

Blass. He has been an inspiration to the lives of his fellow countrymen, as well as for our entire South Florida community.

In honor of his 15th anniversary as president of the American Peruvian Action Committee, I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to Cesar "Eddy" Blass.

AMERICANS DESERVE TO HAVE ISSUES THEY CARE ABOUT MOST ADDRESSED

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this Republican Congress is failing American families.

The gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) originally promised that the Republican-controlled Congress would finish work on the budget nearly 2 months ago. Yet, they continue to sit here and waste our time with political stunts.

The American people have become used to a Republican Congress that is no longer just a "do nothing" Congress, but a "do the wrong thing" Congress.

Americans deserve a budget; they deserve to have the issues they care about most addressed. There is positive legislation that our constituents are asking us to bring to the House floor. We could be saving Social Security, building new schools, reducing classroom size. We could be increasing the minimum wage so that workers can provide for their families. We could be ensuring patients' rights and putting the care back into health care. Instead, we are mired down in partisan rhetoric and debate.

Mr. Speaker, the people of southeast Texas and I have been waiting for over 5 weeks for the Republicans to finish the budget, but we cannot wait much longer. They need to quit stalling and together let us get the people's business done.

EDUCATION SPENDING BILL

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, there are few issues in America more important than education. And in fact, the White House and Congress really do not disagree on the amount of money that we ought to spend on schools in this year's appropriations process. But what is holding up the debate is the question of how to spend those dollars.

The Republican party clearly believes that governors and State legislators, school board members, and principals and superintendents ought to be free to spend the dollars that we are appropriating as they see fit. But the President has a different idea. He wants to tell States specifically how they must spend the money.

In some States, hiring more teachers makes sense. In other States, it might not. But here is the President's answer to the question put by a reporter: "Mr. President, on the issue of funding for teachers, sir, you resent it when Congress tells you to spend money in ways which you do not deem appropriate. Why should a state governor who would like to spend that money differently feel any differently?"

The President's answer: "Well, because it's not their money."

When you have an attitude like that in Washington that the taxpayers' money belongs to Washington and not the taxpayers, it explains how the White House is willing to squander the American tax dollars in a way that neglects children and abandons our schools.

SAY YES TO AGENDA FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, in response to the previous speaker, I sat yesterday with the superintendent of schools in the city of Portland and members of the school committee in Portland, Maine; and they do not want block grants. They want class size reduction above all else.

Mr. Speaker, this session is winding down and the Republican Congress has a sorry record. We have not done very much this session, and much of what we have done has been done wrong.

Many Democrats worked hard to pass campaign finance reform with the help of some Republicans here, but the leadership has killed it. Democrats tried to make our schools safer by passing modest gun safety laws, but Republicans said no. Democrats have worked to make health care safer for patients by passing a patients' bill of rights, but Republicans said no.

Democrats in this administration tried to make the world safer by ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Republicans said no. Democrats have been working hard to get prescription drug legislation passed, but Republicans in the Committee on Ways and Means the other day said no.

Next year let us say yes to an agenda for American families. Let us say yes and get this agenda enacted.

AMERICAN FAMILIES DESERVE BETTER

(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 majority has failed to act on the basic issues facing hard-working Americans. The Republican leadership started the year by trying to spend the surplus on an \$800 billion tax break for the wealthiest Americans, and they did

this despite the fact that we need to strengthen and protect Social Security and Medicare. Their current plan fails to extend the life of Social Security by even one day. It neglects the need for a Medicare prescription drug benefit and hurts every American family in some way.

The Republican leadership stifles common sense gun safety measures like child safety locks and background checks at gun shows, despite the fact that 13 children are killed every single day by guns. The Republican leadership is siding with the gun lobby and letting gaping loopholes remain open.

This Congress should not leave town before its work is done.

The Republican leadership should listen to the public, enact sensible gun safety laws, strengthen Social Security and Medicare, pass a prescription drug benefit bill and a minimum wage bill. Our families deserve better.

RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, we have all heard of the three Rs when it comes to education. Let me add a fourth R: responsibility, because responsibility is the key. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States, responding to the press when it comes to judicious spending of educational dollars said, and I quote, "Well, because it is not their money."

Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle ought to understand both the arithmetic and the responsibility. My liberal friends want the money to be controlled by the educational bureaucrats in Washington. We in the common sense, conservative majority say the money should be spent at home, first and foremost by teachers in the classrooms, by superintendents in the districts, and yes, by governors in the States, along with the respective superintendents of public education. Because while education is a national priority, it ultimately is a local concern.

Mr. Speaker, the President and my liberal friends should join with us to make sure that local control and responsibility is paramount.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOW MICROSOFT TO CONTINUE TO INNOVATE FOR AMERICANS

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I am calling on the United States Justice Department to put away any dream of breaking up Microsoft. Microsoft and its employees should not be punished for being one of the most creative, dynamic teams of people in American economic history.

Mr. Speaker, many of the people who work at Microsoft live in my district, and I can say with confidence that they are undaunted by this struggle, they are focused, and I am confident that their team will continue to bring new products to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, the American consumer has benefited amazingly by the innovation that is taking place in this industry. Computers are more powerful, software is more powerful, and more people have access to the Internet every day.

