

Let us cut the tax rate on the American people. The people of this country are overtaxed. Let us do something about it and let us do it now.

OPPORTUNITY FOR BALANCED BUDGET IS HERE

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

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, for a lot of us conservatives, the key question we are asking about the balanced budget agreement between Congress and the President is whether the agreement on the whole represents a step forward or a step backward. Does this bipartisan compromise bring us closer or farther away from our goals to balance the budget, provide tax relief for American families, and reduce the size of government?

Mr. Speaker, this is not a decision that I take lightly. I would like to see deeper tax cuts, more substantial entitlement reform, and more reductions in domestic spending. Nonetheless, we should not underestimate the opportunity this budget agreement represents.

Unlike past budget agreements that promised to balance the budget, with a Republican Congress, this one actually will. It contains permanent tax cuts, it takes a first step toward entitlement reform, and this represents a step forward.

I compliment the budget negotiators and look forward to receiving the details of this plan.

BALANCED BUDGET AGREEMENT IS SOLID FIRST STEP

(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, as a member of the House Committee on the Budget, I rise in strong support of the balanced budget plan of 1997. After months of unceasing work, the Republican majority has delivered a balanced budget plan where every American wins.

While all the details have not been worked out yet, like the level of funding for transportation, this agreement is a solid first step in the Republican goals of balancing our budget, reducing the size and scope of the Federal Government and providing permanent tax relief for American families.

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With this agreement, American families will pay \$135 billion less in taxes over the next 5 years. It will save Medicare for seniors, produce approximately \$700 billion in entitlement savings over the next 10 years, and finally, ensure that every American benefits from the economic boon of a balanced budget by 2002. That means lower interest rates, higher-paying jobs, and long-term economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, compromise is essential with divided government. I applaud those who achieve this compromise. I look forward to passing the balanced budget plan of 1997 and the accompanying bills, which will be a first step in getting our fiscal house in order.

DO THE RIGHT THING FOR WIC

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Republican leadership will have a chance to redeem itself and prove they are for America's children.

A few weeks ago in the Committee on Appropriations, Republicans largely voted to gut the women, infants and children's WIC nutrition program. Republican leaders denied the nutrition needs of approximately 880,000 at-risk children by not supporting the full funding request that was made by all 50 Governors and the administration.

Republican extremists are arguing that WIC does not need full funding. They would rather deny children their nutrition needs than make up the \$38 million shortfall. Mr. Speaker, many religious and antihunger advocates such as Catholic Charities, U.S.A., have written me citing that WIC is effective, efficient, and cost-beneficial. They are urging Congress to be compassionate to children, and meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, let us do the right thing and get our priorities straight as we go into the budget process. In order to accomplish that, we need to fully fund the WIC Program.

A BUDGET FOR THE TAXPAYERS

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

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I think the middle class has been getting a raw deal long enough. It should be getting easier to start a family and to buy a house, not harder. It should be getting easier to save for college tuition for your kids, not harder. It should be getting easier to make ends meet, not harder.

So what is the problem? The problem is simple. It is the fact that Congress has not been presenting budgets that are balanced, and it is because Congress has been presenting budgets that raise taxes. I think it is time Congress does exactly the opposite. I think it is time the middle class got a break, instead of giving all the breaks to the special interest groups.

That is why this balanced budget agreement should be ratified. It should be supported and voted on here in the House. It lets American families keep a lot more of what they earn, and it balances the budget for the first time since 1969.

This is a budget for the forgotten middle class. I think it is time to pass

a budget for the taxpaying middle class.

A REALISTIC PROJECTION BY THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the budget agreement that has been pretty much accomplished is nobody's gift to the conservatives or the liberals. It has good news and bad news. We now have a Federal Government that has become very big, very large, very intrusive—taxing too much and borrowing too much. This budget agreement moves us in the right direction of reducing some of those huge tax increases of 1990 and 1991 and reducing spending over the long run.

I questioned the analysis of the Congressional Budget Office in coming up with a last-minute \$225 billion. But in talking to CBO, they have predicted ups and downs, some recession in the economy, but the average estimated increase in the GDP over the next 5 years is 2.1 percent. Probably not over-optimistic.

I see some of the bad news as provisions in the agreement that only allows for a net tax reduction of \$85 billion over the next five years. However for the good news, there will be a tax decrease, a tax cut, over the next 10 years of \$250 billion.

Cut wasteful Government spending and we'll be moving in the right direction.

URGING MEMBERS TO READ AND CONSIDER "LETTERS FROM A CHINESE JAIL"

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

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, for nearly 20 years the Chinese Government has sought to silence one of the great advocates of human freedom and democracy, Wei Jingsheng.

Wei recently published a book. It is out today. Viking Press has produced it. It consists largely of his letters from prison, where he has spent so much of his adult life, where he is today, assembled by people who believe in human rights around the world. The publication of this book in America has today prompted the Communist Chinese Government to say that we, by publishing Wei's book, are interfering with the independence of China's judiciary.

Wei Jingsheng is not a well man. He suffers from life-threatening heart disease. He has a neck problem that prevents him from lifting his head. All of this has developed as a result of the abysmal conditions that he faces in prison, where he was recently sentenced to another 14 years. He is due to be released in the year 2009, if he lives that long.

