

anymore. The IRS is starting to begin to sound like campaign reform.

It starts out, "We did not do it. Nobody saw us. You cannot prove anything. We did not do it." Then the truth starts to become apparent and the excuses change. "Ok, we might have had some problems but it was not wrong." Then it is, "Yes, we did it but we will not do it anymore."

That is about where the IRS is today. They have done something wrong. Quotas for their IRS agents, singling out individuals like Paula Jones, harassing small business men and women, striking fear across America.

And some people like Martin Grimes of Wichita, an RV salesman, are just plain mad. In his last \$3,500 check that he got for commission, \$1,400 of it went directly to the IRS. Mr. Speaker, there are many good people who are working at the IRS who have been put in a very bad situation by their management. It is time to cut the IRS code and flatten the tax.

SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Democrats strongly oppose spending taxpayer dollars on private and religious schools and have argued for making the necessary improvements in public schools instead. This week the Republicans hope to pass a bill that would make Washington, DC the first victim in a grand scheme to undermine public schools through taxpayer funded vouchers for private or religious schools. As much as \$45 million in Federal funds would be made available to pay for private education for about 3 percent of the District of Columbia's students.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it makes no sense to take away \$45 million that could be made available to the city of Washington to improve basic skills or to fix deteriorated buildings in the public schools and instead use this money for private schools. With 9 out of 10 children in America attending public schools, Democrats understand that we need to rebuild and reform public schools, not destroy them and waste public funding on private schools. I hope that my Republican colleagues will join us in moving a positive agenda for public education rather than wasting our time on vouchers.

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE POSITION ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS BILL

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this body instructed our conferees working with the Senate on the foreign operations bill to stay with the House position that relates to taxpayer dollars spent for abortion. Abortion is an

issue that there are many differences of opinion of on the floor of this House, but there has generally been broad agreement that taxpayers' dollars should not be spent for abortions in the United States. We need to ensure that that same policy is extended beyond our borders and with taxpayers money that is sent to other countries.

Certainly it was disturbing just a few days ago when the Vice President said that the biggest environmental danger in Third World countries was too many children, too many children in Mexico, too many children in Africa, too many children in Asia. That should not be the position of our Government. Our conferees need to stand firm. Taxpayers' dollars should not be used for abortions in America. They should not be used for abortions overseas.

COINCIDENCE

(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, Patricia Mendoza heckled the President; she got audited. Kent Brown sued the First Lady; he got audited. The National Center for Public Policy criticized the White House; they got audited. Billy Dale got the White House mad; he got audited. Paula Jones refused a cash settlement; she got audited.

If that is not enough to tax your disgust, Shelly Davis, the author of Unbridled Power, who testified about IRS abuses before the Senate, got a notice in the mail yesterday; she is being audited.

Unbelievable. After all this, an IRS spokesman said, coincidence, all coincidence. I say, Mr. Speaker, the IRS has turned into a bunch of political prostitutes.

I want to apologize to all the hookers in America for having associated them with the IRS. I say beam me up, dot com, coincidence this.

A COMMISSION TO OVERSEE THE IRS

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

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with the general comments of the gentleman from Ohio. He is absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. In light of the hearings we had on the IRS, it is clear that there is immediate need for reform.

We Republicans have joined with some Democrats in urging a citizens oversight commission for the IRS. Incredibly, the White House has opposed this. The President's Chief Economic Advisor, Gene Sperling, called the proposal for citizen oversight of the IRS "a recipe for conflict of interest" and "a serious step backward". The President's comments were even worse than

those of his advisor. He said, "I believe the IRS is functioning better today than it was five years ago." The President claimed that a citizens commission to oversee it would mean "less accountability" and "less trust in the agency."

I cannot conceive of how the IRS could possibly have less accountability and less trust from the American people than it does today. This administration has its head in the sand on this issue. The IRS must be held accountable by taxpayers and citizens, not by the White House and bureaucrats.

CRUMBLING SCHOOLS

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

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, we have the privilege here in America to live in what is arguably the wealthiest country in the world. In fact, when we compare the wealth of our country with other countries in the span of human history, we are probably easily among the wealthiest. We are fortunate to live in a country that offers that kind of well-being.

Yet across America our school buildings are crumbling. Fourteen million American students this morning went to school in crumbling school buildings. Education in my view is not only a proper role for government, it is a moral imperative for those of us who are involved in government. It is a scandal and it is a shame that in one of the wealthiest countries in human history we can allow crumbling school buildings to exist in the United States of America.

This Congress recently passed an appropriation for \$21 billion for B-2 bombers, B-2 bombers that cannot even fly in the rain. Yet this very Congress denied \$5 billion to help improve our crumbling school buildings. We must get our priorities straight. Public schools need the help of the Federal Government and crumbling school buildings are a national scandal.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

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

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today, to be followed by my good friend, the gentleman Michigan [Mr. DINGELL] to discuss the need to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act. I believe the time is now to reauthorize this granddaddy of all environmental laws.

It is vital that any piece of legislation that is developed is done so in a bipartisan way. I want to congratulate also the Senate in their effort to craft such a bill. This process must recognize the needs of people who are impacted by ESA as well as the issue of declining species.

