

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order in honor of the late but great Congressman Frank Tejeda.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon in strong support of the President's education initiative. Working together, the Congress and the White House can ensure that every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old work the Internet, and every 18-year-old attend college. These are lofty goals. However, if we can fulfill them, we will help ensure that the 21st century, like the current one, is America's century.

Last night the President spoke of setting world-class educational standards. I wholeheartedly support this goal. Setting high standards means challenging our teachers and students to be the very best they can be. It means challenging business to support education. It means challenging legislators at every level to ensure that our schools have the resources they need to provide every child in America with a world-class education.

Mr. Speaker, I want to work with my colleagues on the Committee on Appropriations, Democrat and Republican, to ensure that the Federal Government lives up to its commitment to education.

In the President's State of the Union, the President announced the America Reads initiative, which will harness the volunteer spirit of our citizens and the knowledge of our Nation's educators to ensure that every fourth-grader can read on his or her own.

I am proud that a college in my district, Pace University, is one of the 60 colleges that has already pledged to place work-study students in tutoring programs. This initiative epitomizes the types of activities we all should encourage and support: students working their way through college by helping to improve the lives of their neighbors' children.

My home State of New York is well on its way to setting rigorous academic standards for all children. New York's plan will challenge every school to graduate every student with a diploma that businesses and colleges will recognize as proof of a rigorous education. Those local schools that struggle at first will be given a helping hand and a chance to improve, but no one gets a free pass. I would encourage other States to look at New York's plan as they work on their own State's standards.

Mr. Speaker, some of the greatest support for higher standards comes from teachers and parents, but they cannot turn things around on their own. They do need the Government's help to ensure that every school is prepared for new challenges that await them. Sadly, however, too many of our public schools are in no condition to meet these challenges.

I would hope that my colleagues would check the physical conditions of schools in their own area. I did, and found too many examples of unsafe conditions and serious overcrowding. Last year I released a GAO report, along with my colleague in the Senate, CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN, that confirmed what too many students and teachers already know: that some of our Nation's schools are literally falling down. The problem is especially severe in New York City, where two-thirds of the schools reported that their environment is inadequate for learning. Right now, not far from this Capitol building, there are public schools that were temporarily closed because they are unsafe.

Mr. Speaker, the Nation's adults are letting our children down. That is wrong, and it must change. Last year I introduced the School Infrastructure Improvement Act, which would have provided interest subsidies to schools to make needed repairs. I also offered an amendment in the Committee on Appropriations to provide \$150 million to make urgent repairs in the most dilapidated schools around the Nation. Local communities can sometimes find it just too tough to do it on their own and they need our help.

In response, the President has announced that his budget will include \$5 billion to help finance \$20 billion in school construction and repair over the next 4 years. This money can also be used to help link our schools to the Internet so that one day soon every 12-year-old will be able to walk into his classroom or school library and link up with the Library of Congress or a local university, or a national newspaper, or a student on the other side of the world. I am working closely with the President on this initiative and plan to introduce legislation to help make it happen.

The President's education vision also includes affordable college for every student. His plan includes a series of monumental student aid initiatives that will ensure that cost is no longer an obstacle to a college degree.

His \$1,500 HOPE scholarships, available for 2 years of college, will put a community college degree within reach of every family. More than 4 million lower- and middle-income students would be helped by these scholarships. Families can opt instead for an annual \$10,000 tax deduction to help send their sons and daughters to college. In addition, families could begin saving for their child's future college education while they are still young by opening a tax-free education saving account. These education IRA's will create investment capital for business now, and provide tax free withdrawals for college tuition down the road,

when high school graduation rolls around. And as a mother of three grown children, I know that that time arrives before you know it.

I strongly support these targeted tax cuts to make college more affordable. In addition, the Federal Government must maintain its commitment to grant-based aid for those families and students struggling just to get by each day. The President recognizes this. That's why he has proposed to increase Pell grants from \$2,700 to \$3,000—the largest increase in Pell grants in two decades. Over 3.6 million students now eligible would receive a much needed \$300 grant increase, and an additional 130,000 families could take advantage of the Pell program.

Practically everyone in this body went to college. That same opportunity should exist for all Americans. These proposals will help give them that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the President's education plan will make it clear once and for all that he is, indeed, the Education President. I hope that when the dust settles and the 105th Congress adjourns next year, this Congress will be known as the Education Congress. I will certainly do what I can to make that happen.

THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, we are here today really to talk about a very important issue. That is the issue of the balanced budget amendment and how Social Security relates to that issue.

TRIBUTE TO THE GREEN BAY PACKERS

Mr. Speaker, before I begin on that issue, I would like to take just a moment to pay special tribute to my idea of some real American heroes, the world champion Green Bay Packers. I would like to express our personal thanks to the players, Coach Holmgren, General Manager Ron Wolf, President Bob Harlan, and thousands of faithful friends all across this country and the Packers as a whole who have now reestablished themselves as world champions in the football world.

There is more to this than just the football world, and I think that is important. While winning the Super Bowl is exciting, far more credit should be given to the Green Bay players, who serve as role models for young people in our communities in Wisconsin. Parents can help their children understand the importance of living their values by pointing to role models who are also on this Green Bay Packers team, such as Reggie White. Reggie's success on the football field has not distorted his Judeo-Christian values. The fame he has earned as minister of defense has not led him to an immoral lifestyle. Instead, he has used his reputation and resources to help those in need. He has set his goals high and worked hard to reach them. He has kept his worldly fame in perspective, and has used it to share an eternal view.

I just want to add from a personal perspective, as a parent of three teenagers, it is truly a privilege to live in the great State of Wisconsin, where we have a world champion football team that also has players on it that as a parent we can point to those players and say, yes, they are the role models that we would like to see our children grow up like.

When I look at people like Reggie White, it is very easy for me to tell my 13-year-old son Matt that we would like to see you express some of those same values that Reggie White willingly shows after enduring some of the football games.

Mr. Speaker, as a lifelong fan, I am very proud of the accomplishments of the Green Bay Packers this season. I take even more pride in the character and integrity of the players and coaches who use their lives to set an example for our young people in the great State of Wisconsin and elsewhere all across America.

That having been said, I would like to turn our attention and our focus to a very important issue facing our Nation today. We are about to begin in the House of Representatives the debate on the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States. I have heard a lot of people say, you do not really need an amendment to the Constitution, why do you not just balance the budget. Maybe I should start there.

