

many of the details still have to be worked out, and of course many will say the devil is in the details. I think Members of this body would be hard-pressed to speak against a budget agreement that for the first time since 1969 gives us a real chance to balance the budget, to get our fiscal house in order.

I would have preferred that we postpone some of the tax cuts pay for more of them through savings in the tax Code. We are doing much of that. Each of us may find, as I say, particulars in programs that we think may be more endangered than before the budget agreement, but that is a product of compromise. Politics is the art of compromise, and it is about time we were able to get together to work in a constructive, cooperative spirit.

I congratulate the President and I congratulate the leaders of the House and Senate on both sides for coming forward with that spirit and getting the kinds of results they have.

If we oppose this, we invite far more harmful consequences to ourselves and particularly to future generations than any of those items we specifically object to could ever cause. Let us not blow this opportunity to do what is in everyone's best long-term interests. The bipartisan budget agreement will allow us to reach balance in the year 2002 without wreaking any havoc on the most important domestic discretionary programs, nor will it wreak havoc on the Defense Department budget.

We as Democrats can be proud of this agreement, since it will allow the Federal Government to continue to be an agent of positive change. We will be able to expand health care coverage to 5 million more needy underinsured children. We will be able to restore the safety net to legal resident aliens who were disenfranchised under last year's welfare bill, and we will be able to go home and justify our actions to a public that is too often skeptical that we are not doing anything that is in their best interests.

This agreement builds on the accomplishments of past deficit reduction efforts, most notably the 1993 deficit reduction package. Since adoption of that 1993 budget package, the deficit has been reduced 4 consecutive years to where it is now the lowest since 1981. It is down to \$74 billion. This past year it was \$107 billion; now we are talking about \$74 billion. That is phenomenal, given where we started, from \$290 billion in 1992.

The tax increases and the spending cuts enacted in 1993, contrary to much criticism at the time, has kept interest rates and unemployment low and the economy booming. The stock market has gone through the ceiling because they have to put their money on their analysis of where the future of this economy is going. That is why the stock market is booming. They see a rosy outlook. They know that our budget is in control.

Now, we hope that this agreement will also lay the foundation for more fundamental entitlement program reforms that must be dealt with before us baby boomers begin to retire. But this agreement deserves our support. The President and the leaders of the House and Senate deserve our support. We congratulate them.

At this point I would like to yield to my colleague and good friend, the gentleman from California [Mr. DOOLEY].

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN] in congratulating the President and the Republican leadership and the Democratic leadership that played such an instrumental role in negotiating what is a very responsible budget that is going to benefit all American families. It is going to build upon the good work that has happened in this House in the last 4 years, when we have been able to reduce the deficit from what was \$290 billion to what might be \$75 billion this year. It is almost one-quarter of what it was 4 years ago.

This is not an achievement that belongs solely to the President; it is an achievement that also belongs to some of the Democrats who had the majority in the first 2 years of his Presidency, and also the Republicans who had control in the second 2 years. We have a package now that I think gives the promise and the hope to American families that we are going to eliminate the deficit in the next 5 years; that we will be able to start repaying the national debt while still protecting the priorities of our families in education and health care, as well as providing some much-needed tax relief with capital gains and inheritance tax.

I thank the gentleman for coming to the floor today and honoring some of the leaders of this country who have put us on the right track.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very fine words and his message that needs to be listened to by everyone.

PRESIDENT CLINTON DELIVERS THE FIRST BALANCED BUDGET IN A GENERATION—HISTORIC AGREEMENT PROMOTES THE COUNTRY'S PRIORITIES

President Clinton has achieved a balanced budget agreement that includes critical investments in education, health care, and the environment while strengthening and modernizing Medicare and Medicaid—just as he promised last year. We have cut the deficit 63%—from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$107 billion last year. This historic achievement will finish the job, giving the American people the first balanced budget in a generation, while meeting the President's goals.

GOAL: TO ENSURE THAT EVERY 8-YEAR-OLD CAN READ, EVERY 12-YEAR-OLD CAN LOG ON TO THE INTERNET, AND EVERY 18-YEAR-OLD CAN GO TO COLLEGE

Largest Pell Grant Increase in Two Decades—4 million students will receive a grant of up to \$3,000, an increase of \$300 in the maximum grant.

Tax cuts targeted to higher education to make college more affordable for America's families.

An America Reads initiative to mobilize a million tutors to help three million children learn to read by the end of the third grade.

Expansion of Head Start—to achieve goal of one million kids in 2002.

Doubles funding to help schools integrate innovative technology into the curriculum.

GOAL: EXPAND HEALTH COVERAGE FOR AS MANY AS 5 MILLION UNCOVERED CHILDREN

Medicaid improvements and added Medicaid investments.

A new capped mandatory grant program that provides additional dollars to supplement states efforts to cover uninsured children in working families.

GOAL: SECURE AND STRENGTHEN MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

Extends the solvency of Medicare Trust Fund to at least 2007 through long overdue structural reforms.

Expands coverage of critical preventive treatments of diseases such as diabetes and breast cancer.

Preserves the federal Medicaid guarantee of coverage to our nation's most vulnerable people.

GOAL: STRENGTHEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Accelerates Superfund cleanups by almost 500 sites by the year 2000.

Expands the Brownfield Redevelopment Initiative to help communities cleanup and redevelop contaminated areas.

Boosts environmental enforcement to protect public health from environmental threats.

GOAL: MOVE PEOPLE FROM WELFARE TO WORK AND TREAT LEGAL IMMIGRANTS FAIRLY

A Welfare-to-Work tax credit to help long-term welfare recipients get jobs.

Restores disability and health benefits for legal immigrants.

