

Return of Big Government." He declared the era of big government over just a couple of years ago, and now he is back with guns blazing: The return of big government.

We need to save Social Security, we need to reduce the debt, and we need to return to the American taxpayers some of the overpayment they are making.

PUTTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE FIRST

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

Ms. STABENOW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge our Republican colleagues to join with us in putting Social Security and Medicare first. We have come together to balance the budget, and we now have an extraordinary opportunity to take the next step in fiscal responsibility and make sure that our children and our grandchildren are protected for the future.

We need to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are protected first, and then we as Democrats will join and in fact lead the fight for tax cuts for middle class families. But, first and foremost, we need to pay down the debt and protect Social Security and Medicare.

We ask our Republican colleagues to join us in this critical, critical issue for the future of our children and our grandchildren.

THE SURPLUS BELONGS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise in response to the eloquent words of my Democratic colleague to say that yes, we too want very much to put Social Security and Medicare first. In fact, the chairman of our Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), has made it clear that he shares the goal of seeing that 62 percent figure, which the President called for in his State of the Union message, to shore up and ensure the strength of Social Security. At the same time, we have an overcharge, and the American people deserve a rebate.

Neither the administration nor Republicans in the Congress anticipated the tremendous flow of revenues that have come into the Federal Treasury as a by-product of the tremendous economic growth which has taken place because of the policies of this Congress and, yes, in working with the President.

But the fact is, the money belongs to the American people and we should do everything that we possibly can to ensure that that overcharge is in fact rebated. But we do share that priority of strengthening Social Security and Medicare, ensuring that we improve

public education, strengthening our national defense capability, and, of course, reducing that tax burden on working families.

PUT SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

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

Mr. WYNN. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to talk about the major problem facing American society, and that is how we deal with our aging population. I believe that the American population wants us to deal with the real problems, and that is Social Security and Medicare, and we must put that first. That is what the Democrats are proposing, that we solve the problem of Social Security first.

Now, on the Republican side of the aisle we have a reincarnation of that old TV show, "Tax Relief for the Rich." How can we figure out a way to give more money to the wealthy?

The public should not be fooled. This is not an across-the-board tax break. Look, if you are in the middle class, the average return that you will see is about \$100. Sixty percent of Americans will only get a tax return of \$100. But if you make over \$300,000, you will get \$20,000.

Who benefits from this so-called tax increase? The very wealthy. And that is the theme that the Republicans have repeatedly put forth: Tax relief for the wealthy, or as I like to call it, Robin Hood in reverse. We should put Social Security first and deal with the real problems of American society.

PROPOSED DEMOCRATIC BUDGET A SHAM

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, the American public today is once again seeing what I consider to be really a sham and the downside of politics. One year ago, President Clinton said Social Security first, so Republicans matched the President and we said we are going to have a 90/10 plan: Of surplus dollars that would be available, 90 percent to Social Security, 10 percent to tax cuts.

We were beaten up on the floor of this House. "That is not enough. Ten percent to the rich Americans." Now the President, a year later, is saying Social Security now, 62 percent.

We as Republicans and as conservatives are going to match the President. We are trying to work with him. We believe that if that is the figure he is going to select, that is the figure we are going to stick with. And yet what the American public is being told is that Republicans are trying to give tax cuts to the rich. I hope America is listening.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS NEEDED

(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. Madam Speaker, we are hearing a lot about bipartisan efforts this year, and I hope that is true. But last year as chairman of the Republican Health Tax Force in the 105th Congress our Speaker produced a bill that was not bipartisan and did not become law because of that purpose. I hope the effort to work on a bipartisan matter on important issues like HMO reform is not a repeat of last year.

I do join my colleagues on the Democratic side saying we need to save Social Security first, but I want to talk about the general issue of bipartisanship.

This year, with the Republican majority even smaller, in part due to their inaction on HMO reform, the time is now to pass those reforms. This year we need to have a Patients' Bill of Rights that protects patients, eliminating the gag clause, providing timely appeals, guaranteeing access to specialists and emergency rooms, allowing doctors determine what is medically necessary, but also, more importantly, making the decision maker for our health care responsible.

Accountability is what we need. If the doctor is not making that decision, then whoever is making that decision needs to be accountable and they need to have the liability.

Let us see how this bill passes, and, if it does not have that accountability, then it is a sham.

WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS

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

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, many of us were quite excited about the President's State of the Union message. He pointed out many things that all of us need to be concerned about in addressing.

Our side of the aisle wants very much to save Social Security; so does this side of the aisle. Our side of the aisle wants to strengthen national defense, just as the President does. Our side of the aisle wants to solve Medicare for the long term, just as that side of the aisle does.

So I hope as the 106th Congress begins, that we can work together, not for political gain, but to solve the problems facing the American people.

