

and four Purple Hearts. Although highly decorated, LtCol Wawrzyniak loved the Marines he served with and never rested on his laurels, always giving one hundred and ten percent in every situation.

After dropping out of high school, LtCol Wawrzyniak enlisted in the US Navy. After serving 23 months in the Navy he was released from active duty in September 1946. Three days later he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He went to China in the late '40's and entered the Korean War. In two tours with the 5th Marines in Korea he was awarded two Navy Crosses, a Silver Star and three Purple Hearts, by the end of the war he was a Master Sergeant.

In 1953, MSgt. Wawrzyniak was commissioned a Marine Second Lieutenant while serving at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

In the years between his commissioning and his time in Vietnam, "Ski" went through the Basic Officers school, Underwater Demolition, Mountain Leadership Training—where he broke his spine on a mountain drop, yet hiked out unassisted. Evasion, Escape and Survival school—where he led his team in avoiding capture for the entire four day period, and where he finished first in his class. As a matter of fact, he finished first in a lot of things, such as Army Airborne School and Army Ranger School.

LtCol Wawrzyniak's experience in Airborne Training (Jump School) illustrates his personality. Then Captain Wawrzyniak arrived at Jump School at the ripe old age of 35, at least 10 years older than most of his classmates. I'm sure his Army instructors must have thought that they had an easy drop out in Captain Wawrzyniak. They must have been quite surprised a month later when he left Jump School not only with jump wings on his chest, but with the IRON MIKE trophy in his fist—graduating number one in his class. Stan's logic was that he should graduate at the top of his class from these demanding schools because he was older and more experienced than his cohorts. That was typical Wawrzyniak logic.

In July, 1965 then Major Wawrzyniak embarked for Vietnam where he served in the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment where he was awarded two Bronze Stars and his fourth Purple Heart.

His accomplishments did not end with his career in the military. Perhaps his proudest legacy from his post-Marine Corps history were the strong relationships he had with his wife Adaline, his daughters, Bernadette and Paula, and sons Michael, Andrew and Stanley. With a career that although distinguished, would have strained even the strongest of family ties, Stanley took the time to mend the relationships that were most important to him.

Shortly after his retirement and until the time of his death LtCol Wawrzyniak's two youngest sons were living in the Swansboro, North Carolina area and working in the building trades. Stan went to work as a foreman with the same contractor who employed his sons. This gave him the opportunity to accomplish two things that were very important to him. First he was able to work side by side with his sons and re-build his relationships with them that had suffered during his long service related separations. Second he was able to build homes. For a man whose entire life had been spent at war in foreign countries, the sense of accomplishment he felt from building homes

was enormous. The fact that he did it side by side with his sons made it doubly important to him.

LtCol Stanley Wawrzyniak's nature can be described by the quote from perhaps the most famous of all Marines, General Chesty Puller: "The real rewards of military service are not the medals you wear on your chest. The real rewards are the looks in the eyes of men who have served with you, men who understand the nature of your service, men who have observed your actions in the most stressful of conditions and have seen the depth of your character."

It is my honor to have such men and women serving in the United States Marine Corps, and residing in my district. Stanley Wawrzyniak is a man who is sorely missed, and greatly appreciated.

MAKING COMMUNITIES MORE LIVABLE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, my goal in Congress is for the Federal Government to be a better partner with State and local governments, the private sector and individual citizens to make our communities more livable. This issue is moving to the center of the American political scene in part because of the attention that has been given to this by the administration, Vice President GORE in particular, but even more important because of the large grassroots pressure that has been building around the country as evidenced by over 240 local and State initiatives in the last election. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Part of the evidence of this growing movement for livable communities has been the attention that has been given by the national media. One of the best and most prominently featured articles was on the front page of the Sunday Washington Post this weekend which cited the new citizens, the new economy, and the new issues that are part of a new and growing awareness in the State of California.

Yet despite this characterization of all this being new, quality of life is truly one of our oldest and most enduring issues. But whether it is a new emerging issue or one of timeless political concern, it is time for Congress to address livability now. We need to get beyond the soundbite focus that are driven by partisan politics catering to narrow special interests. It seems, sadly, to dominate our activities here.