The people who say we do not need an amendment to the Constitution of the United States just plain ignore the history around this city of Washington, D.C. In the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, II, the budget deal of 1990, and the budget deal of 1992, Congresses and Presidents have repeatedly promised the American people that we would stop spending our children's money, and all of those promises, one right after the next, have fallen way to too much spending in Washington, DC. We currently stand \$5.3 trillion in debt. That translates into \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States of America.

For a family of five like mine, I have three teenagers at home and my wife, the Federal Government has literally borrowed \$100,000 over basically the last 15 years. Families of five like mine are going to pay about \$600 every month, every month, to do nothing but pay the interest on the Federal debt. This is a practice that we as a nation must stop if we wish to preserve the future of this great Nation for our children. If we wish to preserve the financial integrity of the future of this country, we must stop spending more money than we have and more money than the Federal Government brings in.

To that end, the balanced budget amendment is being brought forward here in the next 30 days. I rise today to speak in favor of the balanced budget amendment, and talk about a very im-

portant issue as it relates to the balanced budget amendment, and that is Social Security. I brought some charts with me here to make sure that this issue is as clear as possible here today.

The first chart I brought with me shows the actual dollars being collected out of the paychecks of all Americans and put into the Social Security trust fund. Today the Social Security account is literally going to collect \$418 billion from the taxpayers in the United States of America. They are going to write out checks to our senior citizens for Social Security in the amount of about \$353 billion. They are collecting \$418, they are writing out checks for \$353.

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That leaves a \$65 billion surplus in what they are collecting in the Social Security system. The idea is we are supposed to establish a big kitty of money. This kitty of money is to be used when there is not enough money coming in.

When the babyboom generation gets to retirement, sometime between now and the year 2012, the money coming in will be less than the money going out. And the idea is that, if we set this \$65 billion aside, that money will then be there in a savings account so when there is a shortfall in the money coming in, we can go to the savings, get the money and continue making the payments to our senior citizens. That is how the system is supposed to work.

It has been set up that way since 1983. Collect more money than we are paying back out to our seniors in benefits, put it aside into a savings. After a period of time the savings account gets large enough so when there is a shortfall in the Social Security system, either because of a downturn in the economy or we reach the year 2012, whichever occurs first, we can then go to the savings account, get the money and continue making payments to our senior citizens. Unfortunately, that is not quite what we are doing with our Social Security money today.

In fact what we are doing today is we are taking that \$65 billion, we are putting it into a big Government checkbook; that is to say, we are putting it in the Government's general account. We all know the Government spends more than what they have in their general account each year, so what we are really doing is overdrawing the big Government checkbook. So we are taking that \$65 billion, putting it into the big Government checkbook that is overdrawn.

Of course at the end of the year there is no money to really put in the Social Security trust fund. So what we do instead is simply write an IOU to the Social Security trust fund.

I have proposed legislation out here, that is the reason I am rising today. It is called the Social Security Preservation Act, the Social Security Preservation Act. Here is what the Social Security Preservation Act does. It very sim-

ply takes that \$65 billion and puts it directly down here in the Social Security trust fund. To me this is common sense. I come from a business world, not the political world. In the business world if we tell people that we have a pension fund that we expect to make payments to you in the future and I need to set money aside for it, I cannot set aside IOU's. I have to set aside real dollars.

The Social Security Preservation Act would require that the Federal Government set aside real dollars as opposed to spending those dollars on other government programs and then putting nothing but IOU's into the Social Security trust fund. It is very important we do this because when there is a shortfall in our ability to pay our checks to our senior citizens, when that happens we are going to need a savings account to go to in order to keep making the payments to our senior citizens.

So the Social Security Preservation Act is very, very straightforward. It simply says that that money that is being collected for Social Security be left in the Social Security trust fund as opposed to being spent on other Government programs. Make no mistake about it. Today, today that surplus Social Security money is being spent on other Government programs.

I said when I started that we were rising to talk about the balanced budget amendment and how Social Security relates to it. So let me go next to how this picture fits in with balancing the Federal budget.

When the Federal Government reports the debt each year or, rather, the deficit, that is the amount the Government is spending more than it is taking in. It is literally reporting the debt after it uses the Social Security trust fund money. This is a slightly less than honest way of reporting to the American people what is really going on in our budget.

Let me make this perfectly clear: In the year 1996, we reported a deficit to the American people of \$106 billion. We did not tell the American people that, in addition to that \$106 billion, we spent \$65 billion out of the Social Security trust fund. So when we report the deficit to the American people today, what we are doing is reporting the deficit after we take the money out of the Social Security trust fund. That is wrong. That practice needs to be stopped, and it is time that we the American people demand that Congress act responsibly and start reporting an honest deficit to the American people.

The deficit last year was not really just the blue area which was reported to the American people, the blue area in this chart. Rather, it was the blue area plus the red area because that money belonged set aside in the Social Security trust fund. Let me go to the next step and talk about the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

When we pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the

United States, what we are really saying to the American people is that we are going to take that blue area and reduce it to zero. We are still going to be using the Social Security trust fund money when we say we are reaching a balanced budget. This is wrong. This practice should not continue.

Let us talk about why this is going on in our Nation today. The President talked about a budget last night in his State of the Union Address. When the President talks about balancing the budget in the year 2002, let me make this 100 percent clear, when the President says he is going to balance the budget in the year 2002, what he means is he is going to balance the budget by taking \$104 billion out of the Social Security trust fund. If that is your idea of a balanced budget, it surely is not my idea of a balanced budget.

For the last 12 years, since 1983, year in and year out, this Congress has been reporting a deficit that uses the Social Security surplus money to mask or to reduce the true size or the appearance of the deficit. So let me again make it clear that, when the President proposes a balanced budget in the year 2002, what he is not telling the American people is that he fully intends to use \$104 billion out of the Social Security trust fund to make the budget appear as if it is balanced.

This is the practice that must be stopped and our Social Security Preservation Act is the bill, is the piece of legislation that would stop it.

Let me go a step further. There are two ways that we can correct this issue. There are two ways that we can solve this problem. There are two ways that we can stop the Federal Government from taking the money that is supposed to be set aside for Social Security and spending it on other Government programs.

One way we can do it is to fix the constitutional amendment so that when we amend the Constitution, it says to balance the budget but you cannot use the Social Security money to do it. That is one way we could fix it.

A second way is not a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution but, rather, through the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, but rather do it legislatively. Legislatively it is a very relatively simple matter to solve the problem. We simply say that the nonnegotiable Treasury bonds or the IOU's that are currently being put into the trust fund must be negotiable instruments or negotiable Treasury bonds. If we do that, what happens effectively is that we are now required to report the true deficit to the people of our Nation. And if we report the true deficit to the people in our Nation and then we balance the budget, we will at that time balance the budget without using the Social Security trust fund money.