I think we have a unique opportunity in this Congress to do exactly that, because our side of the aisle agrees with many of the things that the President said. I look forward to the 106th Congress, to help solve some of these very important issues.

MAKE EDUCATION THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

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

Ms. SANCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the President again for including school construction tax credits in his fiscal year 2000 budget. The bond proposals that he has offered are based on concepts included in the legislation I just introduced.

When our Nation is facing the most rapid student enrollment increases ever in our history, we must ask, are our schools prepared?

I remember education being a top priority for candidates and incumbents in this past election season. Well, let us keep those promises from the election. Let us make education our number one priority.

I have been on this floor a number of times recounting the horror stories from my own district, about teachers working in closets, about 50 kids in every classroom, about those portable classrooms littering our playground blacktops. The stories that I have told just are not happening in Orange County, California; I know they must be happening in your districts also.

So I encourage the Speaker and the leadership and the Democrats to find a solution to this problem. Please, cosponsor H.R. 415 and support school construction tax cuts. Our children need it.

THE BEST SCHOOLS AND MILITARY AGENDA

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, the Republican Party has a very good agenda, it is called BEST Schools and Military; B for balancing the budget, paying down the debt; E for excellence in education; S for saving Social Security; and T for lowering taxes, with the strongest military in the world.

We want to work with the President. I was encouraged with his State of the Union speech. But when the President starts getting obligations to the whacky fringe left, I get scared, because it scares my middle class voting constituency back home.

Yesterday the President said something very curious. He said we could give the budget surplus back to you and hope that you spend it right.

Who is he? Who are we to tell the American people we do not trust you with your money? This is the whacky fringe left at its best.

I believe the American taxpayers, the hard working, middle class moms and dads throughout the country, can spend their money quite well, without a bunch of busybody Washington bureaucrats telling them "We are smarter than you because we are elected and we are going to spend your money."

I disagree with the President. I think the American people can spend their money better than Congress in many cases.

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SAVING THE BUDGET SURPLUS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE—NOT GOP TAX CUTS

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

Mr. SHOWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to stress my strong support of using the budget surplus for saving Social Security and Medicare first.

We are not out of the woods yet on protecting Social Security, and to squander money away from the budget surplus to pay for a large indiscriminate tax cut would be irresponsible and would further put our Social Security system at risk.

I support tax cuts, but we have to target them where we need them. Target them for working families. Target them for business and development, and for research and development.

We must not put our Social Security system at risk. Saving Social Security first is my number one priority for the people of Mississippi's 4th District and it should be our number one priority as a Congress for the American people.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I have good news about my city and yours. This morning's paper reports that the District of Columbia has a \$450 million surplus and a clean audit. Yes, this is the same city that needed a control board three years ago and clearly does not need one now.

The District will not even have to use the authority Congress gave it to borrow and eliminate an operating deficit. The city will pay down that large deficit from its own revenue. The surplus is by no means all a matter of a good economy. Cuts in government redundancy and waste and improved tax collections have had a lot to do with it.

The District has a new mayor and a reinvigorated city council. A quiet revolution is in progress in the city where this House lives, right under our noses. Look for me to come to the floor often to tell my colleagues what they need to know and, I am sure, what they want to hear about a Nation's Capital where all can be proud.

SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

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

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, there is no better example of the loss of trust in government than our Social Security program. Social Security is one of the great accomplishments of our government in this century and one of the most successful programs in our history.

When Social Security was passed more than 60 years ago, a majority of the elderly lived in poverty, lived in fear of destitution in old age, and it was a fear that was crippling all of society. Today, Social Security benefits not just those who depend on Social Security primarily to put food on their table, but it benefits all of society.

Yet, in my district in New Jersey, and I believe in most of my colleagues' districts, we would be hard put to find anyone who thinks they will get a dime from Social Security for all of the taxes they have paid. That skepticism shows the serious problem of trust we face.

We must restore faith in this fundamental Federal program. That is why we must save Social Security first before we turn to tax cuts.

PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, in 1992, the Republicans' mantra when I was running for election the first time was deficit and national debt and the harm it was causing to our children and our children's future. Being the realist that I am, I came here and got immediately involved in doing away first with our deficit. The 1993 budget passed with only Democratic votes, and got us on the road to where we are today with a surplus. We did what we were supposed to do. We came up with a surplus. That is our challenge now.

What does the majority party do? What are they proposing? Rather than saving Social Security and in so doing, reducing the national debt, they return to their real mantra of spending our surplus on tax cuts, tax cuts that will give two-thirds of the wealthiest people in this Nation the benefit. It will give the top 10 to 20 percent of the well-off two-thirds of the benefit.

This will not reduce our national debt. It will not protect Social Security.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DENVER BRONCOS

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, this past Sunday in the Super Bowl, the Denver Broncos defeated the Atlanta Falcons 34 to 19. It was a hard-fought game, and the Atlanta Dirty Birds came up a little short.