

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.

ALLOWING CHOICE IN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH].

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, as we take a look at what has been said in the preceding speech, I think it is the proper question to ask, or the proper contention to make, are—

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, is it permissible to yield in 1-minute?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING] controls the time. The Chair is informed by the Parliamentarian he may yield to the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH] while remaining on his feet.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Just so we all understand the rules.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would simply make this point: The American people are watching, not for partisan squabbling, but asking this question: What works? And the notion that medical savings accounts, where people control their own destiny, where people are able to visit the doctors they want to see and seek the treatment they feel is best, is at the very heart of our American system. And to suggest that it is some sort of cheap political ploy is once again to at least ignore the facts or to engage in deliberate disinformation and distortion to cloud the picture and to again try to confuse the American public, instead of allowing the American public what they deserve, and that is choice health care.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, is it not correct that \$1.4 million was given to the Republican candidates by the Golden Rule Insurance Co. and now the Republicans are trying to put—

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, objection. That is not a parliamentary inquiry. She is making a political speech.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would inform the gentleman that that is not a parliamentary inquiry.

WELFARE PAYING MORE THAN MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week the Houston Chronicle ran a story about how welfare pays more than the minimum wage. We hear a lot of rhetoric about moving people off welfare and into work, but the Republican leadership refuses a simple up or down vote on providing a liberal wage.

Using the current minimum wage, workers putting in their 40 hours a week for 52 weeks would earn just over \$8,800. A working family supported by a minimum wage earner is below the national poverty level and is eligible to collect welfare benefits.

A minimum wage increase will give my constituents and other working Americans the ability to move off the welfare rolls, but Republicans continue to oppose a minimum wage increase. Instead of bringing this issue to a vote, they have proposed yet another Government subsidy for businesses. This measure is nothing more than a huge entitlement and more public assistance, more welfare, when what we need is a job that pays enough to put food on the table.

The Washington Post said today that the Senate majority leader wants to cut the gas tax and raise the minimum wage. Let us do it. I think that is a good bill.

Let us do it, Mr. Speaker. Democrats want working families to work their way off welfare. It is time for the Republicans to do the same. Support a minimum wage increase.

REPEAL 1993 GAS TAX

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

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing all this handwringing from the other side about gas prices. But what you won't hear from the liberal Democrats on the other side is how they raised the gas tax in 1993.

Not one single Republican in this body supported that Democrat-sponsored tax increase. Thanks to President Clinton and his liberal allies, the American people now pay \$4.8 billion a year more for gas. That's on top of the ever-increasing prices that they pay today.

If Democrats are really concerned about the plight of the average motorist, then they should support the repeal of their 1993 increase on the gas tax. That may not cure everything, but it's a very good start.

Earlier this year, Bill Clinton and the Democrats had the opportunity to cut taxes for the Americans. But they were committed to protecting Washington spending.

I believe they should be given another opportunity to reduce the tax burden on the American people. Let's repeal the 1993 Clinton gas tax.

DROP IDEA OF MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

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

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, our colleagues on the right continue to press for inclusion of the medical savings account proposal in the health insurance bill currently pending in Congress.

Once again, they want to burden average, working Americans to benefit the wealthy and influential.

According to the Urban Institute, if the medical savings account proposal is a part of the health insurance bill, premiums for a standard policy could skyrocket by as much as 60 percent.

If the Republicans have their way, employers win big and employees lose; high income individuals win big and those earning less than \$30,000 a year lose; influential insurance companies win big and average citizens lose.

In addition, according to the Urban Institute, workers may be forced into a single insurance, losing their right to choose.

Mr. Speaker, we have shaped a bipartisan health insurance plan where no citizen loses and all citizens win.

I urge my colleagues on the right to drop this idea of MSA's—an idea which cases many to lose, and support the proposal where all Americans win.

□ 1130

RIISING OIL PRICES AND OIL EXPORTS

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

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States yesterday released oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in an effort to counter inflating gas prices. But last Friday President Clinton lifted the ban on exporting oil from Alaska. At a time when gas prices are soaring, he chose to sell United States gasoline to Asian nations instead of to American citizens.

The ban on exporting oil from Alaska was part of an agreement that allowed the building of the pipeline that supplies the United States. As we face soaring oil prices at home, we are preparing to reduce domestic supplies of oil by shipping it overseas.

Mr. Speaker, the President's decisions contradict each other. He is opening the Strategic Petroleum Reserves to lower the price of oil at the same time he prepares to expand shipments of American oil to foreign consumers. He is making the problem worse than it needs to be. The American public is paying the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the President, "Mr. President, will you please try to be consistent?"