Restores Medicaid coverage for poor legal immigrant children.

Preserves food stamp benefits for people willing to work.

Provides States and cities with additional resources to move disadvantaged recipients into jobs.

GOAL: CUTS TAXES FOR AMERICA'S HARD WORKING FAMILIES

A Child Tax Credit to make it easier for families to raise their kids.

Tax cuts targeted to higher education to make college more affordable for America's families.

A Welfare-to-Work tax credit to help long-term welfare recipients get jobs.

Establishes additional Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

A MESSAGE FROM WEI JINGSHENG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, today from this center of freedom in this people's House, I come to raise my voice in support of a lonely voice for freedom halfway across the globe. I speak of Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Yesterday, in a New York Times editorial notebook piece, Tina Rosenberg wrote an article called Letters From a Chinese Jail: The Blunt Demands of Wei Jingsheng. She wrote:

For nearly 20 years, the Chinese Government has sought to silence one of the world's most important political prisoners, Wei Jingsheng. Once an electrician in the Beijing

Zoo, Mr. Wei is the strongest voice in China's democracy movement. He has spent all but six months of the last 18 years in prison and in labor camps, mostly in solitary confinement in conditions that would have killed a less stubborn man a long time ago, and may soon kill Mr. Wei, who is 46 and very ill.

Now serving his second long sentence, he is watched around the clock by nonpolitical criminal prisoners who ensure that he does not put pen to paper.

But during his first imprisonment he was permitted to write letters on certain topics to his family, prison authorities and China's leaders. Most were never sent. But they now have been translated and published. They form a remarkable body of Chinese political writing.

The book, *The Courage to Stand Alone*, is published by Viking. It shows why the Chinese Government is so afraid of Mr. Wei. His weapon is simplicity. Unlike other Chinese activists, Mr. Wei does not worry about tailoring his argument to his audience and does not indulge in the Chinese intellectual tradition of flattering the powerful. He does not worry about being seen as pro-Western, or a traitor to China.

He writes as if what is obvious to him, that China needs democratic freedoms, should be clear to anyone.

He has also been uncompromising. In 1978, Mr. Deng was fighting for control of the leadership and encouraged reformist thinking. Mr. Wei wrote a bold poster and was arrested in March 1979, given a show trial, and sentenced to jail for 15 years for simply writing a statement.

□ 1330

He was released 6 months before completing that sentence as part of China's bid to win the Olympics in the year 2000. He refused to leave before getting back letters the prison authorities had stolen. But once free, he immediately resumed his work for democracy. He was rearrested, and after a 20-month incommunicado imprisonment, he was sentenced to another 14 years.

Today the New York Times writes that there is no visible dissent in China, that activists went into exile, many were arrested, and others just simply gave up politics and turned their talents to commerce. But the moral force of his writing recalls the prison letters from other famous dissidents such as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letters from the Birmingham Jail, Michnik's Letters From Prison, and Havel's Letters to Olga. He is not a man of many words, and he was probably not writing with an eye to publication. But the most important thing that these other political dissidents had that Mr. Wei does not have is widespread international support.

All over the world dissidents look out for others to see that governments that are oppressing them are getting pressure from outside forces. Unfortunately, such is not the case, for Mr. Wei and his political dissidents do not have the world support. Their names are not widely known, and while some Americans and other officials have brought them up during talks with Chinese leaders, in general the outside

world treats Beijing officials with deference due business partners.

Today Mr. Wei suffers from life-threatening heart disease. Because of a neck problem he cannot even lift his head. All indications are that he has not seen a doctor in more than a year. He is due to be released in the year 2009, if he lives that long.

Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that we in the West must stop allowing our insatiable desire for greater commerce and larger market shares to compromise any further our commitment to freedom of speech, freedom from religious persecution, and freedom from the dehumanizing repression that has brutalized Chinese dissidents for years now.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. SNOWBARGER] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We offer this prayer of Thanksgiving and praise to You, O God, for the gift of our lives and for the opportunities all about us. Our words of prayer are directed to You, gracious God, in response to Your mighty acts of love to us. The promises and the grace that You have given are more awesome than anything we could deserve or imagine. So strengthened by Your word and encouraged by Your spirit, we can meet each day with confidence and new resolve. This is our earnest prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Nevada [Mr. GIBBONS] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GIBBONS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

TAXPAYERS SHOULD NOT PAY FOR CLEANUP OF NUCLEAR WASTE

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, who should be responsible for paying the \$2.3 billion price tag for transporting nuclear waste? Should it be the nuclear power industry, who created and profited from it, or the American taxpayer?

Legislation now pending before the House will force taxpayers to pick up the tab for moving this lethal garbage through their own communities and maybe even through their neighborhoods. On top of that, this legislation would also use American tax dollars to pay for the storage of nuclear waste.

I think most Americans would agree that the cost of transporting and storing these hazardous materials should not have to be paid by innocent American taxpayers, but rather by those responsible, the nuclear power industry.

Let us save America's hard earned tax dollars and return the responsibility of waste to the big power companies.

SUPPORT THE PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT OF 1997

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY], and myself in supporting H.R. 1173, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 1997. So far 70 Members of the House, both Republicans and Democrats, have added their names as cosponsors of this bill.

H.R. 1173 recognizes the fundamental right of police and firefighters to form and join unions and to bargain collectively with their employers over wages, hours, and working conditions.

H.R. 1173 does not create a Federal mandate. It does not affect existing State collective bargaining laws and it would prohibit strikes and lockouts.

This bill is supported by the International Association of Firefighters, the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Union of Police Associations and the National Association of Police Organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in support of H.R. 1173.

IN APPRECIATION OF TEACHERS

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

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support and in tribute to