our youngest children, empower families, and support work. Head Start is just such a program. Comprehensive early childhood education programs have been shown to save at least \$3 for every \$1 invested—by reducing future costs of special education, public assistance, and law enforcement.

Rosemary Flores is one of many Head Start success stories. She is a grandmother in San Diego who was recently appointed as custodian of her grandchildren. She says, "Head Start is like a life raft. It teaches the value of education and the concept of family unity. If I had my way, it would be available to everyone."

Unfortunately, Head Start is not yet available to everyone who qualifies. Currently only 40 percent of the eligible 3-to-5-year-olds or 20 percent of the eligible children from birth to 5 years are served by Head Start.

Mr. Speaker, the President's budget request asks for \$3.981 billion for Head Start in fiscal year 1997. This is a good start on Head Start. We should appropriate the full amount requested.

MEDICARE HOSPITAL TRUST FUND

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

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has released new data showing Medicare's hospital insurance trust fund is going bankrupt a lot faster than the President's trustees estimated.

But the President and congressional Democrats have not put forth any new or serious ideas in light of this alarming new information. In fact, the Washington Post said yesterday,

The new numbers appear to lend support to Republican charges that the Medicare hospital trust fund is deteriorating faster than had been realized and that steps must be taken quickly to arrest the decline. Last year the Medicare trust fund lost \$35.7 million and this year in the first 6 months of this year alone, it has lost \$4 billion.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare's problems are much more serious than the President and congressional Democrats are willing to admit. They want to play politics with this issue. It is time to turn off the Medicare radio and TV ads, stop the medigoguary and join with us a plan that preserves Medicare from bankruptcy while increasing spending and increasing health care choices for every single Medicare beneficiary.

□ 1430

JOIN THE TRIBUTE TO HONOR OUR FIRE AND EMS PERSONNEL

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today we honor America's domestic defenders, the 1.5 million men and women across the country who serve every one of our communities in responding to every type of disaster known to mankind. This evening, 2,000 of their leaders are assembled here for the eighth annual national dinner to honor the fire and EMS personnel.

When I started this effort 8 years ago, Mr. Speaker, it was to give proper recognition to these unsung heroes, and tonight we continue that tradition.

We will be joined by the Honorable Senator BOB DOLE, who will give a keynote address, along with the Vice President of the United States, AL GORE, both of whom have strongly supported, in a bipartisan way, the efforts of these brave men and women.

We will also honor the brave firefighters of the Long Island fire departments who provided such valuable service last year in responding to an unbelievably large incident in Long Island.

Mr. Speaker, today is the day when our colleagues can join together and pay appropriate tribute to these brave men and women by showing up at the dinner this evening and by meeting with them in their offices as the 2,000 leaders of the fire service address Capitol Hill and plead their case for more support and more recognition.

POLITICS, HYPOCRISY, AND THE RISE OF GAS PRICES

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, like all Americans I am concerned about the recent rise in gas prices and the effect that it has on consumers and on our industries in this country. I do not know exactly what the answer is, I am not sure that anybody does, but I think it does merit study by this Congress and by the administration.

But I am also concerned, Mr. Speaker, by the hypocrisy that I see Members of this House, of the other body, of the de facto Presidential nominee of the other party, the Republican Party, that after 16 months of being in control they have decided now they want to repeal the gas tax.

Where were they last January? Where were they with their tax bill? Now they have had this midnight conversion, much like the Earth Day conversion on the environment, and all of a sudden they want to repeal the gas tax.

I have been talking about this for awhile. Why did we not take it up before? It is politics, it is politics plain and simple, and unfortunately as the House continues to engage in this activity, the American people suffer.

