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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 1, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAC THORNBERRY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. McDevitt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2303. An act to direct the Librarian of Congress to prepare the history of the House of Representatives, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1791. An act to authorize the Librarian of Congress to purchase papers of Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, from Dr. King's estate.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for 5 minutes.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to represent one of our Nation's most diverse congressional districts. I represent the South Side of Chicago, the south suburbs in Cook and Will Counties, a lot of bedroom communities and a lot of cornfields and farm towns, too. When you represent such a diverse district, city, suburbs, and country, you have to learn to listen.

I find there is one very common message that I hear back home. I heard it back in 1994 when I was elected and they sent me here to change how Washington works. I continue to hear it. They want us to work together to meet the challenges that we face here in Washington, as well as at home.

I am pretty proud that over the last 4½ years this Republican majority has worked to keep our commitments to change how Washington works. When we think about it, when we came to Washington the Congress, which was controlled by the Democrats at that time, passed the biggest tax increase in the history of our country. It was considering having a government takeover of our health care system. We had massive deficits of \$200 to \$300 billion a year.

When we think about it, there have been fundamental changes that have occurred since then. In fact, in the last 4½ years, this Republican Congress has done some things we were told we could not do.

We have balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years. That is now producing an estimated \$3 trillion surplus of estimated money.

We cut taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years. Now 3 million children in my State of Illinois now qualify for that \$500 per child tax credit.

We have reformed welfare for the first time in a generation. The welfare

rolls in Illinois have dropped by one-half.

We tamed the tax collector, reforming the IRS, shifting the burden of proof off the backs of the taxpayer and onto the IRS. That is pretty good.

Of course, in this Republican majority we are now committed to moving forward with a better agenda, an agenda to help our local schools, keep the budget balanced, pay down our national debt, strengthen social security and Medicare, and of course, lower the tax burden for working families.

That is our commitment, because we are responding to questions that I hear back at home at the union hall and the VFW, the local Chamber of Commerce. People often ask me, when are you folks going to make another change in Washington? Now that you have balanced the budget, when are you going to stop the raid on social security?

Ever since LBJ needed to finance the Vietnam War effort and grow government with the Great Society, Washington has dipped into the social security trust fund to spend on other things. In our Republican balanced budget, we want to set aside 100 percent of social security for social security.

I am disappointed to note that in the President's budget, he only wants to set aside 62 percent, meaning that he wants to spend 38 percent of social security on other things. If we add that all up, over 10 years, that raid on social security totals \$340 billion.

I am also asked back home, when are folks going to start talking about paying down the national debt? I am pretty proud that last year we paid down \$50 billion of the national debt, above and beyond what was expected. This year we are going to pay down \$100 billion of the national debt, above and beyond what is expected.

Under the Republican balanced budget, we pay down over \$2.2 trillion of the national debt, over two-thirds of the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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national debt, over the next 10 years. That is progress, paying down the national debt.

I am also often asked, what about taxes? Taxes are too high. Forty percent of the average family's income goes to government today. Twenty-one percent of our economy is consumed by the Federal Government. That tax burden is too high, too unfair, too complicated.

Unfortunately, the President vetoed our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty on married working couples, to eliminate the death tax on family farmers, family businesses, because he wanted to spend the money. Now he says he wants to raise taxes by \$238 billion so he can spend more. That is really what we are getting down to in the last few days of this session of Congress. We are getting down to some real fundamental issues.

If we look at the President's budget and the Democratic budget, as well as the Republican budget, there is a big difference. We had a key vote last week. We chose between government waste and social security. We made a commitment that we are willing to cut waste, fraud, and abuse in government by 1 percent, reducing the Federal budget 1 cent on the dollar in order to stop the raid on social security.

That is a fundamental, key vote, because when we think about it, do we want to waste our dollars, or protect social security? We voted in the Republican majority to save social security.

What I was very concerned about is recently the leader of the Democrats, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) said, and I will quote, "I understand that there is a feeling now that since we have a surplus and since we have to get ready for the baby boomers, that we really ought to try to spend as little bit as possible." What is interesting is he is saying he is willing to spend social security on other things.

Our commitment is to stop the raid on social security. That is an important commitment, because when folks pay into their retirement security plan, called social security, they expect when it is their turn it is going to be there. Washington has been raiding the social security trust fund for far too long.

