

policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Idaho [Mr. CRAPO] is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, Idahoans have banded together to save homes and neighborhoods and communities from encroaching flood waters. We face what is literally the flood of the century and maybe the flood of the last 200 or 300 years.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to report that last week during the assistance efforts, two Idaho Air National Guardsmen were killed and one seriously injured when the helicopter they were in crashed. Maj. Don Baxter and 1st Lt. Will Neal were killed when the helicopter they were in went down. CWO Shelby Wuthrich survived the crash and was pulled from the wreckage by a local citizen, Sherry Lang.

Major Baxter had just taken command of the Idaho National Guard operations to assist in the flooded areas. His brother tells me that Don died doing what he loved most, flying and serving other people.

Will Neal also was an exemplary guardsman and was enthusiastic about assisting others in trouble. I was able to visit with Shelby in the hospital this last weekend, and the doctors are still determining the extent of his injuries and rehabilitative efforts; but he has a tremendous will and spirit, one that will help him to come to resolution with this tragedy.

I also want to commend all the others who responded to the crash site. Their quick response is a strong testament to the community's spirit.

The thoughts and prayers of all Idahoans are with the families of these three men. They were performing a great service, working for the good of the community and helping others in trouble when this tragedy occurred. I know that all the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives will join me in sending their prayers and in keeping their thoughts and prayers focused on these men and sending our condolences to the Baxter, Neal, and Wuthrich families. Truly, this is the kind of rugged individualism, the kind of integrity and character that Idahoans and Americans exemplify when facing disaster threats.

AMERICANS FAVOR TAX RELIEF FOR MIDDLE CLASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, later this week, this Congress will make a choice about the future of America. As we debate the tax bill, we will have to make a choice between the Republican plan that assumes that the rich do not have enough money and that working families have too much, or we can choose the Democratic plan

that believes what we ought to do with the tax cuts is try to help working families educate their children, take care of their children, provide for child care, and reinvest in America. Those are the two visions: The Republican plan that will give people who earn more than \$250,000 an average benefit of \$27,000 and will cost people that are earning \$17,000, \$18,000, and \$20,000 real money.

That is the difference in a vision of America. To take people who now have done very well in the stock market and decide that, when they had no expectations of capital gains, we should provide them a reduction on the profits that they make, while we should not provide tax relief to low-income working Americans.

That is the choice and a vision of America. We have got to decide whether or not we are going to use the resources that we have saved as a result of the balanced budget efforts that we have made over the last 5 years, whether or not those should be shared with working families in this country, or whether or not they ought to be lavished on the rich who simply do not need it. It is a matter of how we use those resources and how we promote families.

We clearly know in this Congress what the American people want. They have said it over and over again in the polls that they want us to use the resources of the country to improve the educational opportunities for their children, to reduce crime, to protect the Medicare benefits for the elderly, and to balance the Federal budget. But that is not the choice that the Republicans are taking this week.

In fact, what they are doing is racing to pay back those who have supported their campaigns by lavishing reductions in capital gains tax, estate tax and getting rid of the corporate alternative minimum tax which says that for those large corporations that have huge write-offs, even they must pay something for the privilege of being in America. Then we will go back to the days when corporations pay no taxes no matter how much money they make. That is not equity. That is not fairness. That is the not the choice of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we need to provide more equity, we need to provide more fairness. The No. 1 thing that the Americans demand of their Tax Code is fairness so that we know that everybody is contributing their fair share to making this the greatest country in the world. But that is not what the Republican tax bill does. The Republican tax bill heads off in another direction. It decides that those who are the wealthiest, those who are the richest should get the most, and those who are working hard, young families to raise children, should get the least. Somehow that just is not fair.

TAX CUTS SHOULD GO TO MIDDLE CLASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW] is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise also to strongly support the middle-class working families of my district in Michigan getting a tax cut at the end of this week. When all is said and done and we have debated fully the question of who should receive tax relief this week, my vote will be with the middle-class working families in my district.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased as a new Member from Michigan to have been a part of this historic balanced budget agreement, and in that agreement we carved out a net \$85 billion to be given in tax relief. The question now before us is where that goes. While we came together in a bipartisan way on the issue of balancing the budget, we now see great philosophical differences as to where to put tax relief. This is where the big split in terms of vision between the parties comes.

The Republicans voted a bill out of committee that targets the relief, the majority of the relief, to those receiving more than \$250,000 a year with the outdated notion that, if you give to the wealthy, it will trickle down to all of us. That happened in the 1980's and did not work.

The policies of the 1990's under President Clinton have been to focus dollars directly into the pockets of middle-class workers and those who are working hard to get into the middle class, and I truly believe that is how we provide economic stimulus in the country and that is how we make sure that those who need tax relief receive it.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my district would like some tax relief help in sending their children to college. They want to make sure once they are there, they are not penalized; that they can protect the equity in their home and, if they sell it, they will not be taxed. They are concerned about child care for their children, that they receive some help for child care; that if they have a small business that they have worked all their life for, that the capital gains relief will be targeted to small businesses; and, if they pass away, that the estate tax relief will be targeted to small businesses, family-owned businesses and family-owned farms.

Mr. Speaker, I want very much to take that tax relief and put it directly in the pockets of people who are working hard to care for their families, working hard for a good quality of life and people who have worked hard all of their lives to contribute to create jobs in the community and to contribute to a business or a family-owned farm. That is the way we will keep this economy in America going. If we do not have a strong middle class, we will not have a strong economy.

The people in my district are tired of seeing the majority of tax breaks go to those at the top. People working hard every day deserve tax relief, and I am going to be fighting all this week to help make sure that they are the ones that receive it.

