

Following my colleague from Ohio, beam me up, Mr. Speaker. Does this make sense?

REDUCE FEDERAL SPENDING

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

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, my father took home about 85 percent of his paycheck. My brother will take home about 45 percent of his paycheck. My daughters, at the current rate of taxes and spending, will take home between 10 and 16 percent.

Yogi Berra once said, "Ladies and gentleman, the future ain't what it used to be." When I grew up, if you worked hard and tried to save and put money back, you may have a little bit of a life with your family. More and more, that is increasingly different.

Mr. Speaker, we need to reduce the amount of Federal spending and have an effective government. The President wants a \$3 billion literacy program. There are already 14 literacy programs in education, all with bureaucracies, to where we get as little as 23 cents on the dollar down to the classroom. That is cutting education, Mr. Speaker.

We need to work on both sides because American families are endangered in this country. A billion dollars a day, but not one penny goes to any of those.

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HOW FAR WE HAVE COME, HOW FAR WE HAVE TO GO

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

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to wear an official Jackie Robinson 50th anniversary shirt licensed by Terry Manufacturing, the largest African-American manufacturing apparel company in the United States.

Fifty years ago this week Jackie Robinson shattered not just the color line in baseball, he also shattered the myths upon which Jim Crow America was built.

A few brave men in major league baseball took the courageous step to hire one player. But in major league baseball, just as in other areas of American mainstream life, there are still many more barriers to tear down before we have reached our true ideal as a nation.

Monday the world watched in awe as Tiger Woods shattered every record held for the Masters Tournament at Augusta National. Unfortunately there remain golf courses in America where families like Tiger and his family are not welcome and minorities cannot play.

It is right and appropriate that we take the time now to celebrate how far we have come. Let us also reflect on how far we still have to go.

ILLINOIS' LADY INDIANS BASKETBALL TEAM DEMONSTRATE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND COMPETITION

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise this morning to acknowledge an exemplary group of young athletes from Illinois who have persevered in reaching a common goal for the second year in a row. This group of young women have demonstrated the true hearts of champions, and have aspired once again to the highest level of sportsmanship and competition.

This team of student athletes hailing from Carlyle, IL, are known as the Lady Indians basketball team. In March the Lady Indians won the Illinois high school Class A women's basketball championship.

En route to their second State championship and third straight visit to the Illinois finals, Mr. Speaker, the Carlyle Lady Indians rolled to a record 33 wins and no losses, including the championships in the Cahokia Conference Tournament, the Mascoutah Holiday Tournament, and the Highlands Invitational. In the last three seasons the Carlyle ladies high school team has racked up an impressive 94 wins to only 8 losses, which demonstrates a selfless commitment to excellence and a willingness to forsake individual accolades for the good of the team.

Mr. Speaker, this team, led by Courtney Smith, the 1997 Illinois Ms. Basketball, and Angie Gherardini, the Illinois Class A coach of the year, is an outstanding example of hard work, dedication and excellence which every young athlete can learn from, and truly symbolizes the selflessness and devotion of all the people of the 20th District of Illinois.

So today Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate these 12 devoted players and the assistants who guided this team to their second straight Illinois State Championship in 1997: Michelle Donahoo, Leslie Dumstorff, Heather Hitpas, Kristin Hustedde, who recently visited my office as part of the Congressional Youth Leadership Council, Tara Kell, Erin Knuf, Summer Knuf, Lindsay Macon, Stacey Pollman, Jessica Robert, Brie Sheathelm, and Courtney Smith.

H.R. 2 ABANDONS COMMITMENT TO HOUSING THE VERY POOR

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, this week the Speaker of the House announced that he wants to give a \$300 billion tax cut to the wealthiest people in this country. This is a disgrace. But the story gets worse, much worse. Today Republicans are going to try to pay for those tax breaks by taking money from poor people in public housing.

Today in the Committee on Banking and Financial Services we will debate H.R. 2, a bill that abandons our Government's commitment to housing the very poor. Under H.R. 2 many poor families will end up spending more of their income on housing or be forced into homelessness. Meanwhile, people making over \$350,000 a year will get a tax break.

Mr. Speaker, is this what the Republicans stand for: Giving tax breaks to the rich while throwing poor children onto the street? H.R. 2 is extremely unfair and must be stopped.

DO NOT CUT MEDICARE TO PAY FOR TAX BREAKS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, as we begin the debate over how to balance the Federal budget, I rise today to express my frustration over some of the recent proposals for dealing with our Nation's Medicare Program.

Last week I was concerned to learn of the President's offer to take an additional \$18 billion out of projected Medicare spending. Then, Mr. Speaker, I was utterly outraged to learn of the response of the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget to the President's offer. The gentleman from New Mexico said an additional \$18 billion was not nearly enough.

Republicans have threatened to call off budget negotiations with the President unless he accepts Medicare cuts of up to \$30 billion or more. A cut of this magnitude without balanced reform would devastate the Medicare Program and cannot be justified.

And why are the Republicans scrambling so furiously for these deep, unsustainable cuts in Medicare? Not to extend the life of the Medicare trust fund, not to improve the quality of health care for 38 million seniors, but because they need the money to finance massive tax breaks for the very wealthy.

Mr. Speaker, I will not support any budget, whether Republican or Democrat, that uses the Medicare Program as a piggybank for giant tax breaks for the rich.

TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH AT THE EXPENSE OF MIDDLE CLASS WORKING FAMILIES

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is the same old song and dance here on Capitol Hill. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are proposing large tax cuts for the rich at the expense of middle class working families.