I know there are a lot of viewers out there in America watching this today. I have to tell you something. This is

not going to change because Mark Neumann stands up here and talks about it in Washington, DC. This is only going to change if the American people get actively involved in this process. What we need the viewers to do is to call their Members of Congress and ask them to become cosponsors of the Social Security Preservation Act. It is extremely important that you do this in the near future. If they do not hear from the American people, this will not come about.

We all need to understand, when this comes about, there is \$104 billion of wasteful Washington spending that must be stopped. So we need to understand that this is not the most desirable Washington kind of bill that has ever been introduced. But if the American people honestly believe that we should not be using the Social Security trust fund money to balance the budget, remember when the President proposes this, he proposes that we use the \$104 billion out of the Social Security trust fund. If you all think that is wrong, then you need to get in touch with your Members of Congress and let them know that you want them to be original cosponsors on the Social Security Preservation Act.

I see my friend from the State of Washington has joined me here today.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NEUMANN. I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. COBLE). The gentleman from Wisconsin is reminded to restrict his remarks to the Chair and not address the viewing audience.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF].

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to comment on this specifically because I am one of the seniors we are talking about. I know, I know a lot about how they feel about this issue. The seniors that understand it are irate that their money is not being there collecting interest with negotiable instruments but it is being taken out to mask the size of the deficit. That is to fool the American people and tell them, let them think that the deficit is much smaller than it actually is. In the year 2002, when we arrive there, we are still going to be over \$100 billion a year still in a deficit position unless we fix this and a couple of other things.

I think we need to be honest with the seniors. It is their money. They paid it in. They trusted the government to have that money there when they need it and the sign says it is about honesty. That is exactly what it is about.

We have to be honest with the American people. The problem is the Congress has over the years tried to obfuscate and confuse the issue of the deficit, and it is time that we stand up and say what it is and be honest about it and then we can work toward an equitable solution in the long run.

I say it is absolutely essential to be honest with the seniors and to get that money taken off budget so it is there for the seniors when they need it. It does not change the ultimate outcome any because when we get to the year 2002, we are still going to be two or three years beyond that before we can really get the budget balanced under the present plan.

Mr. NEUMANN. If I could just interrupt briefly here, the good news is that we can do this without any dramatic changes in the overall budget process. I had some people in our conference even say to me, where are you going to get that extra money from. The reality is, because the economy is doing better than was originally anticipated, if we put the exact same budget on the floor of the House of Representatives that passed through here last year, it already got enough votes to pass. If we put that same bill on the floor, we can at least start setting aside the principal in the Social Security trust fund without doing anything different than we did before. Why is that? That is because the economy is performing better than was anticipated last March. So the difference between the March and January, where we are at right now today because the economy is doing better, if we pass the same spending levels that we had last year, we will in fact be able to put the Social Security trust fund aside without doing any additional cuts. What we are really saying is that that additional revenue that is being generated because the economy is doing better, we just cannot go and spend that money on other wasteful Washington spending.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, that is the point. This is something that we have an opportunity here, we have an opportunity that is given us. And in the past, when we have had these little extra amounts of money, they just got spent.

That is absolutely immoral when we are desperately struggling to balance the budget. Here is a chance that we have, and I say that we must keep faith with the seniors and we must do this. I very much appreciate Congressman NEUMANN's actions in helping to bring this before us.

Mr. NEUMANN. We are not alone on this. There are a lot of especially Members of last year's freshman class that are working very, very hard on this issue. I sure appreciate the support. And more importantly, this is an issue for the American people.

The other thing that I would mention is, you mentioned that the senior citizens are irate. When senior citizens find out about this issue, last year they sent in 60,000 letters in support of this bill. When I introduced it the first year in Congress, my first year here in 1995, when I first introduced it, I was basically a lone voice. When people started finding out that in fact this Social Security trust fund money was being spent to mask the true size of the deficit and in fact that in the President's

budget proposal, in the President's budget proposal he intends to use this Social Security surplus money, the \$104 billion right straight out of the Social Security fund, he intends to use that to make it look like the budget is balanced, when the senior citizens across America found out what was going on, we received 60,000 letters in 1996. And I have already received 25,000 letters of support of this bill from across America. I have them in my hands.

So the senior citizens are very much in support of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Social Security Preservation Act.

I yield to the gentleman from Indiana, [Mr. SOUDER].

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I thought this was the Green Bay Packers special order.

Mr. NEUMANN. We did do the Green Bay Packer special order. I would be happy to do it again. We do have the world champion Green Bay Packers in Wisconsin, and we are very proud of them.

Mr. SOUDER. The Pack is back, and I appreciate your cheerleading for that. When we were over in Israel, you had this special Green Bay Packers flag you brought over there. You wanted to get a picture with the Prime Minister with it. You have been a Packer enthusiast for so long, it is great to see them back.

Mr. NEUMANN. As I said in my original remarks here today, it is more than just about football. It is about people achieving excellence and receiving the recognition that goes with achieving that excellence. And more importantly than that, it is about having a team with people on it that we can, as parents, point to and say, that is the role model I would like to have my kids see growing up. We have people like Reggie White, who are not afraid to show the Judeo-Christian value system that our young people can look to and say, that is how I want to turn out, too.

Mr. SOUDER. Many of the themes that we have in community involvement and individual involvement to see a small size city owned by many people and the commitment to that in this day and age of transient commitments and that type of thing is very refreshing. But I also wanted to support your efforts on the Social Security off budget bill that you have introduced and continue to work with.

If I could make a couple of points reiterating the points that you have made. That is, I have heard you make a number of these, even though I missed some of this presentation, so I assume there is some overlap but I want to say amen to what you have been doing and taking leadership, along with Congressman DAVID MCINTOSH of Indiana.

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And that is that a lot of this is a question of integrity. And a lot of the reason many of us came to Washington is we were unhappy with the way things were being done.

We still have many attorneys here, some of us are not attorneys, and quite proud of that fact. It is a good blend to have in it. You were in the housing business, I was in the retail business, and if we take something that is supposed to be a pension fund, we have to have it funded at more than 100 percent in a bank account or we go to jail.

Now, Congress has conveniently exempted themselves from that type of coverage or we would be in prison, because you have a specific amount coming out for FICA. It is called a trust fund. We have passed separate bills calling it a trust fund to act like it is there, but it is not. We spend it on other things. That is a question of integrity.

Now, many people stand up here, including our distinguished President last night, and challenged us about Social Security and this question. But one thing that happens in Washington, I am not saying him or anybody in particular, but talk is real cheap. You can go like this pretty easily. The question is, What are the actions? What are you actually doing?

