

months of groceries, health care services, household utilities, or go toward their children's education at a local community college.

Now is the time not for promises but for action.

If this Congress wants to encourage work we must reward working families by increasing the minimum wage and giving them hope for a better future.

It is time to give America's workers a raise.

SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the House will be considering the authorization bill for NASA next week, which includes funding for the international space station.

You will hear arguments from opponents of the space station. If their rhetoric sounds familiar, it should. They are the same arguments used last year, and the year before that, and the year before that. In fact, they are the same arguments used by opponents of any visionary project throughout history.

Space station opponents are trying to sink our country's investment in the future.

Opponents do not want you to hear that the space station is on schedule and on budget, or that nearly 90,000 pounds of hardware have been built by the United States and our international partners.

Opponents of the space station want you to cut it because they claim we cannot afford it.

I tell you now that we can't afford not to build the space station. We cannot turn our backs now on the men and women who have worked to make the space station and its promising future a reality.

I urge everyone to support the international space station—a vote for the space station is a vote for our children's future.

WHAT GOP REALLY STANDS FOR

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I drove by the gas station today. Premium was up. Unleaded was up. But the minimum wage—the salary earned by a lot of people who buy the gas and pump the gas—was stuck right where it had been.

Gas prices might be at their highest point in years, but the buying power of the minimum wage is soon to be at its lowest point in 40 years. Our lowest paid employees are getting gouged everywhere—at the gas station, at the grocery store. But, instead of giving minimum wage employees a break, the Republicans tell them to wait.

Yes, two bucks a gallon is a lot to pay—especially when you are only making four and a quarter an hour.

But, of course, the Republicans are careful not to cut into the profit margin of the oil companies. After all—that is the Republicans' profit margin, too. In the past few years, oil and gas companies have pumped millions of dollars into Republican campaign coffers. Now I finally realize what GOP stands for—gas, oil, and petroleum.

America's gas tanks are running on empty, but the Republican Party is out of gas.

REPEAL THE GAS TAX

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, that last 1-minute was almost ridiculous. Why is your gas going up? Well, yes, it has to do with market, and perhaps there is a little too much coziness between the big oil companies, who have always been putting generous donations into Democratic campaign coffers. But one thing we must never forget is that gas, every single gallon, is 4.3 cents higher because Bill Clinton resides in the White House, and under a Democrat majority Congress they increased your gas prices 4.3 cents per gallon and Americans have been paying that for 2½ years.

I ask my Democrat colleagues who are so concerned about America's working class to join me in asking the President to repeal his excessive 4.3-cents-per-gallon gas tax and let us give Americans a little help this summer.

LET THE CHIPS FALL

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture spends \$200 million a year on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program known as EQUIP. Now the focus of the purpose of EQUIP is manure. That is right, manure. And after years of studies and reports and after hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, the Department of Agriculture has come to several conclusions.

No. 1, big farm animals produce more manure than small farm animals. And, No. 2, manure stinks. Beam me up. Mr. Speaker—\$200 million to determine that manure stinks.

I think these environmentalists over at the Department of Agriculture have been smelling too many methane fumes. Why not just let the chips fall where they may, stockpile a little of it, and tell these monarchs and dictators overseas if they keep jacking around with oil prices, we are going to turn Elsie loose.

I yield back the balance of this methane.

WELFARE INVITES COMPARISONS TO SLAVERY

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

Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, in slavery people worked but were not paid. In our current welfare system people do not work but they are paid. Neither system can be condoned. It took a Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, to end slavery and it appears as though it will take a Republican President to end welfare as we know it.

When President Clinton had a Democrat-controlled Congress, there was no welfare bill to vote on. Now that the Republicans control Congress, President Clinton has repeatedly vetoed welfare reform.

But unlike then-Governor Clinton's 12-year failure to do what 48 other States did easily, pass a State civil rights bill, we should not wait on welfare reform. We should not continue to have a system that has been like a 20th century version of slavery. Welfare and slavery have both provided the basic necessities while leaving their victims filled with despair.

CALL FOR IMPOSITION OF WINDFALL PROFITS

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

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans want to repeal the 4.3-cent gasoline tax. Let us debate that. But there is no guarantee that the oil companies are going to lower prices by 4.3 cents, so the consumer would just ride over to the gasoline station, pay the extra 4.3 cents that the oil companies had in lower prices and they wind up with no extra money in their pocket. The only way in which we can be sure that the consumer gets a break is if we impose a windfall profits tax on oil companies.

□ 1115

In that way, the consumer, as taxpayer, will get that 4 cents back into their pocket.

In addition, down in Texas, Koch and Citgo and Coastal have closed down 300,000 barrels of oil refinery gasoline per day as of last Friday. Up in New Jersey, there is another 190,000 barrels that Tosco is not producing.

We need the President to move in, to use his Executive power, to jawbone these energy executives, so that the 500,000 barrels of idle gasoline refining capacity is put back on line by this weekend, so that we flood the marketplace with gasoline. That drops the price of oil in the global and American marketplace.

