

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, think about what \$2.3 billion would buy today. If the American people knew what Congress was planning to do with this large sum of money, they would be appalled. Does anyone here honestly think the American people would choose to spend this money to transport nuclear waste through their States, their communities, their towns and their backyards? I do not think so. Yet this is exactly what H.R. 1270, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997 will do.

Today, schools need more teachers, communities need more police, veterans need a cost-of-living adjustment, and the hard-working men and women of this country need a tax break. Why then, Mr. Speaker, do some in this body contend that the \$2.3 billion should be used to subsidize nuclear powerplants? It is an unfair, unfunded mandate.

H.R. 1270 seeks to create an interim storage facility at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, to temporarily store nuclear waste. Why endanger Americans when it is infinitely safer and seven times cheaper to keep this waste on site?

THE 101st BIRTHDAY OF ELENA E.L. CHRISTIAN

(Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to say congratulations and happy birthday to Elena E.L. Christian, who is 101 years old today and who happens to be my grandmother.

This great lady is a native of the island of St. Kitts. At about 3 years old, she traveled with her mother and siblings to the island of St. Croix, then one of the islands of the Danish West Indies.

Fifteen years later, she witnessed the lowering of the Danish flag and the raising of the American Stars and Stripes as we became the United States Virgin Islands and she later, an American citizen.

She has given her long life in service to the education of our children and to the St. Johns Anglican Church. She continues to be a role model for all of us who, while we might not attain her age, we can still aspire to her level of commitment and achievement.

Happy birthday, Grandma.

A MESSAGE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I have a message for all of those in the middle class out there: Every time you hear the liberals attacking tax cuts as tax cuts for the wealthy, hold onto your wallets. Because when liberals talk about tax cuts for the wealthy, they

are really talking about you, the middle class.

That is right, Mr. Speaker. Tax cuts for the wealthy are code words for tax cuts for the middle class, and the big-government crowd will have none of that.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is the same big-government crowd that acts as if they are doing you a favor by letting you keep what is already yours. Of course, they do not really think you are entitled to keep the fruits of your labor. The only thing the big-government crowd thinks that you are entitled to is the fruits of other people's labor.

Surprise, surprise, the politicians are the ones who get to decide what to take and what special interest groups to give it to.

Let us give the middle class a tax break and stop Washington from wasting so much of middle-class taxpayers money.

THE IRS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the IRS, in denying the 1996 tax return and refund to Pamela Damon, said, Pamela Damon, you are dead. You have been dead for 26 years. Now, if that is not enough to bury your 1040, Pam went to the Social Security Administration. They called the IRS and they said, Pam is here in our office, she is alive. They said, Pam's presence is not enough. She is dead as far as the IRS is concerned.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker.

I recommend that Congress do two things. No. 1, hire a proctologist to perform brain scans on all those morticians at the IRS. And No. 2, pass H.R. 367, that simply transfers the burden of proof to the IRS.

Unbelievable. Pam Damon is alive.

ON SCHOOL CHOICE

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

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands would be willing to let me also join her in wishing a happy birthday to her grandmother. And may she have 101 more happy birthdays.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that every single person alive in the world, but especially in this great country, should have as much personal freedom and liberty as their acceptance of personal responsibility will allow. And I have found that, for most persons, we will find them never so willing to accept personal responsibility and the expectations of the rewards of the accompanied freedom as they are when it comes to the education of their children.

That is why I am introducing today on behalf of all the parents of Washing-

ton, DC, who have so thoroughly expressed their desire for more freedom of choice in the selection of schools for their children, a bill that would enable even the most poor of those parents to select the school that they think is best for their children through the use of a system of opportunity scholarships for those children.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit Holy Redeemer School, a private school where children are educated because their parents have found the way to get them included in a better alternative. Mr. Speaker, I saw happy, healthy, young people who love their school and who love to learn.

Mr. Speaker, almost without exception, their favorite courses were math and science. We could not have academic curriculum too rigorous for these children to enjoy when they got to go to the school of their choice. We have 800 children in Washington, DC, today who sit idly in a waiting line, hoping for that opportunity, that hope encouraged by loving parents. We ought to help them. We have the bill to do so.

WORKFARE PROVISIONS OF WELFARE REFORM

(Mrs. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the workfare provisions of the welfare reform. Welfare recipients who must work for their benefits under the new welfare reform law must be protected by existing Federal labor laws.

When the welfare reform bill was passed, Congress gave very little guidance to the States for determining how they would apply existing employment laws to welfare recipients. As a result of it, many States are going off the handle trying to determine how they are going to work with the labor laws. We never said that, the Congress never said that the Fair Labor Standards Act, including minimum wage provisions, applied to welfare recipients. Welfare recipients in work programs should indeed earn the minimum wage.

There are some people, Mr. Speaker, who want to overturn that decision. They think it is OK for people who are on welfare to make less than the minimum wage. I say to this Congress that people who are on welfare and going into work deserve the minimum wage. Welfare recipients deserve the dignity of equal treatment with their fellow workers. The minimum wage does that. They are entitled to the protections of the wage and hour laws. They are not second class citizens. Minimum wages are not inflated wages. They are decent wages, Mr. Speaker.

