

of any point of order, to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 75) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes, that the joint resolution be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations, and that the previous question otherwise be considered as ordered to passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). There will be 15 1-minutes on each side.

#### IT IS TIME THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS SUPPORT FLEXIBILITY FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, there is a Latin phrase that applies to those liberal Democrats who constantly believe that Washington always knows best: via ovicepitum dura est. For the engineers, "The way of the egghead is hard."

Mr. Speaker, it is time our liberal colleagues support the education opportunities that grant our local school districts the flexibility to decide how to spend their Federal education funding.

We are all aware of the Administration's plan to hire 100,000 new teachers, and we can all agree that hiring more qualified teachers should be a priority. But what about books? What about computers? What about the basic things, like pencils and papers? What right do Washington bureaucrats have to deny school districts the option of using these funds for these necessities?

Mr. Speaker, we can do more to improve the education of our children by giving local school districts the flexibility and tools needed to make those improvements. Let us give our children the best education opportunity we can. Let us cut the Federal purse strings.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back all the egg-headed, cookie-cutter, liberal funding theories which cannot possibly meet the diverse needs and educational needs of our children.

#### REPUBLICANS HAVE KILLED CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM AND CONTINUE TO BLOCK AN INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, Americans have enjoyed an unprecedented growth in our economy over 8 years. We have the lowest unemployment rate in decades, but 12 million workers, 10 percent of all American workers, work at the minimum wage. The majority of them are adults, a majority are women.

Most of those women are trying to bring up children at that minimum wage with less than \$10,000 a year. They have not seen any benefit from the economic boom. They deserve a wage increase, and they can only get that wage increase by increasing the minimum wage by this Congress.

Eighty percent of Americans favor doing that. Even two-thirds of all Republicans favor doing that. We have a bill that would raise the minimum wage by \$1 over the next 2 years. It should pass. It could pass in a day, but the Republican leadership is going to hold that bill hostage unless it is possible to give \$70 billion per year of tax cuts to the handful of Americans who make more than \$300,000 a year. That tax reduction goes to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

Why is this? Members guessed it, the handful of Americans who make more than \$300,000 a year make the vast majority of contributions to political campaigns.

The Republican leadership of this Congress, the House and Senate, have killed campaign finance reform again this year.

#### AFRICA TRADE BILL: AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see the African Growth and Opportunity Act passed yesterday, overwhelmingly passed, and it has now passed both chambers of Congress.

We need to get to work, Mr. Speaker, on putting together a Senate-House conference committee on this bill so we can get it to the President for signature. This legislation is a first step in helping Africa help itself by bringing the continent into a positive trading partnership with the United States.

As the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, as well as an original cosponsor of the bill in the House, I can say that passage of this historic bill is good for Africa and it is good for America.

In addition to bringing Africa into a trading partnership with us, it will help open African markets to American goods. America today has only 5 percent of Africa's market. France and other European nations dominate the continent's trade. With this bill, the U.S. will be able to pry some of the African markets away from Europe. This will lead to tens of thousands of new jobs for Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge quick formation of a House and Senate con-

ference committee on this bill so we can get it to the President for signature.

#### IT IS TIME CONGRESS WRITES THE LAWS, NOT NEW YORK JUDGES

(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, judges in New York have ruled that Mayor Giuliani shall give \$7.2 million to the Brooklyn Museum of Art, even though their exhibit is offensive. I will say it is offensive, a portrait of the Virgin Mary splattered with elephant dung.

If that is not bad enough, now taxpayers have to subsidize it. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. In the name of art and freedom of expression, these stumbling, bumbling, fumbling judges in New York have institutionalized perversion.

The museum may have the right to show it, but by God, the taxpayers should not be compelled to fund it. It is time that Congress starts writing laws, not these judges. I yield back the stupidity, absolute stupidity and perversion, of the decision of these judges in New York.

#### ASKING THE PRESIDENT TO DO THE RIGHT THING

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, as usual, the gentleman from Ohio is absolutely right.

I address my comments to another topic, however. In the coming days, the President is going to have to do some critical things and make some critical decisions. He can choose to support a Republican program that balances the budget and saves social security, or he can succumb to the pressure of the liberal Democrat leadership here in the House and bust the budget and loot the social security trust fund once again.

To the average hard-working American taxpayer, this should not really be a dilemma, but this is Washington, and silly things happen here. When liberals get together to discuss spending issues, it is awfully hard to keep their hands off of the taxpayers' money.

The President talks about his legacy. He can assure his place in history if he stands up to his free-spending friends and says no to budget-busting and no to more increases and raids on the social security trust fund.

Let us hope that just this once, the President does the right thing.

#### REPUBLICANS HAVE ALREADY SPENT \$17 BILLION OF SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUS

(Mr. BERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, it would have been amusing the last few weeks if it had not been so sad listening to our Republican colleagues swearing to protect social security. This charade continues, despite the fact that the Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that the Republicans have already spent \$17 billion of the social security surplus.