You are standing down there in the well. You have introduced this bill in the last Congress. It is not something you just invented as a tactical maneuver for the balanced budget debate. You presented a budget to this Congress that I and 88 others voted for that had Social Security off budget, proving that it can be done. We did not just talk, we acted.

A number of us voted against our party's budget last year because we were concerned that the additional spending was being spent. Excuse me, when they had additional revenue coming in, instead of putting it on the deficit, they spent it. So we voted against that budget. We have been consistent in trying to hold against that.

We also got ourselves in a little trouble by coming down with a 1.9-percent amendment to actually reduce the spending. Many of the people who are now saying, oh, let us take this \$65 billion this year and take it off budget. Where were they? Now, some of them were there from the other party as well as our party, but many of them who have been talking about this, where were they on these tough decisions?

We have been there. You have been a leader with this. We are trying to do this. This is not something new we invented. This is not even new to us. I used to work for U.S. Senator DAN COATS. He introduced in 1980 in this body a bill to take Social Security off budget. This has been our party's initiative. We need to be in the forefront of this. This is fundamental principle.

I commend your leadership. There is no money there. Some people say, oh well, this does not replace all the funds and there are different ways we can do this. There is a new movie, this Jerry McGuire movie says, "Show me the money. Where is it at?" There is no money there.

Whether you are just coming into the system, whether you are a baby boom-

er, or a young person who views UFO's as twice more likely than that there will be money there in Social Security, this is a giant scam that most American people are working out. Maybe we cannot get the whole thing this year, but we want at least to get some steps, and we are down here pleading with our leadership, with the other body, to say we have an opportunity.

The President challenged us last night, many of the other party's leadership is challenging it. Hey, let us go do it. When they have a good idea, let us not argue over partisanship, let us say, hey, great idea, let us take Social Security off budget. We have been talking about this for years. Amen. Let us get it done.

So I commend your leadership, and we can continue to talk here and work with this, but I will yield back here and see if you want me to join at another point.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I see another good friend, my colleague from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be here with you gentlemen. I just wanted to add a quote that was made in, I believe 1935, a Senator James Wadsworth asked, when they were contemplating the Social Security System, he said, "In what kind of country are our grandchildren going to live? Shall it be a free country, or one in which the citizen is taught to be dependent upon the Government?"

We need to ask that question today, but we also need to ask another question. How can we continue to meet the current obligations of the Social Security system and the current obligations of the Federal Government as long as we continue to mask what the real problem is? We have to get back to being honest about our problems before we can ever hope to solve them.

The people in my district know we did not have a budget deficit of \$104 billion last year. We had a budget deficit of \$170 billion. We said that the entire time. First of all, one of the problems with the Congress is a crisis of confidence because we have not spoken the truth. The fact is we spent \$170 billion more last year than we took in.

Part of that money was revenue that was raised and was supposed to be raised so at some point in the future we would be able to make the obligations under the Social Security system.

People in my district believe there should have been a trust fund established. Now, whether there was or not, we know there was not a trust fund established, but the expectation is that money should have been there and it should have been invested wisely. And the corollary, along with all the other moneys, had we invested them properly, we would not have this problem.

So the most important thing about your bill is the fact that we honestly deal with our problems. We owe it to the people of this country who are dependent on Social Security, we owe it

to the children who are not yet born who will be paying into this system to not mask our Federal deficit any longer by confusing the issue and not accounting for the money that we borrow, sometimes steal, that should have been allocated for the Social Security system.

So I want to encourage you. I think we have to have this as part of the solution to the problems on Social Security, but also part of the problem in solving the problem with our budget deficit and spending more than what we actually have.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I certainly could not agree with his comments more. It is about honesty, it is about integrity and being straightforward with the American people, certainly telling the American people we have a \$107 billion deficit, and then going and getting \$65 billion more out of the Social Security trust fund.

That is inappropriate behavior and has been going on since 1983, I might add. And now it is incumbent upon the Republicans to stop this practice from continuing as we go forward. It is our job as Republicans not to look the other way from a practice that is clearly wrong and just let it go on. It is our job as Republicans to turn this thing around and let us start doing it right, let us start setting that money aside.

I might just add that if this had been done right over the last 12 or 14 years here, there would currently be \$550 billion sitting aside in the Social Security trust fund today, and the amount would grow by \$65 billion in this year alone. So it would be up over \$600 billion in a savings account to protect the Social Security system for our senior citizens right now, today.

I would add one more step. I have not forgotten about that \$600 billion. It is not in my bill currently, but we did have legislation on the floor last year, and it will be reintroduced, that we would be able to pay that \$600 billion back to the Social Security trust fund to get this fund solvent the way it is supposed to be.

The way we would do that is pretty straightforward. After we reach a balanced budget, we would recommend that we cap spending increases at the Federal Government level at a rate 1 percent below the rate of revenue growth. So if revenue goes up by 5 percent—remember, revenue goes up because of inflation and real growth in the economy—so if revenue goes up by 5 percent, we would simply cap Government spending increases at 4 percent, probably still faster than the rate of inflation.

Since spending is going up, if you have a balanced budget, spending goes up slower than revenue growth, you have created a small surplus. And that surplus, of course, grows each year that you follow this program. That surplus is the money that we need to put the funds back into the trust fund that was supposed to have been put there

over the last 15 years, and then reassure the solvency of the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. COBURN. One other thing that I think is important that I would want the American public to know, is we cannot let chairmen of committees not speak truthfully about this problem. It is important that they ask the question of their elected representative of the truth about whether or not the deficit is really \$107 billion or is it more than that.

It is also important that they ask their representative when they go to vote on the budget whether or not we took that into consideration as we considered that budget, and not allow the politics as usual, the careerism, to wave this off and say this is a nonissue. This is at the heart of the issue: being honest about what our real problems are so we can attack and solve them, not just for us and not just for the seniors today, but for the children and the young people who are going to be seniors tomorrow.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the gentleman from Wisconsin, to draw out a point here, and that is that people who have followed this debate understand this, and I assume that it has been touched on and we have talked around it here, but the reason there is a surplus is because there are more people paying in now, but we are headed to a point down the road here where there is not going to be enough money and we will have a big shortfall.

Mr. NEUMANN. Right. Today, there are three people for every one person drawing out of the Social Security system. By the year 2010 it will be two people for every one person drawing out.

You can see how that very rapidly reaches a point where you cannot take enough money out of that one paycheck, or those two paychecks, to pay one person's Social Security. That is the problem. Long term, there is a shortfall and we have an inability to pay the amount out in Social Security that has been promised to our senior citizens.

