

the Government has to be careful how it, quote, spends its scarce resources.

Now, that is where I have a major difference with the administration. When a parent is able to keep some of the money that he or she works very hard to earn, that is not an example of the Government spending money. It is not our money, to begin with, here in Washington. It belongs to the people who earn it. We ought to cut taxes, and let us begin to do it now.

CREATION OF BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE TO REVIEW ETHICS PROCESS

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

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to thank my colleagues that are waiting for their 1-minute for their willingness to let me intercede at this time. I appreciate their grace and patience.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few months the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], the minority leader, and I have been talking about the need for a comprehensive review of the ethics process. We have had several good discussions culminating in our joint appearance before the House today to announce the creation of a bipartisan task force to conduct a review of the ethics process and to report to the bipartisan leadership on how the process might be improved.

For this review to be successful, I think we need three key elements:

First, the process must be truly bipartisan. Like the Ethics Committee, it should be composed of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. Furthermore, and as the majority leader you will not find me saying this too often, I think this task force should be cochaired by a Member from each side of the aisle.

Second, we must have dedicated Members who will do what is right for all Members and, more importantly, for the institution of the House of Representatives.

Third, after the past few tumultuous months, I think we must have a brief cooling-off period where Members can sit back and examine where the ethics process works, where it does not and how it might be improved, and in a climate temporarily free from potential ethics charges.

After a great deal of discussion, I am pleased to announce that the distinguished minority leader and I come to the floor today to announce the creation of a 12-member bipartisan task force cochaired by a Republican and a Democrat.

Ethical review of our peers, and the process by which we conduct that review, is a constitutional responsibility. It is an important job that few Members are excited about performing. I have given a great deal of thought to whom the Republican side of the aisle should ask to do this. I want Members

who are well respected and who are committed to doing what is right and what is in the best interests of the institution.

While we have many Members who meet this criteria, I believe I have found six who will work well with Members, to be appointed by Mr. GEPHARDT.

Members are the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], who I have asked to be one of the cochairs, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS], the gentleman from Delaware [Mr. CASTLE], the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] and the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN], who as chairman of the Ethics Committee will serve as an ex officio member of the task force.

Minority Leader GEPHARDT and I have also agreed on a moratorium on the filing of new ethics complaints until April 11. This 2-month cooling-off period will give the task force members an opportunity to meet, review and discuss how the ethics process can be improved and in a climate free from specific questions of ethical propriety.

The task force is free to look into any and all aspects of the ethics process. Some of the questions I think the task force will want to address include: Who can file a complaint and upon what basis of information, what should be the standards for initiating an investigation, what evidentiary standard should apply throughout the process, how has the bifurcation process worked, does it take too long to conduct a review, should non-House Members play a part in a reformed ethics process, should we enlarge the pool of Members who might participate in different phases of the process?

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri for working with me to create this important task force.

I yield to the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT].

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I would agree that we believe on the Democratic side, I think, with our friends on the Republican side that there needs to be a complete review of the ethics process with a view toward recommending changes to the whole body, that the body might considerate at some point in the future.

We also agree that there should be six Members, one ex officio and five other Members. In that connection, I today am appointing the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. CARDIN] to be our cochair, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], the gentleman from California [Ms. PELOSI] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] to be part of this bipartisan task force.

We are also asking the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN] to be ex officio, as he will be our recommended

ranking member on the permanent Ethics Committee.

So we will be joining with the majority leader in the unanimous consent request for their appointment and for the understanding that there will not be a filing of ethics complaints for this, I believe to be, 65-day period in which this group should be doing its work.

I thank the gentleman and Members on his side for working with us on this process. I think it is an important step forward in working together to improve the ethics process for the body. I look forward to receiving recommendations from this group.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I should also advise Members of the body that, during this interim period, the regular work of the Ethics Committee under the leadership of the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] and the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN] will continue to advise Members with respect to requests they might make about the appropriateness of courses of action they may take. That advisory function, I know, is being carried out well because I just got some advice back from the committee myself yesterday on a trip that I am looking at. So let me just say that I believe this accommodation enables every Member to feel they have a place to make their inquiries. They can get a quick, accurate, reliable response and at the same time this committee can work. Again, I want to thank the minority leader for his congenial efforts to work this out with me.

ESTABLISHING BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE ON REFORM OF ETHICS PROCESS

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, in furtherance of this understanding concerning the establishment of a bipartisan task force on reform of the ethics process, I ask unanimous consent that during the period beginning immediately and ending on April 11, 1997:

First, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct may not receive, renew, initiate or investigate a complaint against the official conduct of a Member, officer or employee of the House;

Second, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct may issue advisory opinions and perform other noninvestigative functions; and

Third, a resolution addressing the official conduct of a Member, officer or employee of the House that is proposed to be offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House shall, once noticed pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, have precedence of all other questions except motions to adjourn only at a time or place designated by the Chair and the legislative schedule within 2 legislative days after April 11, 1997.