Remember, that \$17 billion loan does not include the Republicans' \$1 trillion tax cut. It does, however, include Senator TRENT LOTT's ship that the Navy does not need, does not want, and does not have the people to man if they had it.

It does include over \$1 million to study the spruce bark beetle. In fact, according to the CBO, if the President had not vetoed the tax bill, we would have already raided the social security trust fund by at least \$70 billion, without counting any of the other billions and billions and billions that my spendthrift Republican colleagues have passed this year.

With all this spending and all this borrowing, how can my Republican colleagues get up here with a straight face and say they are saving social security? The American people know better.

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THE WORLD REMAINS A DANGEROUS PLACE, AND THE PRESIDENT REFUSES TO ABIDE BY THE WILL OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to be amazed by the lax defense policies of this administration. Today our Navy has more than 200 fewer ships than during Desert Storm. Red China has six times our land forces and North Korea has developed a missile that delivers weapons of mass destruction to U.S. territory, and now the Clinton administration says it will ignore the vote of the Senate, abide by the rejected test ban treaty, just as they ignored H.R. 4 that calls for a missile defense.

Despite the fall of the Soviet Union, the world remains a dangerous place. Yet under President Clinton the will of the Congress is ignored and defense spending has not even kept pace with inflation. We must insist that the President follow the will of the Congress regarding national defense; modernize our weaponry and above all, above all, increase pay and benefits so that no soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines have to rely on food stamps to feed their families.

WE MAY LOSE HMO REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). For what purpose does the gen-

tleman from Arkansas seek recognition?

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am from Texas.

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to follow my colleague, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) because they are the ones that wanted to cut defense spending by 1 percent last week.

What I am here today about concerns what we are seeing that is happening. Despite a strong bipartisan vote in favor of HMO reform, the overwhelming and public support across the country, the leadership has shown it is still looking for a way to cut and eliminate real HMO reform.

The Republican leadership scheduled a bill that automatically linked to it a Patients' Bill of Rights, supposedly their patient access, but the House spoke by a bipartisan vote and passed a bipartisan measure for real HMO reform. Now we see the Republicans have stacked the conference committee with only one Member who voted for the bill, only one Member.

What is so sad is that they are overruling the whole majority in this House. Clearly, our fight for HMO reform is just beginning. We may have won the first battle but we have a big battle to go. By appointing only those Members who oppose it, they want to bury it again. They are neglecting the American people by a large majority, and this House, by a large majority, wants binding external appeals. They want open communication with our doctors and patients. They want accountability to whoever makes those medical decisions.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair wishes to apologize to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) and to the people of Texas.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. ARMY COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR RONALD W. BEDFORD, A REAL AMERICAN HERO

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

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) that this Republican Congress has added about \$38 billion more than the President of the United States has requested for defense, but I would like to speak on something else.

Mr. Speaker, our society has cheapened the name of heroes today by elevating millionaire movie, music and sports stars while ignoring those Americans who perform unselfish acts of courage and sacrifice.

I wish to pay tribute to an American whose character and actions are truly unselfish acts of courage and sacrifice. On September 2, the 54th anniversary of VJ-Day, U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Ronald W. Bedford began a 1,500-mile journey from Mobile, Alabama, to Washington, D.C.

His walk, which takes him through six States and the District of Columbia, is remarkable because it is entirely on foot. But CSM Bedford is not walking this enormous distance to set any record. Instead, he is striding the 71-day route to bring attention to and raise funding for the construction of a national memorial to honor America's greatest generation of heroes, those who fought in World War II.

Bedford, an ex-airborne infantryman now stationed at Fort Rucker, Alabama in my congressional district, came up with the idea of the walk after learning that there was no national memorial for the 16 million Americans who served and sacrificed to liberate the world from Nazi and Japanese occupation in World War II. His efforts to help raise money for the on-going World War II Memorial fund have gained the support of the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, and the praise of former Senator Bob Dole, who chairs the World War II Memorial Committee.

CSM Bedford's journey of 2,792,000 steps will take him through 144 cities and 15 military installations before he arrives at Arlington National Cemetery on November 11. From there, he will cross Memorial Bridge, pass by the Lincoln Memorial, and then proceed to the spot on the national mall where the World War II Memorial will be built next year.

I salute the Sargent Major for his personal sacrifice and welcome him to Washington, D.C.

NO MORE DEADBEAT LEADERSHIP

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership was irresponsible in trying to spend the surplus on \$800 billion worth of tax breaks for the wealthiest in this country. Now it is trying to skip town without addressing the needs of American families.

The failures of this Republican leadership are many. Their budget does not extend the life of Social Security by a single day. It fails to strengthen Medicare with not even a penny to provide for a prescription drug benefit for seniors who are desperately looking for that kind of a benefit. The Republican leadership has ignored American families. Families overwhelmingly support common sense gun safety laws that keep firearms out of the hands of kids and of criminals.

The Republican leadership has allowed the special interests to write our gun laws. Common sense should be applied when it comes to the safety of our schools, of our neighborhoods, of office buildings and places of worship. This Congress should not adjourn without closing the loopholes that let guns fall