

to try to get reelected. In fact they called it Mediscare. What we are seeing are a group of people who were so afraid to save the system that the President's own Medicare advisers said was going bankrupt that they will resort to anything to get reelected.

□ 1015

It was the President's task force that said we must save Medicare. So we did something radical. We said we would allow Medicare to grow at 7.2 percent. The President said, let us let it grow at 7.4 percent, and we were told we wanted to destroy the system.

Well, I agree with the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT]. Mr. Speaker, if saving Medicare is being mean to senior citizens, beam me up, because I do not understand this place anymore.

WHERE IS REPUBLICAN BUDGET?

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

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, what the gentleman who preceded me in the well did not say was that his party does not have a budget that explains how we make these cuts, whether they be Medicare cuts or tax cuts. Indeed, this Congress just returned from what I thought was the Easter break, but hearing the Speaker's comments yesterday promising massive tax cuts made it sound more like a political Christmas.

It was only 2 years ago that Members of the Republican Party paraded into this well to say, where is the White House budget? Well, what a difference 2 years makes. Now the conservative Democrats have presented the so-called blue dog budget, the White House has presented its balanced budget. What has the reaction been? The Republican Congressional Budget Office says it is not balanced enough, but they presented no budget of their own.

Then they say the Medicare cuts are not deep enough. They presented no budget of their own. Yesterday the Speaker promised eliminating all capital gains. That is about \$40 billion a year, the mass of the benefits going to the wealthiest individuals in the country, and yet no budget has been presented.

So here is my challenge to the other party. When you demand cuts, put a budget on the table before you come to the table.

HATCH AND KENNEDY ARE RIGHT

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

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do what is right for the children of America.

Senators HATCH and KENNEDY have developed bold new legislation in the other body designed to protect the

physical health of our children, and we in the House should also support this legislation. It has bipartisan support and deserves our support.

There are three major components to it: A block grant to allow the States to provide the health insurance coverage, which is paid for by a tax or a user fee on cigarettes that not only will pay for the program but also discourage youth from smoking in the first place. One-third of the revenues, and I say specifically to my Republican colleagues like myself who are fiscally conservative, one-third of those revenues will be used to reduce the budget deficit and stop mortgaging children's futures.

The health of our children is far too valuable to allow it to be threatened by a lack of adequate health insurance. There is no area where health insurance and preventive care brings more rewards. It is cost-effective as well as being humane, and it deserves the support, bipartisan support, such as Senators HATCH and KENNEDY have already developed.

MORE TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, when I woke up to today's papers, I read the latest idea of the Republican leadership's do-nothing Congress, which is to go ahead and give 1,400 of the wealthiest families in this country a \$4.6 billion giveaway by eliminating all estate taxes, and that is what it amounts to, over \$4 billion to only 1,400 families in this country.

This is not relief, which we want to see in estate taxes, this is a giveaway, at the same time that my colleagues say that Medicare cuts are not big enough on millions of senior citizens in this country, and with 10 million children in this country who have no health care opportunity whatsoever.

Now, to think that this is, in essence, what my Republican colleagues are headed toward in their budget describes why they do not have a budget, because there is no way to plug up those holes. Deal with the deficit, balance the budget, and take care of the needs of this Nation. Who are you for, and who are you against?

Mr. Speaker, with this policy, what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are telling us is, they are against our seniors, against our children, and for the wealthiest people in this country who do not need that type of assistance. That is simply wrong.

AMERICANS SHOULD FIGHT FOR TAX RELIEF

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, in 1980 the Federal revenue was about \$500 billion.

We then had the Reagan tax cuts, and by 1990 the Federal revenue was over \$1 trillion. It doubled in a decade. Mr. Speaker, if we could double our Federal revenue in the next decade, we would go from an income or revenue of \$1.5 trillion to \$3 trillion. We could balance the Federal budget with \$3 trillion income.

However, the opponents to tax relief say you cannot cut estate taxes, which we all know as death taxes. We are taxed all of our lives, and then now we have a tax when people die. We cannot eliminate death taxes, because that is only 1,400 people. We cannot cut capital gains taxes, because that is only the wealthy. We cannot even give tax relief to families, \$500 per child, because there is no revenue generated from that.

Well, this country can get tax relief. We are taxed too high, and we can do it and still see an increase in the Federal revenue. Do not believe all the demagoguery. Fight for tax relief. I urge my colleagues to vote for tax relief as soon as we can get it to the floor.

TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH, MEDICARE CUTS FOR SENIORS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we have been here before. Last year Speaker GINGRICH attempted to give tax breaks to the richest citizens of this country and pay for them by cutting Medicare at \$250 billion. The American people stopped that.

This year, as April 15 approaches and Americans are rushing to pay their taxes, Speaker GINGRICH, who himself still owes the Federal Government \$300,000 in fines, Speaker GINGRICH is back. He wants more tax breaks for the wealthiest people and more cuts for Medicare.

Yesterday Speaker GINGRICH, appealing to his wealthiest contributors in the Republican Party, advocated a huge tax break for the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans. At the same time, the Republican chairman of the Committee on the Budget yesterday said he wants more Medicare cuts.

The Gingrich team is doing it again: Tax cuts for the richest 1 percent, Medicare cuts for 37 million senior citizens. That is wrong.

AMERICANS ARE OVERTAXED

(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, the previous speaker spoke about what is wrong. What is wrong is to lie to the American people and say something is a cut when it is not a cut. The Republican Medicare proposal last year increased Medicare funding \$190 billion to \$270 billion. That is not a cut.