This really brings into the discussion the people that are in their 40s and 50s. This honesty issue and this reporting it straightforward and setting the money aside, it is not only about the senior citizens of today, it is about people in their forties and fifties who are today putting about \$12 out of every \$100 they earn into this Social Security account with the expectation that when they get there, when they are 65, 66, 67, that they will then receive their Social Security checks. You see, if we do not accumulate this kitty the money will not be there to make good on their checks.

I can give my colleagues some dates on this. By the year 2012, in the year 2012 there is no longer enough money coming in to make the payments back out, and that assumes a solid economy. That is kind of a best case scenario. And we all know in Washington when

they give you a best case scenario, we are probably looking at the year 2005, 2006.

This is not a long-term problem but rather it is a very short-term problem. And I would just add it could be shorter than that. If we had an economic downturn next year, and it was reasonably severe, we could hit a shortfall in the Social Security account as early as next year if the economy were to go into a recession.

That is why I am so concerned that this issue get addressed right now, today, in this year's budget.

Mr. SOUDER. There are other things compounding this as well, and correct me and add to this if you have additional information, and that is that people are living longer than originally projected in Social Security.

Furthermore, the longer you live, and Congressman COBURN, as a doctor, knows this, there are more things that go wrong that are very expensive. It is one thing to replace your heart once, multiple times, other organs, but we have incorporated other programs inside Social Security. And so those who just say we can handle this on a cash basis are a little naive.

Other people say, well, if you just bump the age of retirement a couple more years, that would fix it. But look at this assumption they have. That assumes there is no change in the age that people are dying. If you bump the retirement age by 2 years but through health advances they die 4 years later, we are actually facing a bigger shortfall than we currently have.

A lot of the things that are trying to be put out to explain away this problem are actually good arguments that it could be much worse than it actually is.

Mr. COBURN. Well, thank goodness for our health care system, because in fact we have increased longevity to a tremendous amount, and that has been a detriment on the Social Security trust fund in terms of how they calculated what was going to be needed.

But we should not get tied up in that issue. The issue is, is it ethical to say that our deficit is \$107 billion when in fact it is \$172 billion. That is why people lack confidence in this body, is because we do not have the courage to oftentimes make the tough decisions because we will not face up to the facts.

The American public needs to know that the deficit is much larger than what they have been taught and it is much larger because of moneys borrowed from payments into the Social Security system. It needs to stop. It needs to stop because we owe that honesty to the American public.

And I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for allowing me to participate.

Mr. NEUMANN. I had an interesting experience along the honesty and integrity line. I was doing an interview, and the person on the other end of the phone said to me, "Is this really true?" It was like they were in disbelief that the President would actually take \$104

billion out of the Social Security trust fund to try to make it look like his budget was balanced. They were almost in a state of disbelief.

I brought with me this morning, it is a Washington Times article on January 18, 1997. The headline reads "Clinton Budget to Use Trust Funds, Social Security Surplus Added In." I mean, there is absolutely no question that when the President says he is going to balance the budget in the year 2002, that what the President means is he is going to balance the budget by taking \$140 billion out of the Social Security trust fund to make it look like it is balanced.

If anybody has any doubts on the accuracy of this, this is a very good article. His Treasury person was in talking and he says, "We will include it. I think Congress is correct to include it in deficit calculations." And he just goes on and on about the fact that we should be using the Social Security trust fund money.

I have also noticed something that is very different here in Washington versus our townhall meetings back in Wisconsin. When I go through this issue back in our townhall meetings back in Wisconsin, everybody agrees that the money should be set aside.

□ 1515

But out here in Washington there are a whole bunch of people who believe that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system, that we do not need to set that money aside, that after all we are collecting it this year, so why should we not spend it this year.

Then I ask them, what about 2004, 2005 when there is not enough money coming in? What are the choices going to be in 2004 or 2012 in the best case scenario? It is going to be to go into our families' paychecks and take more tax dollars out so we can continue making those Social Security checks. The second choice is to reduce our Social Security benefits to our seniors. I personally find both of those choices unacceptable. That is why we have got to solve this problem today.

Mr. SOUDER. I am not sure at what point, perhaps the gentleman would know this more, but as I have heard, there is a point out here where the FICA tax alone could be around 43 percent, depending on where the shortfall is. This is not just a small matter, it is a budget-busting matter that we have been able to disguise this and lulled into this because of the number of people working versus the people in the retirement system. But a day of reckoning is coming. The longer we wait, the tougher the reckoning.

Not only do individuals pay into this but a lot of people may not be aware that their employer is matching it. If you are self-employed, you know you have to pay both halves, and that one of the things I personally think we ought to be doing as a country and individual employers ought to be doing is showing what an individual's check

would be if that match was not going in there.

So we are not only spending the amount you are putting in, we are spending the amount that the employer is putting in. This devastating tax would cripple our economic system.

Some people say, oh, there would be politically an uproar if we tried to change benefits and not do it. Quite frankly the baby boomers, I was born in 1950, we are going to be the biggest voting block when we are there and we do not intend to starve and the people who would have to pay our way are our kids and they are not going to intend to pay all of this if the Government defaults. The bottom line is we will probably bankrupt the country unless we do this because we will be a huge voting block, much bigger than the current senior citizens. It is a devastating outlook if we do not have the courage to face up to the integrity of the problem now.

Mr. NEUMANN. I think the gentleman is bringing up a good point here. This issue is not just an issue for seniors or even just an issue for people that are 40 and over hoping to get Social Security.

Let us talk for a minute about the impact of the Social Security Preservation Act on our people that are under the age of 40. Right now today with no money in the Social Security trust fund, these discussions that they are having about letting them privatize it or letting the people keep their own money in their own account, all of those discussions are not going to happen. The reason is because no one but no one can go to our seniors and say, "I'm sorry, you don't get Social Security anymore." That is not going to work.

Let me paint a different scenario. Suppose the Social Security Preservation Act had been in place since 1983 and in this kitty of money, this Social Security trust fund, there was now \$550 billion, real money, and it is actually there. Then we could go to the senior citizens and say, "Look, there is a savings account. Your Social Security check is safe."

I am going to talk to these people under the age of 40. Some of them would like to put their own money into their own Social Security trust fund and take some of the responsibility on themselves for their own retirement. We are talking about families here that work every day of the week, these families who get up in the morning every morning and go to work, work hard for a paycheck and they are struggling to make it from week to week and paycheck to paycheck.

What we would be doing is going to those people and saying, look, they are already putting \$12 and some cents aside out of every \$100 you earn. Why do you not take some of that money and put it into an account to take care of yourself in your own retirement, so it would be money that is already coming out of their paychecks, that now

could go into a savings account on their behalf to build for their own retirement for them to take care of themselves when they reach the age of 65.