I was very pleased to note that the Chief of Staff to the President understands what we want to do. The Republicans' key goal is not spend the social security surplus.

Let us work together. We can work in a bipartisan way. Let us stop the raid on social security, let us balance the budget and stop the raid on social security.

THE AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, many of us have come to the House floor one after another talking about lowering the high cost of prescription drugs, especially for the elderly and underinsured. Unfortunately, Republicans have simply refused to join Democrats to fight the drug companies and reduce these high prices and help protect public health.

Let us look at the numbers. More than 75 percent of Medicare beneficiaries have no coverage or inadequate MediGap coverage for prescription drugs. At least one-third of Medicare beneficiaries have no drug coverage at all. Forty-four million Americans do not have health insurance. That means they also, obviously, do not have coverage to help pay the high cost of prescription drugs.

Meanwhile, drug companies charge Americans higher prices, in many cases twice as high, sometimes three times, four times, five times as high, compared to prices paid by the citizens of any other industrialized Nation.

An average dosage, 60 tablets of Zocor for high cholesterol, costs \$44 in Canada and \$102 in the United States. One month's supply of Tamoxifen for breast cancer sells for \$156 in the United States and only \$12 in Canada.

The drug industry repeatedly tells the American people that any reduction in prices will cause them to dramatically curtail and cut back their research and development efforts. It is difficult for some of us to take these threats seriously. Who pays for a majority of research and development costs for new drugs in the United States, anyway? The answer is American taxpayers.

The fact is Congress, where the drug industry's multi-million dollar lobbying campaign and operation has such great influence, has granted this industry enormous tax breaks for research and development.

At the same time, the National Institutes of Health and non-governmental research organizations fund more than half of all research and development for drug companies without charge. Then drug companies take the information they patented and they market another new and very lucrative miracle drug to Americans, and charge them the highest prices in the world.

It is no secret what is going on here. Drug companies simply are doing what they need to do to maximize profits. Unlike every other industrialized nation in the world, the U.S. does not in any way tamper with or regulate drug prices. What is the effect? Drug companies charge us the highest prices of any country in the world by multiples of two, three, and even four times what other countries pay.

Who are the victims? The victims are always those with the least bargaining power: those without insurance, those who are elderly, those who are poorest. From a market perspective, what the drug companies are doing is appropriate. They are maximizing their profits. That is their job.

It is equally appropriate that Democrats in Congress are taking the lead in protecting seniors and the uninsured, and to address the ramifications of what drug companies are doing to the disadvantaged. That is our job.

Understand, again, 50 percent of all research and development costs for the research and development of new drugs in this country are paid for by taxpayers. Understand also that Congress has bestowed on those drug companies generous tax breaks on the money they do spend on research and development. Then understand that drug companies show their appreciation to American taxpayers by charging us two and three and four times what citizens of every other country in the world pay.

How can we lower prescription drug costs? We can lower prices through competition. I have introduced a bill that would permit competitors, that would permit generic companies to enter the market for drugs when they are unreasonably priced, whether the drug's patent has expired or not. The patent-holder would receive royalties for being the first on the market. Generic companies would compete with them, and Americans would receive a price break fueled by competition.

The bill would require drug companies to publicly disclose audited information justifying the prices that they do charge.

I urge my Republican colleagues to stop stonewalling. I urge them to join Democrats in lowering the cost of prescription drugs. Let us act before it is too late.

A SALUTE TO THE WORLD WAR II GENERATION AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, every day America is losing one of our most precious resources. This resource provided our country what it needed to overcome the economic calamity of the Great Depression. It was a resource that saved the world from the twin threats of Nazism and Japanese militarism, and then, when that job was done, turn to rebuilding a shattered planet and, when they deserved to let others pick up the load, they then went and took on communism, which for decades loomed as a threat to democratic government and individual rights everywhere.

I am, of course, talking about a generation, perhaps the greatest generation, of Americans, which is now passing from the scene. One year ago my father, Donald Rohrabacher, or Lieutenant Colonel USMC retired Don Rohrabacher died. Just a short-term ago, a friend of mine, Bob Smiley, Robert Smiley, Junior, lost his dad.

My dad joined the Marines in the Second World War. Robert Smiley,