I want to commend my colleague, the gentleman from Alaska [Mr. YOUNG], chairman of the Committee on Resources, and the ranking member, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] for their recent efforts to craft a bipartisan bill.

This process has been supported by the involvement of my friend [Mr. DINGELL] as well as the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] and the gentleman from California [Mr. POMBO].

We must set aside partisan politics. We must set aside personal interest and do what is right for the people of this country and for the species which this legislation protects.

HONEST TAXPAYING CITIZENS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO FEAR IRS

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, how many honest American citizens are going to be terrorized by the IRS before the IRS changes the way it does business?

Everyone knows that it is not just the tax cheats who panic when the IRS comes around to conduct an audit. Ordinary American citizens who pay taxes are driven to panic as well. It should not be that way.

Tax cheats should feel the cold, unrelenting power of the IRS when their misdeeds are found out, but honest citizens who do their best to comply with an extremely complicated Tax Code should have nothing to fear from an audit.

But the IRS knows that many people who work for a living, who have family obligations, and are living from paycheck to paycheck do not have either the time or the money to do battle with the IRS when the auditors want to play hard ball. IRS agents know that and they can count on that advantage.

But an ordinary citizen who is not a tax cheat simply does not have the money to pay for all the legal leadership necessary to defend himself against the IRS. It is not a fair fight. It is a recipe for abuse and it must stop.

SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, our public schools are under attack. Across the country there are students trying to learn in conditions that we should be ashamed of: crumbling walls, leaky roofs, and overcrowding.

The Republicans' response to this crisis is amazing. They want to take money out of the public school system and give it to private schools.

A recent poll shows that the vast majority of Americans oppose Republicans' attempt to use tax dollars for

private schools. The American people want to be able to provide all our children with a first class public education, but the Republicans do not. They want to allow public schools to continue to deteriorate while using taxpayers' dollars to subsidize private schools.

Mr. Speaker, we must not allow the Republicans to tear down our public school system. We must continue our commitment to providing every child in this country with a quality education.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR REAL ACTION IN REFORMING IRS

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the Internal Revenue Service is bullying the American taxpayer, and it is time for this practice to stop.

I appreciate what my colleagues in both the Senate and the House have done to look into this problem with the IRS. Now it is time for real action. The Congress needs to build on the current momentum and take advantage of this opportunity for true tax reform.

To police the tax system, our government employs over 110,000 IRS agents at an annual cost of \$9.8 billion a year. A fair, simpler tax system would eliminate the need for this tremendous and unethical bureaucracy.

The American taxpayers have known this for years, that the IRS needs drastic reform. Now it is time for the Congress to help the taxpayers of America and simplify the Tax Code. Let us give the taxpayers the relief they deserve.

CONGRESS SHOULD NOT ABANDON OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, they are at it again. The House majority has planned to help only a select few of the students that exist. Nine out of ten students attend our public school system. Once again, 9 out of 10 students attend our public school systems. We have to be responsive to those individuals, and our obligation as elected officials is to those people that attend our public school system.

We have to assure that they have the resources. We have to make sure our teachers have the training that is required. We have to make sure that our buildings are adequate and, at the same time, we have to make sure that they have access to the latest technology.

As taxpayers, our obligation is to the public schools, not to the private or religious schools. The majority's plan to abandon our public schools is not an option. Vouchers are not the answer. Abandoning our public schools will only make it worse.

What we need is a commitment of repairing our buildings, a commitment to our students that are out there, commitment to our teachers, a commitment to our communities. We must work for all our students that are out there. Let us not abandon our schools.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IS ALIVE

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

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, some individuals have misinterpreted yesterday's vote in the Senate as an indication that campaign finance reform is dead. I think they are deceiving themselves. There was no knockout punch. It was a draw.

Campaign finance reform is alive and it is a golden opportunity for the House and our House colleagues to prove that. The spotlight will turn to the House and whether we can follow through on our promises to take the electoral process out of the hands of the highest bidder and put it back in the hands of the American bidder.

I applaud Speaker GINGRICH's comments that he will give campaign finance reform its due in the House, and the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] for asserting that he will hold hearings on the reform effort and examine the different campaign finance bills, including the bill introduced by myself and my friend, the gentleman from Maine, [Mr. TOM ALLEN].

Mr. Speaker, there has been some heated debate on this issue. Let us take that debate out of the pages of the newspapers and put it on the floor of the House of Representatives. Let us make it an open debate, hear all the sides, hear the viewpoints, and decide which direction we are going; and, Mr. Speaker, after that debate, then we can decide just how our campaigns should be run, by the highest bidder or by the American public.

VOTE "YES" ON FARR AMENDMENT TO H.R. 901

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

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning because the second vote we are going to take today is on H.R. 901, and I have an amendment to that bill that is on the floor. It is the second vote we will take. It amends the Land Sovereignty Act.

I rise as a private landowner to urge my colleagues to protect private property rights. I rise as a former county supervisor to ask my colleagues to protect local control. I rise as a former member of the State legislature to ask my colleagues to protect State rights. And I rise as a Member of Congress to ask my colleagues to vote for that amendment to protect our information sources.