We cannot do that today. The reason we cannot even begin that discussion today is because that money that is supposed to be here in the Social Security trust fund has been spent on other Government programs and there is nothing there except for a bunch of IOU's. If the Social Security Preservation Act is put into place and we can accumulate this kitty of money so we can honestly look our senior citizens in the face and say, "Yes, your Social Security is safe," then and only then can we begin some of these other conversations that are currently going on here in Washington, DC.

This is not just about seniors. Just think what it would mean for our working families if they could take some of that money that is already being set aside and they could put it aside in their own behalf to take care of themselves in retirement.

This is a bill that really crosses all age groups. It is in the people under 40, it is in the people from 40 to 60 who are hoping to get Social Security, and it most certainly is affecting our senior citizens of today where if we have an economic downturn there is not going to be enough money coming in and there is supposed to be a savings account there that is full of IOU's instead of cash. All generations here are impacted by this issue.

Mr. SOUDER. As the gentleman alluded to, it is a very pro-family policy to try to be honest about this, because most families in America have both parents working. Many of us, including me, have a child in college. You are trying to meet all the demands of your kids for this and you are working your head off and you do not know how in the world you are going to set aside much and we just kind of assume that when we get to retirement age, Social Security is going to be there even if we have some savings of our own, which many families do not have the luxury of doing, particularly the poorer the family the more dependent they are on this. The FICA tax comes out, no matter what income you are at, we take out the Social Security, and those people who are struggling and barely making it and drowning day to day and trying to figure out how to pay their car bill, insurance bill and health insurance and their housing costs and all this type of thing are watching it get drained into a system so it can be used as part of a general government program. How is that pro-family?

What is pro-family is to provide what it is supposed to be, is a security net for when you are older so you can try to use your current income, the rest of it, on living and trying to get above water. We are going to be in a state of shock, those about to come into the system. Based on the gentleman's numbers, it could be as early as those in

the late 50's, certainly those of us who are boomers, in the mid 40's and down, we are going to be in a state of shock if somebody says, "Well, you're only going to have half of it there." Then pretty soon somebody says, "None of it there."

You are going to say, "You mean I've worked all my life, and we scraped by and watched these dollars be taken out, and I gave up certain things and now it isn't there?" What does the word trust fund mean?

Mr. NEUMANN. It is an improper practice. Both of us came out of the business world. If either of us had set up a pension fund and we said to our employees, "You're going to get this pension when you retire," and then we put IOU's in the pension fund instead of real money, first off they would arrest both of us in the private sector for doing it, but secondly our employees would revolt back against the policy we were establishing.

That is where we are at on this issue. The American people need to understand the issue and then respond to help all of us in Washington get the message just how important this issue is.

Mr. SOUDER. Last year we even had a debate here on the House floor because there was a proposal that in the private pension programs from business, to lower the percent of, I think it was 145 percent down to 125 percent. Some of us had grave reservations about that. Yet here with zero percent, here we had this huge ruckus on this floor about whether businesses could lower the percent beyond 100 that is in reserve. In our own program we have zero.

Mr. NEUMANN. Does the gentleman see the irony in that debate? I know they ran ads against both of us saying we had reduced the pension funds when in reality what was done is those pension funds were required to keep not enough money to pay the pensions but enough money to pay the pensions and a 25-percent cushion. That is what that debate was about last year. Instead, if they had used those same resources to actually solve the Social Security problem, can you imagine how much farther ahead we would be as a nation? To honestly solve a real problem that is facing this country, not a pension fund that is funded at a level necessary to pay the benefits plus a 25-percent cushion, but rather they turned their attention and focused on the Social Security issue where there are zero dollars in the trust fund, and zero dollars in that pension fund, not 100 percent of what they need plus a 25-percent cushion but in this case zero, would it not have been great if they had used those resources to help us solve this problem instead?

I think I should maybe walk back through this once more.

Mr. SOUDER. I think it would be very good for people who came in part way through.

Mr. NEUMANN. We are dealing with the balanced budget amendment and

how Social Security relates to the balanced budget amendment and a couple of ways to correct the problem that exists.

I just start through that the Social Security system today is collecting \$418 billion. It is paying out to our senior citizens in benefits \$353 billion. That is right, it is collecting more than it is paying out by \$65 billion. That \$65 billion is supposed to create a savings account, a kitty of money, a growing kitty of money. The reason we are doing that of course is because as more people reach retirement age you have got fewer dollars coming in and more dollars going out. At the time when these two numbers cross, when there is not enough money coming in to make good on the Social Security checks, we are supposed to have this savings account sitting there that we then go to, get the money and make good on the Social Security promises that have been made to our senior citizens.

The idea is that that money is supposed to be set aside. Unfortunately what the Federal Government is doing today is taking that \$65 billion, putting it into the general fund or their big Government checkbook. They overdraw that checkbook each year. That is the deficit. Since there is no money left at the end of the year, they put IOU's down here in the Social Security trust fund instead of putting real dollars down in the trust fund.

The bill that we have introduced called the Social Security Preservation Act, again this is not Einstein kind of stuff, I come from the business world where you have to learn how to make cash flow work. The bill that we are proposing, the Social Security Preservation Act, very simply says take that \$65 billion and put it down here in the trust fund instead of spending it on other Government programs. It is a very straightforward bill. Instead of spending the money on other Government programs and putting IOU's in the trust fund, put real dollars down there in the trust fund so there is something there to guarantee and protect our senior citizens.

How does that relate to the balanced budget amendment? When the Federal Government reports to the American people how much more money it is spending than what it is taking in, that is, the deficit each year, what they are reporting is the amount that they overspend what they have in their checkbook but they are not telling the American people about the fact that after that, there is another \$65 billion they have taken out of the Social Security trust fund. So in addition to the deficit that is reported to the American people, they are taking an additional \$65 billion out of the trust fund that they are not reporting.

This is an issue about honesty and integrity and being straightforward with the American people. The fact of the matter is that when we report a \$107 billion deficit, the reality is the deficit is \$172 billion.

How does that relate to the balanced budget and the balanced budget amendment that is currently under discussion here? Let me start with the President's State of the Union Address last night. Let me just make it 100 percent clear that when the President talks about balancing the budget, he is talking about still using that money from the Social Security trust fund, \$104 billion in 2002, to reach what he calls a balanced budget.

Let me just say that once more so it is 100 percent clear. When the President says he is balancing the budget in the year 2002, what he means is he is taking \$104 billion out of the Social Security trust fund to make the budget look like it is balanced. That practice is wrong and it is going to lead to a Social Security system that is just basically insolvent as we go forward.