DEFICIT REDUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, when I first got here back in 1993, it was August of 1993, the Democratic President and the Democratic House put forth a deficit reduction plan. At that time we did not receive any votes from our friends on the other side of the aisle. We received no Republican votes.

Mr. Speaker, that deficit reduction plan that we passed in 1993 has worked. The deficit of this country was 290-some billion dollars. We are now down to \$67 billion. We are on the verge of finally balancing this budget. Many of us feel, since we are so close to balancing this budget, that there should be no tax breaks until we actually balance the budget. Unfortunately, because of agreements made, we are going to have a balanced budget agreement, at least we have a blueprint, and now we can see the problems developing in that blueprint. Now we have two tax bills. One would give huge breaks to the wealthiest 5 percent of this country while working families struggle to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, underneath this 5-year balanced budget plan we have one bill for entitlement reform and one bill for tax breaks. But if we are going to give tax breaks, they must be limited, they must be targeted, and they must benefit families. Unfortunately, the GOP tax plan benefits the wealthiest 5 percent of this country. By that I mean those people who make more than \$250,000 a year.

On Monday, Mr. Speaker, the New York Times warned that the GOP plan would, and I quote, "Shower tax cuts on the Nation's wealthiest families." But as conservative political commentator Kevin Phillips, who worked in the Reagan White House, warned last week, he said that the Republicans are determined, quote, "to slash the capital gains tax, the estate tax, the corporate alternative minimum tax, and some other provisions important to those people who write campaign checks." He said that on the Morning Edition of National Public Radio on June 19.

Last Sunday, this past Sunday, President Clinton urged Republicans instead to work with Democrats and pass a tax bill that, quote, "meets the real needs of middle-class families providing help for education, for child rearing, and for buying and selling a home. That is the kind of targeted tax relief we should have."

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Republican tax bill has and will have a devastating impact on working families. This week we are probably going to have this debate even more on the House floor. This week the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities finds that the combined GOP tax bill and budget bill gives a \$27,000 a year annual windfall to the top 1 percent of this country. The top 1 percent gets a \$27,000 windfall, and the bottom 20 percent of American families will lose, will lose, Mr. Speaker, \$63 under the Republican tax plan.

TAX FAIRNESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. OLVER] is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, in the next few days we are going to learn something about tax fairness here in America. We are going to learn something about the heart and soul of the two major political parties, my party, the Democratic Party, and the other party, the Republican Party. We are going to learn who each of those parties defends and who each of those parties serves and who each of those parties is willing to fight for.

Mr. Speaker, almost 2 months ago, the President and the budget leadership from the two major parties reached agreement on a balanced budget by the year 2002, and they agreed on a tax cut, to boot, in that process. Now there is a lot of disagreement as to exactly who is supposed to get that tax cut, but the amount of the tax cut is agreed upon by both parties over a 5-year period and a 10-year period.

Let me put that at family level. There are roughly 100 million families in America, and the agreement calls for roughly \$100 billion of tax cut over 5 years. That is roughly \$1,000 per family.

Now, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party have different plans for how that tax cut is supposed to be given to the American people, and I want to compare the Republican plan with the Democratic plan by treating 20 families, just 20 families across the income scales, from the lowest income level to the highest income level, where under the agreed plan there is roughly \$2,000 to be distributed to 20 families.

Mr. Speaker, in the Republican plan, the highest income single family among those 20 families, out of the \$20,000 that is to be distributed, would get about \$8,000 out of that. And if we add the next three families to it, so we have the four highest income families out of the 20 spread across the whole spectrum of American life, they would get almost two-thirds of the tax reduction. Four families out of 20, 20 percent of the families, would get two-thirds of all of the tax reduction.

In the Democratic plan those same four families would get \$6,000 among those four families, or about 30 percent of the tax reduction. At the other end of the scale, the eight families at the lower end of the income brackets, which represent 40 percent of all Americans, they would get zero out of the Republican tax reduction plan. In the Democratic tax reduction plan, they would get almost 25 percent of the tax reduction.

TAX BREAKS FOR THE WEALTHY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, sometimes a cartoon says it all, and over the weekend a cartoon appeared in the Home News and Tribune and the Asbury Park Press in New Jersey and its message was right on target. It shows two characters from the TV show "The Simpsons" both reading the newspaper with the headline, "GOP Tax Plan"; but Mr. Burns, as a representative of the rich, says, "Excellent," while Homer Simpson, as the symbol for the middle class, can only respond by saying "Duh."

This really sums up the way the American people will react to the tax bill being pushed by our Republican colleagues. If taxpayers happen to be wealthy, if they are somebody who does not have to worry too much about making ends meet or paying for their kids's education, then this plan is for them. If, on the other hand, they are part of the vast majority of the American people in the middle class or the lower end of the income scale and they could use a little help, well, under the GOP plan they are just out of luck.

Another generalistic analysis appeared in yesterday's New York Times under the headline "Study Shows Tax Proposal Would Benefit the Wealthy," with the subhead, "Wider gap is seen between rich and poor." The Times reports that the 5 million wealthiest families in our country would gain thousands of dollars, while the 40 million families with the lowest incomes would actually lose money, with the effect of widening the already growing gap between the richest and the poorest families as a result of the Republican tax plan.

The Times article cites a study that was conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities of the tax plan approved by the Republicans last month in the House Committee on Ways and Means. And although the Committee on Ways and Means' Republican staff disputes the Center's study, the Republican staff calculations conveniently cover only the first 5 years before the big tax breaks for the wealthy start to kick in well into the next century.

The rapid growth of these provisions favoring the wealthy, phased in later