TAX INCREASES NOT A SOLUTION

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Well, Mr. Speaker, there they go again.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a tragedy when our liberal friends on the other side again, despite an excess of rhetoric, use as their main bone of contention that the way to solve problems is to impose a new tax. And you heard my good friend from Massachusetts, even as he called, properly I believe, for the expansion of the use of our fossil fuels, although certain friends over there will try to have it both ways, in the heat now of seeing a problem, the key to what he talked about was a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, the way we solve these problems should be based on this acknowledgment: The American people work hard for the money they earn, and all Americans should hang onto more of that hard-earned money and send less of it to Washington.

So no to all tax increases, roll back the Clinton gas tax, and let that be not an end to itself, but the start of the rollback of the assault of Washington on the pocketbooks of Mr. and Mrs. America.

THE DRAMATIC PRICE INCREASE IN GAS PRICES

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, there is one big question in relation to the gas tax, and that is if we are going to repeal the 4.3 cent gasoline tax, how much of the reduction, if any, will the consumer see?

If the market is not working, then consumers will not see much of it at all, and there are indications that the free market in the area of big oil is not working.

Today I will be sending a letter to the Justice Department seeking answers to three questions: First, why did the prices spike so quickly, when we all knew there was cold winter months ago and when this idea that Iraq would dump oil has been known for several months as well? That does not explain a 1-week dramatic rise.

Second, if there is a true free market, why did not a couple of the companies, at least one of the big ones, decide to keep the price low and compete on price and increase their market share? That is what Adam Smith would tell us they would do.

Third, most vexing of all, when the price of crude goes up, the price of gasoline goes up immediately. But when the price of crude on the wholesale market goes down, the price of gasoline hardly goes down at all, and if it does, it is slow and grudging.

Until we answer these questions, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to know if the consumers would benefit. And if we can answer these questions, drivers will save hundreds of dollars at the

pump, not just the 4.3 cents of the gas tax.

REPEAL GAS TAX OF 1993

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

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, here we go again, attacking the free market. I guess we need a bigger government to control more and more.

Mr. Speaker, I represent a portion of southern California where people are paying almost \$2 a gallon for gasoline. That is right, \$2. That is ridiculous.

The people are angry. The people are even angrier when they find out that Congress slapped a tax on gasoline to pay for numerous social programs. That is right, Congress increased the gasoline tax in 1993 to pay for numerous additional social programs.

In the past, the gas tax worked fine because all of the moneys went to fixing highways and potholes. What happens today? Only a fraction of the gas tax money is spent on highways and bridges. That is the problem.

My position is simple. If we are not going to fix the highways, then we should not collect this gas tax money.

Let me tell you how we are going to lower the cost of gasoline. It is simple. Let us repeal the Clinton gas tax increase of 1993.

CONGRESS SHOULD BRING MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE TO A VOTE

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the 104th Congress has been on now for a little over a year and let us look at the extreme Republican agenda.

They have spent the whole year trying to cut Medicare and Medicaid, to pay for a tax break for the rich. The Democrats and the President has stopped it. They want to give us the largest education cuts in the history of the United States. Can you imagine that? And they want to gut the environment and make air dirtier and water dirtier.

Now they lecture us about family values, but they do not want to increase the minimum wage. We cannot even get a vote on the floor of this House to say whether or not we want to increase the minimum wage by a lousy 90 cents an hour, up or down. Give us a vote. The American people want an increase in the minimum wage. Do not tell us you are for family values, Republicans. You do not give a darn about the American family. You will not even allow us to have a vote to raise the minimum wage 90 cents. When 84 percent of all Americans, 84 percent, say they want an increase in the minimum wage, including 71 percent of Republicans, the House leadership here will not even give us a vote.

The minimum wage ought to be raised 90 cents; 90 cents is all we are asking. Give us a vote.

AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL SEE THROUGH DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, once again we hear what is the pithy disinformation campaign that is the basis of the Democrats' political hope in the future. What they are betting is they are betting that the American people will not see through this disinformation campaign and they are betting that in fact they will be confused and deceived and disinformation by it.

I and those who believe in the future of America are convinced that in fact the American people will see through it, and I am betting the American people will know what the truth is.

Just to be specific, a \$700 billion increase in Medicare can hardly be called a cut. A 50-percent increase in student loan funding can hardly be called a cut.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention something in the Washington Times this morning in an editorial that I thought was very interesting. It had to do with a poll conducted regarding the AFL-CIO's decision to spend \$35 million in dues supporting Democratic candidates to defeat Republicans. We find out that 62 percent of the union members oppose the political use of their dues in that way. I thought that should be brought to your attention.

PERFECTING THE CASH-AND- CARRY GOVERNMENT

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Senate voted unanimously in favor of a health care reform bill that did not include costly medical savings accounts. In fact, the other body voted explicitly on April 18 to keep medical savings accounts out of the bill.

Now the presumptive Republican nominee for President wants to appoint to the conference committee Senators whose sole purpose will be to force MSA's into the bill when no one is looking. You can tell a lot about a man the way they act when they think no one is watching.

I guess we're supposed to ignore the fact that the Golden Rule Insurance Co. has given \$1.4 million in campaign contributions to Republicans. And that Golden Rule also happens to be the premier company peddling MSA's. Regardless of how the Senate voted, Golden Rule will get its way through the back door.

Mr. Speaker, this buyout is just one more fine example of how the GOP has perfected the art of cash-and-carry Government.