So what are we doing about this? The Social Security Preservation Act that myself and many others in this Congress are introducing would require that we balance the budget by actually eliminating all of the deficit, including the Social Security deficit.

A lot of people have said to me, "Well, MARK, you can't do that." So our Social Security Preservation Act would require that we actually reach a true zero, not just a zero that appears balanced while still using the Social Security money as the President has proposed.

A lot of people have said, "Well, how are you going to go about doing that? Doesn't that mean we have to cut \$104 billion more money out of the budget?"

First let me go over the "cut" word. Even if we did this exactly as I have it laid out here, spending would still increase each and every year from now through 2002. Spending would still go up, so there is no, quote, cuts in overall Government spending even if this is put into place.

But there is more good news. A lot of people in Washington would tell me that we cannot do this because the budget we passed last year was so tough that we cannot go any farther on reducing spending. First, I do not believe that. I believe there is still a lot of wasteful spending. But second, because the economy is doing better than anticipated, we have additional revenues coming into the Federal Government that will allow us to pass this piece of legislation without doing any spending reductions beyond what was already proposed last year. That is to say, if we passed the budget that has already passed both the House and the Senate, we can at least set aside the surplus money that is coming in this year in the Social Security system and also in 2002. That is, if we pass the budget that we passed last year again, we will in fact be able to put the Social Security money aside in 2002 without doing anything different than what has already passed through the House of Representatives and the Senate last year.

This is an exciting time in history. We are about to do something that is

clearly right and necessary for the future of this great Nation we live in, for our children's future. We have for generations, since 1969, we have as a government spent more money than we are taking in. We are on the verge of changing our most sacred document as a Nation, the Constitution of the United States. This is a very serious matter that is being addressed here when you go to change the Constitution of the United States of America. Does it need changing? I would only point to the fact that as a government we have not been able to restrain ourselves since 1969. We as a people, and when we say a government, it is really the American people, we have not been able to do what is right for the future of this Nation. This problem has been building. We have gotten away with it from 1969 until today.

We need the balanced budget amendment because the track record indicates we cannot do it without the balanced budget amendment. When it is in our Constitution, when it is in our most sacred document, that we must stop spending more money than we are taking in, that we must restore the financial stability for the future of this great Nation for our children's future, when that happens, we will get the job done by 2002. And we will not do it the way the President suggested, by taking \$104 billion out of the Social Security trust fund to try and make it look like somehow we have balanced the budget.

□ 1530

We will not do it that way; we will do it the right way, we will do the honest way and the straightforward way for the good of the future of this great Nation we live in.

And I want to just go one step further. I think it is important that we talk about what has happened over the last 2 years and how significant balancing the budget is to the American people. Sometimes this gets lost in kind of Washington jargon that this is all about just the future; it is not about today. Well, I would like to point out that over the last 2 years we have reduced the deficit to the lowest number it has been in a generation. As a matter of fact, for the first time in 30 years we took \$30 billion out of the appropriations process. That has not happened in the last 30 years, and that is not Washington mumbo jumbo. They actually reduced spending in the appropriations process by \$30 billion.

Well, what happened when we reduced spending by \$30 billion at the Federal Government level? Well, that meant the Federal Government borrowed \$30 billion less out of the private sector. Still sounds Washington-like. Let me go the next step:

When the Government did not take that money out of the private sector there was more money in the private sector. When there is more money available, the interest rates stay down. When the rates stayed down that is good for the whole economy, in particular for our American citizens.

Anybody who is on a variable rate mortgage understands that when the Government did not borrow that \$30 billion, it stayed available in the private sector and therefore interest rates went lower, that their mortgage payment is lower. But it is even further than that. When the interest rates stayed down, more people were able to afford to buy houses and cars and when people bought more houses and cars, other people had to go to work and build the houses and cars, and that really is what this is all about. It is really about providing opportunities for those people to leave the welfare rolls and go into the work force and have an opportunity to live the American dream.

That is what this is all about. It is about my children's future, and if I get excited talking about this issue, it is because when I see growing deficits and growing debts that has accumulated to \$5.3 trillion I see the end of America as we know it today. I see economic problems that we are passing on to our children that cannot be resolved, and then when we start talking about balancing the budget and we see this working model where reducing spending has actually led to lower interest rates, producing more home sales and car sales, producing more job opportunities in the private sector, well, I know that is the future of America we are talking about. I know that my kids, when—they are all teenager now. If all three of them are teenagers, I know that is for my three teenagers to have a job opportunity.

That is what balancing the budget is about. It is about keeping the interest rates down so people can afford to buy houses and cars, and the people who build those houses and cars have job opportunities, so my children have a chance to live the American dream just as my wife and I have had during our generation.

That is what balancing the budget—that is what this issue is really all about.

Mr. SOUDER. In addition, and this is really good straight talk about the budget because these issues get so confusing, and from time to time we need to have some of this kind of stuff because part of the goal of politicians often is to confuse matters, to obscure what is underneath, and I think this has been very good straight talk because in addition to the interest rate, because to some degree we have had a somewhat stable interest rate even with this deficit which has confused matters. But there is another way to do it too, and that is to sell off your country because of your trade imbalances and kept interest rates down by bringing in foreign money through trade imbalances and then we start selling in the Midwest and Indiana and Wisconsin.

These are huge issues about companies being taken over, about farm land being taken over because we have not

been in order and responsible in our own country and refuse to deal with our deficit. We have become foreign dependent, which is not where we want to be as a nation. So it not only entails our interest rate, it entails a lot of other issues that are relative to the budget and very disconcerting.

And you raised a very important point now twice that people need to understand that we have been through this with CBO and OMB and we spent a lot of time in meetings discussing this. But when they take a pessimistic or attempt to in the CBO scoring of the growth rate, knowing that somewhere along the line there is going to be a recession and that they do not project that because they average, I think, a 1.9. We update these things three times a year, I think it is, and in that process every time the growth rate comes in better we spend the money. We do not even keep the seed corn for a recession in this 2002 plan—really is not realistic because last year we spent more money when the growth rate was higher, so what do we do in a year when the growth rate is lower?

Now compound that over time and what you are in effect saying is we have had a good boom period, we have this huge thing hanging over our head in the Social Security trust fund, we have a national debt that is tremendous even without future obligations like Social Security, we are worried how we are going to pay Medicare, we are worried how we are going to pay the veterans, we are worried how we are going to pay railroad retirement, how we are going to meet our Government employees things.