So far this month we have had some of the worst of examples, where Americans concerned by violence on our schoolgrounds saw us respond by attempting to weaken our gun safety laws and by posting the 10 Commandments in school yards, something that is not going to inspire much confidence in the minds of most American families.

We do not have to make up issues or shy away from real problems. There are simple, common-sense approaches for dealing with livable communities.

In the area of gun violence, we can approach it the same way that we have reduced auto deaths and injury on our roads. We can make a huge difference in the three-quarter million Americans who have been killed by gun violence since 1960. An American government that has been able to take action to childproof aspirin bottles and cigarette lighters ought to be ashamed that there are more product safety protections for toy guns than for real guns. We can start by simply passing the legislation already approved by the United States Senate to close the gun show loophole and make it harder for children to get their hands on guns.

We can make strides to make our communities more livable dealing with the built environment. All the time and money the Federal Government spends on physical infrastructure can be planned regionally and coordinated with our State, local and private partners.

We can make the problems of air quality and traffic congestion better, not simply throwing money at them and in some cases actually making them worse. We can help manage the entire water cycle rather than have a flood insurance program that pays people to live where God does not want them despite being flooded out repeatedly. Most important, we can have the Federal Government practice what we preach, where we locate Federal buildings, how we manage our land.

We could even take the radical step of having the Post Office obey local land use laws, zoning codes and work with local communities across the country before they make locational decisions that can have a devastating impact on Main Street America.

Making our communities more livable is everybody's job, and it ought to start with Congress doing our part. We will feel better, and America will be better for our efforts.

ELIMINATE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I represent a very, very diverse district, a series of communities on the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs, Cook and Will Counties, industrial communities like Joliet and a lot of suburban towns, as well as cornfields and grain elevators. The folks back home have a pretty clear message even in such a diverse district. They want us to meet our challenges and work together and come up with solutions.

That is why they are so proud of what this Congress has accomplished in the last 4½ years, with balancing the

budget for the first time in 28 years, cutting taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years, reforming welfare for the first time in a generation, and taming the tax collector by reforming the IRS for the first time ever. Those are real accomplishments and folks say, "Well, that's pretty good, but that's history. What are we going to do next?"

Well, this Congress and this Republican House have several very, very important goals. We want to strengthen and make our schools not only better but safer, we want to strengthen Social Security by locking away 100 percent Social Security revenues for Social Security. We want to pay down the national debt. And, of course, we want to continue working to lower taxes for the middle class and for working families. This year as we work to lower taxes and to lower the tax burden for middle-class families, I believe that the approach we should take is to address the unfairness in the tax code, because when I listen to the folks back home, whether in the union hall or the VFW, a local Chamber of Commerce or at a coffee shop in my hometown down on Liberty Street, people say that not only are their taxes too high, they complain about the complexity and the unfairness of the tax code.

I believe this series of questions really illustrates a key area of unfairness that we should make a priority in this Congress this year in getting the job done on eliminating this most unfair area of our tax code, that is why I want to explain why enactment of the Marriage Tax Elimination Act is so important with the question of fairness. Do Americans really feel that it is fair that under our tax code, married working couples pay more in taxes just because they are married? Do Americans feel that it is right that 21 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more under our Tax Code just because they are married, \$1,400 more than an identical couple with identical incomes who live together outside of marriage?

Clearly I think the American people agree that the marriage tax penalty is wrong and we need to set it right. The marriage tax is not only unfair, it is wrong. It is wrong that under our Tax Code you are punished for getting married. As I noted earlier, it affects 21 million married working couples on average \$1,400 in higher taxes just because they are married.