There is competition in this industry, and if my colleagues do not believe me, look at the stock market where millions are putting their hard-earned dollars investing in Microsoft's competitors, and that is fine. But, Mr. Speaker, consumers are enjoying the benefits of a vigorous electronic industry.

The Federal Government should put away any scheme to dismember the most creative, the most dynamic industry in the history of the world.

SQUEEZING A NICKEL OUT OF FIVE DOLLARS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, if a schoolboy gives his favorite teacher an apple, she will probably take a small bite out of it, something like that, just modest.

Now, if the taxpayer, his parents send the same apple in the form of tax dollars to the Federal Government, this is what they deem as their fair share, and that is the debate we are in today.

What we are asking is that the Department of Education, just like all the other Federal agencies, get \$5 and squeeze a nickel out of it.

Now, I am a father of four. I have two teenagers and two who still love me. We have to sit around the kitchen table every night to come up with ways to save money. Mr. Speaker, if we can buy our gas for \$1.07 a gallon, we go two more blocks so we do not have to pay \$1.10. I do not buy new suits until they are on sale, and my colleagues might be thinking, well, I hope there is a sale coming up soon.

I do not get a steak when I go out to eat; I get chicken, and we do not buy Special K unless we get the 35 cents off coupon.

All we are asking of the Department of Education and all of the Federal bureaucracies in Washington is to find that little old nickel out of the \$5 so that we can save Social Security.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, when I came to Capitol Hill 10 months ago to represent my hometown of Las Vegas, I made a promise to fight for the fastest growing senior population in the country and for all of the working families like mine that have moved to Las Vegas in search of a better life.

There are two pieces of unfinished business that are critical to my district, a patients' bill of rights and the prescription drug coverage for southern Nevada citizens.

Over and over again I hear from my constituents, from working parents worried about health care coverage for their families, from seniors having to choose between buying food and buying medicine. They need help and they do not care about Washington politics. The patients' bill of rights is a bipartisan issue because everybody should be able to determine the best course of medical treatment and consultation with their own doctor. If HMOs make decisions like doctors, they should be held legally accountable like a doctor.

We need to enact a bill that protects the patients' bill of rights, not the HMO's bottom line. We need to pass a bill to ensure prescription drug coverage for seniors. We did a cost survey and found that uninsured seniors in my district pay two, three, or four times the price that insured seniors pay for some of the most common prescription drugs. These drugs keep them alive, but financially it is killing them.

I stand up for all of the seniors in my district.

MORE UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

(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, a few days ago I counted down the hours that we had remaining in this session, and I asked the question of what we could do for our young people in providing them safe schools. And I ask now the question with maybe less than 24 hours in this session, at least as we know it, whether or not this Congress is going to be known as having done good or having harmed the American people.

The question is, are we going to pass what the American people have asked us to, which is a patients' bill of rights, so that we can stop once and for all drive-by emergency rooms, so that we can give women the right to have their OB-GYN as their primary provider, so that we can have second opinions, so that we can reestablish the patient-physician relationship. While all of our loved ones are under the care of a physician, how tragic it is for them to have to call for a procedure and someone at a phone who does not even know who they are says no, you cannot have it.

We need a patients' bill of rights. I did a study in my district, and how unfortunate it is that my seniors are

having to pay light bills and having to pay rent, but cannot buy their prescriptions, of having to cut their prescriptions in half. What a tragedy. Yes, Mr. Speaker, is it not unfortunate that we do not have real gun safety in America when 80 percent of the American people say we want reasonable gun safety and we want our children to be safe in schools.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am really stunned to listen to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about the fact that the 106 Congress has not accomplished much of anything. I guess that is sort of their message today. So it is incumbent upon us to point out, once again, the great accomplishments that we have made in this Congress.

At the beginning, Speaker HASTERT stood right here on the opening day and talked about the need to improve public education. We have done that by passing the Education Flexibility Act so that local school districts can make decisions as to how to best educate their children. We passed the Teacher Empowerment Act, which also moves further in that direction.

Tax relief for working families. We did it; we did it. People are taxed more than they ever have been since the Second World War, and the President unfortunately vetoed that measure and the Democrats on the other side of the aisle voted against it. We said that we wanted to save Social Security and Medicare, and we all know that we have locked up the Social Security Trust Fund for the future, going well beyond the 62 percent that the President advocated when he stood here in his State of the Union message.

And rebuilding our Nation's defense capability. We passed the National Missile Defense bill, which is very, very important to our national security, and the Defense appropriations bill. We have accomplished a lot in this 106th Congress, and do not forget it.

GOP BUDGET GIMMICKS

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, as the GOP leadership in Congress struggles to complete its appropriations work, now a full 40 days past the end of the fiscal year, I thought it fitting to examine their record of Social Security budget gimmicks this year. There simply are not enough apples in this city to demonstrate adequately what the Republican Party is doing here. They simply take apples from one basket and, before they put it in the other,