So what do we do when we finally have a good growth period and we finally have some money? We spend it. If they would have been using the money that we gained in this past year, if not to retire the debt, which I believe they should have been doing, then it should have been in the Social Security or get the Social Security off. It is not as hard as people say, but it is harder if every time you want to run for office you want to promise a new program and you have a new idea to spend money out of Washington rather than paying the debts that are accumulating and the future obligations that are accumulating over your head. It is that for campaign season you need a new program, because unless you have a new program you are afraid you will not get reelected, and it is one of the tough things we are dealing with here in Washington because our promises are outrunning our funding.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. SOUDER, I just concluded a story that: It is a true story, where at a basketball game in Delavan, WI where my teenage son was playing, and I looked over at my wife and she was holding a baby of one of our friends, one of the teachers of the parochial school where my son attends, and I looked over at her with that baby on her lap and I mean I am supposed to be thinking about the basketball game.

But my mind wanders back out here to Washington, and I could not help but think what these issues mean to that baby that was sitting on Sue's lap, where we have already borrowed \$20,000. We, our generation, has borrowed \$20,000 that we are going to pass on to that baby.

That is not right and it is not fair. This issue is not just about numbers and budget. It is a moral issue. How can we as a Nation, how can we as a generation, possibly justify that we are taking that child's money, that poor old baby sitting on my wife's lap, how can we justify taking that baby's money and spending it on our programs today, and how can we justify saying we are balancing the budget by taking \$104 billion out of the Social Security Trust Fund knowing full well that what that means is that when that baby reaches the work force, when it is time for that baby to have the opportunity to live the American dream, to have a chance at the American dream, that young child—what we are doing is we are saddling them with a situation where the Government is going to demand even more in taxes before they get to spend money on their children. It is just not an acceptable way to go.

I just conclude today by urging our colleagues to join us in supporting the Social Security Preservation Act. I would reach across the aisle, encourage our Democrat colleagues to join us on this bill. This is not a partisan issue. Preserving and protecting the Social Security system should be something that both Republicans and Democrats are very interested in, and I look forward to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. I thank the Speaker very much for his kindness and I rise today to speak about children. Sorry my colleagues have left the floor of the House, and I appreciate their comments about a very important issue, and that is creating opportunities for our children. And might I say that although I will be speaking today about technology and joined by many of my colleagues, I would appreciate a slight bit of deference to just acknowledge that there is a disagreement when it comes to the balanced budget amendment.

We all want to get to the same place, and that is to balance the budget. I must add that in protecting Social Security I would bring attention to the gentleman's comments that when you include Social Security in the balanced budget amendment you then prohibit and inhibit the flowing of Social Security checks to our seniors throughout

this Nation if they then have to face the burden of the balanced budget on their backs.

So I know we will have a vigorous debate, we want to have a future for this Nation, and I think it is key that we recognize that we might have different perspectives, and clearly I think we should exempt Social Security from that so that we can have an upright and a fair discussion on this issue and, in fact, preserve a future for our children.

Having said that, I am gratified today for the reason that I have come, and that is to capture the spirit of the President's message, but the work of so many of my colleagues and myself acknowledging the importance of the access of the Internet to all of our children. So I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce a sense of the Congress resolution regarding the outstanding achievements of NetDay, the NetDay organization.

I, along with many Members of the House, have become acquainted with the NetDay organization through the activity generated in our home congressional districts by grassroots NetDay projects. I was proud to have had the honor of joining fellow Houstonians in the kickoff of the ceremony for the Houston independent school district's NetDay '96. I was happy to serve as the honorary chair for that event and under the leadership of our superintendent and our assistant superintendent for technology, the superintendent being Ron Page, the assistant superintendent being Dara Ann Burrow, and many volunteers, we can claim it as a success.

Albeit a success in many of our districts, we realize that we are just beginning, and so as a member of the Telecommunications Conference Committee, the Reform Act of 1996 which the 104th Congress passed, I am proud that my colleagues join together to insist that there must be universal telecommunications access to every school and library and classroom in this Nation.

Fortunately, for HISD, because of our program, 79,975 students now have Internet access in the elementary, junior, and high school. I say that it is still not enough. This was accomplished with the assistance of 652 volunteers who contributed their time to the neighborhood schools. The efforts of sponsored volunteers, students, teachers, and HISD personnel saved the Houston independent school district \$28,000. With our school district's decision to hold NetDay '96 connection projects for each Saturday in the month of October, they ensure that every targeted school within minority and majority communities received an equal opportunity to have their neighborhood school library receive the necessary wiring for Internet access. With the entire Houston community support, we can reach the goal of universal access for all of Houston's children by the year 2000.

But we must go further than that, and we come to this Congress to go beyond our respective constituencies and localized communities. We must work toward universal access to the Internet. We must be vigilant in our efforts to promote software and hardware innovations. When I talk to my teachers, they emphasize that the infrastructure is so very important that they need the software. We must not forget that. We must have our children accessing material that is valuable and valued. I have learned that there are a number of software and hardware technologies which if employed will also block the ability of our young users to access Web sites that may not be appropriate for them.

In addition, the use of network systems by school districts can also provide protection for the Internet's youngest and most valid users. We in Congress must work to provide these important protective features to users of the national information infrastructure as educators work to assist us in guiding our children successfully toward the 21st century job marketplace.

That is where the work will be. Silicon Valley will not be Silicon Valley. It will probably be Silicon Nation. And I believe that we should not cease from searching for additional innovative ways to protect our children as we also work to provide them with the much needed skills for today and tomorrow. It is a fact that by the close of this century 60 percent of the new jobs will require computer skills that are currently held now by only 20 percent of our population. The work we do today will pay off for our children.

From Alabama to Wyoming, the NetDay organization has many places they can call home. In the State of Alaska the Anchorage school district reports that 70 percent of Alaska's students wired several schools as part of NetDay. In the State of California, the launching site for the entire NetDay effort, over 75,000 volunteers wired over 3,500 schools last fall.

The call that I raise up today and the call that I hope is heard: Are you listening throughout the Nation and can we do any less? Well, in the State of Texas a hundred schools were wired. Most of them were in the city of Houston. We obviously need more activity in the entire State of Texas as well as all over America.

It is evident from our first NetDay year that States have gone at varying degrees of success in their NetDay efforts. We still have a lot of work to do before every school is connected to the Internet. As a parent and a Member of Congress, I will continue to work toward a safe and secure Internet environment in which we can provide educational opportunities for our children.

That means, and we must get a little direct here, I do not think any of us would claim any opposition to the first amendment. I hold myself out as someone who vigorously defends the freedom of speech, but I can assure you I