I hope all of us in Congress will remember Wei Jingsheng, buy his book and read it, as we deliberate on the important questions of human freedom that are before us today.

REFORMING THE WIC PROGRAM REQUIRES BIPARTISAN CO- OPERATION

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

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I heard the gentleman from New Jersey, our colleague, talk about the women's, infants' and children's program, so I wanted to take the floor just to explain for a moment that through the years the WIC Program, as it is known, has received strong bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats because of its effectiveness in reducing low weight births and reducing birth defects resulting from nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy.

The administration did request \$76 million for additional enrollments in the WIC Program as part of the supplemental appropriations bill that will be on the floor tomorrow, and that bill actually contains half of the administration's request, \$38 million.

I am going to offer an amendment to restore the other \$38 million, but with a caveat, that being that later this fall in the committee that I chair on children, youth, and families, we are going to be looking at a number of structural and policy issues associated with this program, why it must have \$100 million in carryover funds, why the administration has asked for an additional \$100 million on our contingency funds in their 1998 budget request.

I hope we can get the same sort of bipartisan support and cooperation on the necessary policy reforms to the WIC Program as I suspect we will on my amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill tomorrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1997

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5) to amend the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, to reauthorize and make improvements to that act, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997".

TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

SEC. 101. AMENDMENTS TO THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

Parts A through D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) are amended to read as follows:

"PART A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

"SEC. 601. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS; FINDINGS; PURPOSES.

"(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the 'Individuals with Disabilities Education Act'.

"(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

"PART A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

"Sec. 601. Short title; table of contents; findings; purposes.

"Sec. 602. Definitions.

"Sec. 603. Office of Special Education Programs.

"Sec. 604. Abrogation of State sovereign immunity.

"Sec. 605. Acquisition of equipment; construction or alteration of facilities.

"Sec. 606. Employment of individuals with disabilities.

"Sec. 607. Requirements for prescribing regulations.

"PART B—ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION OF ALL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

"Sec. 611. Authorization; allotment; use of funds; authorization of appropriations.

"Sec. 612. State eligibility.

"Sec. 613. Local educational agency eligibility.

"Sec. 614. Evaluations, eligibility determinations, individualized education programs, and educational placements.

"Sec. 615. Procedural safeguards.

"Sec. 616. Withholding and judicial review.

"Sec. 617. Administration.

"Sec. 618. Program information.

"Sec. 619. Preschool grants.

"PART C—INFANTS AND TODDLERS WITH DISABILITIES

"Sec. 631. Findings and policy.

"Sec. 632. Definitions.

"Sec. 633. General authority.

"Sec. 634. Eligibility.

"Sec. 635. Requirements for statewide system.

"Sec. 636. Individualized family service plan.

"Sec. 637. State application and assurances.

"Sec. 638. Uses of funds.

"Sec. 639. Procedural safeguards.

"Sec. 640. Payor of last resort.

"Sec. 641. State Interagency Coordinating Council.

"Sec. 642. Federal administration.

"Sec. 643. Allocation of funds.

"Sec. 644. Federal Interagency Coordinating Council.

"Sec. 645. Authorization of appropriations.

"PART D—NATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

"SUBPART 1—STATE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

"Sec. 651. Findings and purpose.

"Sec. 652. Eligibility and collaborative process.

"Sec. 653. Applications.

"Sec. 654. Use of funds.

"Sec. 655. Minimum State grant amounts.

"Sec. 656. Authorization of appropriations.

"SUBPART 2—COORDINATED RESEARCH, PERSONNEL PREPARATION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SUPPORT, AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

"Sec. 661. Administrative provisions.

"CHAPTER 1—IMPROVING EARLY INTERVENTION, EDUCATIONAL, AND TRANSITIONAL SERVICES AND RESULTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH COORDINATED RESEARCH AND PERSONNEL PREPARATION

"Sec. 671. Findings and purpose.

"Sec. 672. Research and innovation to improve services and results for children with disabilities.

"Sec. 673. Personnel preparation to improve services and results for children with disabilities.

"Sec. 674. Studies and evaluations.

"CHAPTER 2—IMPROVING EARLY INTERVENTION, EDUCATIONAL, AND TRANSITIONAL SERVICES AND RESULTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH COORDINATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SUPPORT, AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

"Sec. 681. Findings and purposes.

"Sec. 682. Parent training and information centers.

"Sec. 683. Community parent resource centers.

"Sec. 684. Technical assistance for parent training and information centers.

"Sec. 685. Coordinated technical assistance and dissemination.

"Sec. 686. Authorization of appropriations.

"Sec. 687. Technology development, demonstration, and utilization, and media services.

"(c) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

"(1) Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

"(2) Before the date of the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142)—

"(A) the special educational needs of children with disabilities were not being fully met;

"(B) more than one-half of the children with disabilities in the United States did not receive appropriate educational services that would enable such children to have full equality of opportunity;

"(C) 1,000,000 of the children with disabilities in the United States were excluded entirely from the public school system and did not go through the educational process with their peers;

"(D) there were many children with disabilities throughout the United States participating in regular school programs whose disabilities prevented such children from