Let me give an example here of a couple in the south suburbs of Chicago. You have a case where a machinist and, of course, this particular machinist works at Caterpillar in Joliet, he makes the heavy machinery that we use to mine and dig things and build things. He makes \$30,500. If he is single, after the standard deductions and exemptions he is in the 15 percent tax bracket. But under our Tax Code because two working people who choose to get married, their incomes are combined and in fact you file your taxes

jointly, you are pushed into a higher tax bracket. This example of this south suburban couple, this machinist who meets and marries a schoolteacher in the Joliet public schools with an identical income of \$30,500, because under our Tax Code they combine their incomes and their combined income is \$61,000, pushes them into the 28 percent tax bracket. And because this machinist and this schoolteacher in Joliet, Illinois, in the south suburbs of Chicago chose to get married, they pay more in taxes. That is just wrong.

Of course I would like to point out that for this schoolteacher and this machinist in Joliet, \$1,400 is real money. \$1,400 is one year's tuition at Joliet Junior College, our local community college, and it is 3 months of day care at a local day care center. We need to eliminate that marriage tax penalty. It is wrong that under our Tax Code this machinist and schoolteacher end up paying higher taxes when they get married. Had they chose not to get married and just lived together, their taxes would have been \$1,400 less. That is just wrong.

Under the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, we eliminate this marriage tax penalty for this machinist and this schoolteacher. In fact, we do it by doubling the standard deduction. We also double the brackets so that joint filers can earn twice as much as a single filer and remain in each bracket. Had the Marriage Tax Elimination Act been law today, this machinist and schoolteacher would have seen the marriage tax penalty eliminated.

What is the bottom line? Mr. Speaker, in just a couple of weeks this House of Representatives will be working to pass the tax provisions for this year's balanced budget, the 3rd balanced budget in 30 years, thanks to a Republican Congress. I believe as we work to provide tax relief as part of this balanced budget, our first priority should be making the Tax Code fairer for this schoolteacher and this machinist by working to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

I am pretty proud of what we have accomplished. In 1996 we created as part of the Contract With America the \$500 per child tax credit benefiting 3 million Illinois children. This year let us help married working couples. Let us help Illinois families by eliminating the marriage tax penalty.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR SENIORS

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, today the President proposed a Medicare reform package that preserves what is fundamental about Medicare. It treats all seniors equally.

Unlike the privatization/voucher proposal that has resurfaced, the Presi-

dent's plan does not jeopardize the core Medicare program so many seniors depend on and it does not create different classes of coverage for seniors at different income levels. It does not abdicate our responsibility to seniors by turning the Medicare program over to private managed care plans, the same plans that dropped 400,000 seniors last year and are poised to do the same this year.

What the President's plan does do is provide prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare covers hospitalization, it covers doctors' visits, and, of course, it should cover prescription drugs. That is why we need to modernize Medicare. Prescription drugs are no longer supplemental to basic health care. They are integral to it. The President's proposal updates Medicare coverage to reflect modern medicine. The President's proposal is designed to make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors by covering half the cost of prescription drugs up to a \$2,000 cap.

The value of this benefit depends on one key variable, the sticker price of prescription drugs. Obviously higher prescription drug costs will exhaust the benefit much more quickly than lower prescription drug costs. That is where the drug companies, Mr. Speaker, come in. Drug companies are overpricing their products. This remains true regardless of how much these companies spend on research and development. By the way, we do not know how much drug companies spend on R&D because they have refused to disclose this information to the public or to this Congress.

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How do we know that drug companies overprice their products? Just look at their profits. Remember, these dollars are the dollars left over after research and development. Last year drug company profits outpaced those of every other industry by over 5 percentage points. Drug company profits last year were \$22 billion. Last year the CEO of Bristol-Myers Squibb made a \$1.2 million salary, a \$1.9 million bonus and \$30.4 million in stock options. Drug companies cannot continue to monopolize price their products and expect the American people to accommodate them.

Prescription drug coverage for seniors is critically important, but it is not intended to address, nor does it address, the market failure in prescription drug pricing that is driving up health care costs and hindering access to needed medications here and around the world. Drug companies can voluntarily price their products to promote access, which they are not doing, or they can disclose their costs and try to justify their windfall prices, which they are not doing, or they can continue to exploit their monopoly advantage, which they are doing, until Congress is forced to regulate their prices like a utility.