The latest tax proposal put forth by the Speaker of the House is to eliminate all capital gains and estate taxes,

which would cost a staggering \$300 billion over the next 5 years. Who benefits from these cuts? The wealthiest 5 percent of Americans. And who pays for these cuts? Working families.

Do not just take my word for it. USA Today estimated on Monday that it would cost the average American family \$400 a year to pay for this tax windfall for the wealthy.

It is time to stop proposing huge tax breaks for those who need it the least and to start providing targeted tax relief for those who need it the most: Middle class American families.

REDUCTION OF TOP RATE OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX FROM 28 TO 14 PERCENT

(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 rise to congratulate my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans. I have to do that, after having heard the vitriolic attacks that are emerging from the Democratic side attacking us for what clearly will be the single most important thing that we can do for working families in this country, and that is reducing the top rate on capital gains from 28 to 14 percent.

I am very gratified that we now have, I think it is 127 Democrats and Republicans as cosponsors of this measure. Why? Because Democrats and Republicans know that it is going to benefit working families. It is going to, based on every shred of empirical evidence we have, increase the flow of revenues to the Federal Treasury, as it has always done when we unleash that \$7 to \$8 trillion of locked-in capital that people are concerned about selling because of that rate that is so extraordinarily high.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join as cosponsors of H.R. 14, Democrats and Republicans.

BAN HANDGUN POSSESSION BY ANYONE UNDER 21

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

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, do my colleagues know children in the United States are 12 times more likely to die because of a firearm than children in every other major industrialized nation? And that the United States has the highest rate of gun-related child homicides and child suicides of 26 major industrialized nations?

Over the last 30 years the percentage of murders committed by people under 21 in my hometown of Chicago went from 10 percent to nearly 40 percent. Over that same 30-year period, the number of murders committed nationally by those under 21 increased 5 fold.

Mr. Speaker, when we consider these facts, there can be only one conclusion: Our children are all too often the perpetrators and the victims of handgun violence.

Mr. Speaker, we in America need to ban handgun possession by anyone under 21. I have introduced a bill that would do exactly that, and I urge my colleagues to support me in this effort.

A NEW DEFENSE TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION?

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

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, perhaps as a former U.S. attorney and a Federal prosecutor, I am particularly sensitive to new defense theories when they arise in court cases. I was mystified yesterday, though, to see a new defense to criminal prosecution raised by none other than the Attorney General of the United States.

In her letter in which she refuses to appoint an independent counsel to investigate allegations of wrongdoing for which there may be a conflict of interest or an insufficient basis, she says that the Vice President's admitted use of a telephone in the White House and the OEOB to solicit funds was not a crime because the use of the phone for something that is otherwise permissible is OK.

I can see the next time the U.S. attorney has to exercise prosecutorial discretion involving the use of a phone by a drug trafficker, and I suppose now that the Department of Justice will have to decline such prosecutions because the use of the phone is otherwise permissible, and therefore even if it is used to solicit drug monies, that is OK because use of the phone is for otherwise legal purposes.

It is a sad day indeed.

FACING BIGOTRY AND HATRED

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

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, my remarks today are timed to coincide with tonight's television showing of the film "Not In This Town," about hate groups and racial bigotry in America.

I speak on this topic because I was in Billings, MT, just prior to what happened to Tammie and Brian Schnitzer and their family, after it had become known they are Jewish, an identity which ought to be an occasion of immense pride.

Mr. Speaker, Billings, MT, is not the only city where such events occur. In fact, in Santa Barbara, CA, where I live and work, a community forum was held just last Saturday night because of a recent incident in a local high school. Participants included Babatunde Fofayemi, Judith Meisel, Michael Caston, the superintendent of schools,

the Reverend Sara Moores Campbell of the Unitarian Society, the Reverend Rueben Ford of St. Paul A.M.E. Church and other community leaders.

The Santa Barbara News Press gave very extensive coverage to this event, demonstrating that a newspaper is a powerful educational instrument.

Mr. Speaker, right now, before Passover, following Easter, we must recognize that bigotry and hatred are challenges faced by the entire human community.

LET US BRING JUSTICE TO THE COMMANDOS

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

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an injustice suffered by over 300 men of the Vietnam war, an injustice that spans three decades.

During the war, the United States Government trained a number of South Vietnamese commandos to infiltrate North Vietnam Communist operations. Many of these commandos were captured and brutally tortured during their years of imprisonment and sustained long-term injuries.

There are about 300 commandos currently living throughout the United States. It is now time for our Nation to recognize their heroic war efforts and compensate the few surviving commandos and their families.

The Pentagon has failed to carry out the unanimous will of the 104th Congress to pay these brave men an average of \$40,000 each for their time in captivity. In fact, while the Pentagon has delayed, three of the commandos have perished.

The House Committee on Appropriations has the opportunity to fully recognize their service on behalf of the United States as they consider the supplemental appropriations bill this week. It is the least we can do to recognize their enormous sacrifice.

Let us not turn our backs on the commandos.

100 DAYS OF DOING NOTHING

(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, today is the 100th day of this Congress. Today marks 100 days of doing nothing.

The Republican leadership has no agenda. The Republican leadership has no budget, no education bill, no children's health care bill. Why do we not have a budget? Why do we not have a children's health care bill? What can be more important? Instead of doing the people's work, we are spending our time on busy work and political posturing.

What have the Republicans done about a budget? Nothing. What have