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

There was no objection.

PELL GRANTS

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union address last week, the President of the United States discussed his plan to make college more affordable and more accessible to working families by increasing funding for Pell grants.

Pell grants serve as the very foundation of student aid for low- and middle-income families. The President's proposal would raise the maximum Pell grant award to \$3,000 and would raise the total number of Pell grant recipients to over 4 million.

Mr. Speaker, I promised the people of Massachusetts that the first bill that I introduced in this House would make college more affordable for working families. This month I intend to keep that promise.

□ 1015

I will be introducing a bill that expands the President's proposal and expands the maximum Pell grant award to \$5,000, bringing the award to the level at which it was created, adjusted for inflation. More students will be eligible for larger awards, giving more families the chance to send their kids to college and to realize the American dream.

I thank the President of the United States for his leadership on this issue, and I ask my colleagues to join me in making education more affordable and in making our children's future even more bright.

MYTH: WASHINGTON BUREAUCRATS KNOW BEST HOW TO SPEND AMERICA'S MONEY

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

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I was amazed again yesterday when I read Secretary Rubin's statement in Congress Daily, implying that tax cuts would unduly harm our economy.

Think about it: What Secretary Rubin really thinks is that Washington bureaucrats know better how to spend the American people's money than the American people themselves. It takes a lot of nerve to suggest to the American people, who have to balance their own budgets, pay their own bills on time, that the Federal Government, which does not do these things, will make better decisions about managing money than they will.

It takes a lot of nerve, especially since this President is proposing an additional \$1 billion in spending for a bureaucracy whose financial books are

unauditable. What responsible American would put a billion dollars into a company whose books were unauditable?

This is not about tax cuts. It is about arrogance, the arrogance of the President and his advisors suggesting that a dollar spent by Washington bureaucrats is better spent than a dollar spent by parents, families, across America.

NO TIME TO WASTE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, while Democrats and the President have developed sweeping plans to strengthen our education system and provide health care for the 10 million children in this country who currently have no coverage, the Republicans have offered no specifics in return. Instead of immediately turning Congress' focus to programs that make a real difference in people's lives, like tax breaks to help pay for college, the repair of decaying elementary schools and insurance for uninsured infants, today instead the GOP has scheduled a vote on term limits.

If history is any indication, Mr. Speaker, time will show the GOP's interest in term limits today is nothing more than a delay tactic. Term limits will do nothing for schools badly in need of repair. Term limits will not teach a child to read or ensure our children receive medical attention when they fall sick.

I think we have a lot more important things to consider and we do not have time to waste. The sooner the Republican leadership learns this, the sooner we can provide quality education and health care to our children instead of spending the time today on term limits.

FEDERAL ESTATE TAX SHOULD BE REPEALED

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to speak about my first bill and to implore my colleagues to repeal the Federal estate tax. This tax hits millions of families and small farm and business owners.

This unfair tax for too long has been burdening people of this country at one of the most difficult times in their lives, at the time of the death of a loved one. It forces them to sell assets just inherited by them so they can pay unreasonable sums to the Federal coffers.

Mr. Speaker, numerous people across the country stand to lose family farms and businesses that they have worked their entire lives to build. Faye Givler, owner of Steckel Printing and em-

ployer of 94 people in Lancaster, PA, stands to lose her life's work with this tax. Her children, just because of this tax, stand to lose it all.

Mr. Speaker, this is outrageous. With 65 cents of this tax going to enforcement and compliance, what sense is there in inflicting such stress on Americans who work hard to build their children's future? This tax threatens that simple dream. I urge my colleagues to repeal this unfair tax.

WHERE IS THE APPLE FOR OUR TEACHERS?

(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, today I am meeting with representatives from the education community from the State of Texas. I want to give them hope and, most importantly, I want to answer the question, where is the apple for our teachers?

Interestingly enough, as the bipartisan team met with the President last evening, education was high on the priority, but yet today we will spend 9 hours or so talking about term limits, when the American people can elect or unelect their elected officials every 2 years.

Two years ago the Republicans were talking about slashing title I programs by \$4.9 billion. If education is so important, let us get about the business of doing what we are supposed to do. Let us ensure that we have the right number of Pell grants for our college students, and our college student direct loan program. Let us really talk about education so that something happens.

Let us not just fool around with political gimmickry and term limits when we all know the American people will elect us or unelect us every 2 years. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and make education my priority and make this Nation the very best it can be for the rest of this 21st century.

SUPPORT A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(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, it happens in every household, in every business, both large and small, in every school system, in every city council, in every county government, in every checking account across the Nation, everywhere but here in the Federal Government. This Government has not balanced its budget since Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. It should be easier to balance the Federal budget than to get someone to the moon.

When we borrow money for all these lofty enterprises for the Federal Government, for each dollar that we borrow it takes at least \$3 just to cover the interest to pay it back. So let us