LET US HOLD HEARINGS ON THE OIL COMPANY SCAM ON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, gas prices are shooting up at the pump. Meanwhile, the big oil companies have just announced record profits. Gasoline inventories dwindle. Meanwhile, three major refineries announced routine shutdowns on the very same day, last Friday. Pump prices soared 30 cents on oil company speculation. Meanwhile, their Republican defenders in Congress blame a 4-cent tax. The President initiates an investigation and releases reserves. Meanwhile, the Republican Congress sits on its hands. Where are the hearings? People want answers. Why are the oil companies doing this? But all we get is a Republican silence of the lambs.

Mr. Speaker, consumers are in need, and all we get is a Republican fig leaf for the naked greed of the oil companies.

Let us face it. The gas tax is a dry hole. If we want to strike oil, let us pass a windfall profits tax on the money that the oil companies are taking out of the pockets of consumers. They are tipping consumers upside-down and shaking money out of the pockets of these consumers. Let us have Republican hearings on this oil company scam on the American people.

THE TIME IS RIGHT TO DO RIGHT—RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the time is always right to do right. And raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do.

This is not just an economic issue, Mr. Speaker, this is a moral issue. Hard working people deserve the right to earn a livable wage. The minimum wage is at a 40-year low. No one can live, much less support a family, on \$8,400 a year.

Mr. Speaker, stop playing politics with people's lives. Bring a clean minimum wage bill to the floor. Do not load it up and bring it down with your pet programs.

Mr. Speaker, you have the ability, you have the capacity, you have the power to bring a clean minimum-wage bill to this floor and give people a livable wage.

BLAMING THE GAS TAX ON THE REPUBLICANS?

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

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I was just in the House Chambers, and I cannot believe what I just heard in the last few minutes.

I was here 2 years ago, and I voted "no" on the largest tax increase in the history of this country. It was the Clinton tax increase supported by the Democrats in the House of Representatives, not one Republican voted for it, and supported by the Democrats in the U.S. Senate. What did that large tax increase do? It put on the American people and the working people, from what previous speakers have just spoken, the largest tax increase in the history of this country, and I certainly did not see any of these brave speeches, just now given recently in the last few minutes, but some of these Democrats about this onerous gas tax. It is those people right there who put that gas tax on each and every one of us.

People did not have to be rich to get the gas tax put on them. They put a 4½ cent tax on every American that buys a gallon of gas, and today they are trying to get away from it as fast as they can run and somehow do a flip-flop and blame it on the Republicans.

Forget about the partisan politics. Let us talk about the tax.

FOREIGN RELATIONS REVITALIZA- TION ACT SHOULD BE DEFEATED

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

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, SAM GIBBONS is an internationalist, and I

join with many in the tribute to this great legislator.

Today we do not have an internationalist bill on the floor, the Foreign Relations Revitalization Act. It forces the consolidation of agencies, which is the President's prerogative. The levels necessary to conduct foreign policy are just not there. It get involved in China policy when we should basically be staying away. It put restrictions on our relations with Vietnam. It put restrictions on our participation in international organizations. It has severe restrictions on our family planning policies.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a bipartisan bill, it is a partisan bill. It should be defeated. The President's veto should be upheld, and we should not stand for partisanship at a time when our foreign policy should be bipartisan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLINGER). Pursuant to provisions of clause 5, rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

AMENDING CENTRAL UTAH PROJECT COMPLETION ACT

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1823) to amend the Central Utah Project Completion Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to allow for prepayment of repayment contracts between the United States and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District dated December 28, 1965, and November 26, 1985, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1823

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PREPAYMENT OF CERTAIN REPAYMENT CONTRACTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE CENTRAL UTAH WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT.

Section 210 of the Central Utah Project Completion Act (106 Stat. 4624) is amended by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: "The Secretary shall allow for prepayment of the repayment contract between the United States and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District dated December 28, 1965, and supplemented on November 26, 1985, providing for repayment of municipal and industrial water delivery facilities for which repayment is provided pursuant to such contract, under terms and conditions similar to those contained in the supplemental contract that provided for the prepayment of the Jordan Aqueduct dated October 28, 1993. The prepayment may be provided