□ 1215

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOREST SERVICE ORGANIC ACT OF 1897

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

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, today is the 100th anniversary of the national forests. Since the creation of the forest reserves in 1891 and the Organic Administration Act in June of 1897, we have put more than 190 million acres into the forest system. These lands hold a wealth of resources and are managed by the most sophisticated forest practices and the most strenuous environmental laws in the world. While there are many management successes, there are also urgent problems.

Last week I flew, with two of my colleagues, over 600,000 acres of the Boise National Forest destroyed by fires in the past 5 years. This scenario has been repeated in other forests, and scientists predict that it will occur again and again if we do not act now.

All past and present Forest Service chiefs have advocated active management of our national forests. We must now provide the professional scientists and foresters with the ability to properly manage these lands in order to have a forest legacy left to our grandchildren.

SUPPORT THE COMMANDO FUNDING

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

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to illustrate the grave implications which resulted from the untimely failure of Congress to approve the supplemental appropriations bill.

Included in the supplemental is \$20 million in payments to former South Vietnamese commandos who were trained by and worked for the U.S. Government during the Vietnam war. The Pentagon failed to carry out the will of the 104th Congress to compensate these brave men for their service to this Nation, especially for their time in captivity.

Tragically, the Pentagon delayed and four commandos perished in the last year. Now, while this body recessed and failed to pass the supplemental appropriations bill, a fifth commando has also perished.

Duong Lang Sang was captured in 1966 by the North Vietnamese Government while working for the United States. After 16 years in hard labor as a prisoner of war he was finally released in 1982. After his release he suffered many illnesses arising from his torture.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Sang passed away in Chicago as a result of those injuries. He has left behind a widow and

two school-aged children. Please join me in asserting that we pass the supplemental appropriations bill so that these soldiers would not have died in vain.

PRESIDENT SHOULD SUPPORT GEKAS-WYNN GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN PREVENTION PROVISION

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, when Congress passed the historic balanced budget agreement by a vote of 333, it set forth a very good tone for Congress and the White House and the Senate to work together to move us toward a balanced budget by the year 2002. And although this resolution is very important, it is only the first step. There will be a lot of skirmishes down the road over taxes, education, Medicare, health care in general, and so forth like that.

One of the things that the Republicans have done, however, to make sure this does not lead us to a gridlock and a Government shutdown is that we have passed the Gekas-Wynn Government shutdown prevention provision. What that says is that if Congress and the President have not agreed on a balanced budget or the appropriations bills by September 30, then the Government would continue at 100 percent of the 1997 funding level and that would prevent a shutdown.

Now, for some reason the President is against this. I hope that he will change his mind and support this so that we will not have the Government shutdown as we did last year.

TRIBUTE TO LT. LEILANI SALAMASINA STROKIN

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, it is not very often that I appear before my colleagues in the well, but today I want to offer a special tribute to a young lady, a great American, with a proud Samoan heritage who just graduated from West Point. While it may be a common occurrence among my colleagues to witness a countless source of our Nation's finest young men and women who are nominated and accepted every year to attend our military academies, it is a very rare occasion for me to celebrate such an event among Samoan Americans, especially when there are only about 150,000 of us throughout the United States.

First, my sincere thanks to the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROSLEHTINEN], who after evaluating Salamasina Strokin's application, nominated her 4 years ago to attend West Point. Salamasina's father is a retired military officer himself from

Florida, but her mother, Sina, is Samoan, and this is what makes this story special, Mr. Speaker.

Salamasina's mother passed away last year and it was her dream to see that her daughter graduated from West Point. Nevertheless, Salamasina kept on going because she knew her mother would not want her to quit now regardless of what happened. To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, I believe Salamasina Strokin is the only Samoan American who has graduated from West Point, and I pay this special tribute to her late mother, her father, her relatives, and her friends.

This is certainly a proud moment for our Samoan community, and I give all my best to 2d Lt. Leilani Salamasina Strokin.

GOOD NEWS: CONGRESS TAKES IN AN EXTRA \$100 BILLION AND SPENDS LESS THAN PREDICTED

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I think all of us in business know that good news does not necessarily make news and bad news is always on the front page. But I think there is some good news, especially with respect to the budget, and the interesting thing is not only do most Americans not know this, frankly, I do not think most Members of Congress know this.

Back in June 1995, when this House passed its budget resolution, we said that we would spend in fiscal year 1997 \$1624 billion and that we would take in, in revenue, about \$1,451 billion. Well, that is what we said in June 1995. Let us talk about what really has happened.

In fiscal year 1997 we are going to spend \$1,622 billion. In other words, Mr. Speaker, this Congress is going to spend less money in fiscal year 1997 than we said we were going to spend just 2 years ago. And the even better news is, because the economy has been stronger and interest rates have been lower, we have taken in an additional \$100 billion.

Now, when is the last time that Congress took in an extra \$100 billion and actually spent less than they said they were going to spend? I think that is great news for the economy, I think it is great news for the American people but, most important, I think it is great news for our children.

CONGRESS FORMULATES THE UNEQUAL WORKERS POLICY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that in America we would formulate the unequal workers policy. That is what this House, the Republicans, are beginning to do.