Now, if my colleagues on the other side say it is a cut, either they have a

huge math disorder or they are a liar, period. I certainly would hope that we have a math disorder on the other side that maybe we can reach out through one of the 706 social programs sponsored by the Department of Education and help those who failed in mathematics to understand. They are getting paid \$134,000 a year to serve in the U.S. Congress. They ought to be able to know an increase from a decrease, and then they ought to have the forthrightness to be truthful about it.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is this: The American people are overtaxed; Medicare has gone broke; we have a proposal to fix it. They are separate issues. Balancing the budget is a separate issue. The Speaker offered the President a balanced budget without tax cuts. The President is the one who has rejected it, not the Speaker. We are trying to work with the other side. We are not trying to fight them.

KIDS AND GUNS DO NOT MIX

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

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, permit me to gently change the subject. I would like to talk about kids and guns today.

Mr. Speaker, according to a recent study of gun deaths by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children in the United States are 12 times more likely to die because of a firearm than children in other industrial countries. The United States had the highest gun-related child homicides and the highest rate of child suicides of 26 industrial nations in the study. There is not even a close second.

Between 1965, Mr. Speaker, and 1995, the percentage of murders committed by people under 21 in my hometown of Chicago went from 10 percent to nearly 40 percent. Over the same 30-year time span, the number of murders committed nationally by those under 21 increased fivefold. Today, 18- and 19-year-olds account for the largest percentage of violent crime arrests in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, these sobering facts can lead to only one conclusion: Kids and guns do not mix. I urge my colleagues to support my bill that would ban ownership of handguns for anyone under 21.

CHILDREN FIRST IN EDUCATION ACT

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to support the Children First in Education Act, a bill which would direct 95 percent of our Federal education dollars to our local school classrooms. For too long we have been satisfied with the mediocre performance of sending from 50 to 80 percent of Federal funds to local com-

munities. That means over 20 cents, at least, of every education dollar intended for local schools gets lost in the bureaucracy. This can be improved.

Mr. Speaker, in the past few weeks, I visited with students, teachers, and administrators in schools like McCaskey High School in Lancaster City. Here I witnessed a topnotch education atmosphere, yet one which could be enhanced by getting Federal funds directly into the hands of someone who knows your child's name.

Mr. Speaker, if this act is passed, out of a total of \$15 billion federally, approximately \$3 billion more would get directly to our kids. That is more than \$70 per student per year, money which could be used for new textbooks, teachers' aides, and learning materials.

I urge my colleagues to join in sponsoring and cosponsoring the Children First in Education Act.

ARC ROAD PROGRAM BENEFITS OUR ECONOMY

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I was dismayed by a letter I received yesterday from the chairman of the House Committee on the Budget. It seems that he considers the Appalachian Regional Commission's road-building program corporate welfare, saying that it is used to, quote, "link well-to-do urban centers with other well-to-do urban centers".

Now, perhaps that is the case with road-building programs in Columbus, OH, but I can assure my colleagues that, in my part of Ohio, ARC road funds are used to bring economic development and jobs to remote communities.

Other regions take good roads for granted while the Appalachian people do without. The ARC road program was a promise the Federal Government made to the American people of Appalachia in 1965. It is now 77 percent complete. It is not corporate welfare, it is basic infrastructure.

I am hopeful that the good chairman will reconsider his assertions about the worth of this essential program. We need to finish the job and to keep our commitment to the people. The taxpayers in my district want concrete results. We need pavement, not broken promises.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT NEEDS TO ACT

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, last December while I was on vacation with my family, I used my wife's cell phone to talk to some of my colleagues. A few weeks later I found that the conversation was all over the newspapers, and I had found out that a couple of Democrat activists had broken the law and

eavesdropped on my conversation, the equivalent of wiretapping. I saw them all over the television talking about how they had come to Washington and given this tape to Democrats in this House; yes, in this very House; and how just a day or two later transcripts of my private conversation wound up in the newspapers.

Mr. Speaker, I was mad, and so were some of my colleagues, and we demanded that the Justice Department get to the bottom of this matter.

Well, Mrs. Reno can move pretty quickly when she wants to. She got a grand jury together within days after a Republican committee chairman was accused by a Democrat activist of improper activities, but when it came to IRS agents snooping in our taxpayers' files or Democrats snooping in on private phone conversations or the Democrat National Committee accepting Chinese campaign checks, or the Vice President making telephone calls from the White House, she can drag her heels along with the best of them.

Mr. Speaker, TapeGate is so open and shut of a case that even Barney Fife could have solved it in a day. I have written her that I want an answer by tomorrow, and so far I have not heard a peep.

□ 1030

If we do not hear by tomorrow, we are going to have to hold the Democrats in this House accountable for what they did.

HAPPY APRIL FOOLS DAY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, a few listening realize that Congress has extraordinary power. One of those powers is to change the calendar and the time of day during a legislative session. So the Republican leadership has declared today to be April Fools Day, if Members have been listening to the speeches.

If we take the top 1 percent of the people in this country, they own 40 percent of the wealth. They are telling us from that side of the aisle, if we take the top 1 percent who own 40 percent of the wealth in America and exempt them from all taxation, we will balance the budget. No inheritance taxes for the top 1 percent who own 40 percent of the wealth, no capital gains taxes for the top 1 percent who own 40 percent of the wealth, but we will balance the budget.

How is that? Because the little people will pay taxes. All the little people who work for those folks will pay taxes, and we will have a balanced budget.

Is it not a wonderful world? Is it not great? We have to love this country. If we exempt the wealthy from paying taxes, we will balance the budget. The problem today that we do not have a