

to spend this pot of money. If the choice is between giving the money back to the people who earned it or spending it, the Democrats will spend it. Republicans will not spend it. They want to give it back to the people who earned it. It is their money in the first place.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO PAY OFF THE DEBT

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the last Speaker would say that if the money from the so-called surplus is left in Washington that Americans should not trust us because "we" would spend it. The last I heard, the Republicans were the "we". The Republicans are in the majority.

If the Republicans are so fractionalized, if they are so disorganized that basically they are saying we should take the surplus and get it out of here as quick as we can and stop us before we hurt the Nation any further, then I understand the argument.

But if it is that no matter what economist we might listen to, no matter what American we might talk to, the whole idea of the surplus is that the President says that we are close to \$4 trillion, we now have the ability to pay off some of that debt, and we should do that. And that is what we are talking about on our side.

BIPARTISAN WORKING GROUP TO TAKE COMPREHENSIVE LOOK INTO YOUTH VIOLENCE

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

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I am not a fan of these 1-minute speeches. Usually I do not do this. As we can all see, it devolves sometimes into a partisan food fight.

I come today to praise a bipartisan approach to the number one domestic issue, in my opinion, and that is youth violence. At the initiative of the Speaker of the House, working with the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the minority leader, they have appointed a bipartisan working group, 10 Republicans, 10 Democrats, co-chaired by the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), and I am the vice chairman of this group.

For the next 2 months we will look in a bipartisan way at a comprehensive approach to youth violence. Guns, school security, breakdown of the family, influence of the mass media, a comprehensive approach to do what we can in the Congress to address this critical issue in a bipartisan way.

We need more approaches like this one where we can work together, because we are all serving the same people.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BY ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES PRODUCE RESULTS

(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, the suspect for the heinous railroad killings has been caught. Resendez-Ramirez turned himself in to the INS installation in El Paso.

Let me applaud the collaboration of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with Don Clark leading the effort in Houston, Texas, along with U.S. Marshal Contreras, the Texas Rangers, and, of course, the INS. Collaboration among law enforcement agencies is extremely important.

It is extremely important to recognize that while this alleged perpetrator and killer will probably be indicted for murder, he is not representative of the hard-working, taxpaying immigrants who live in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to acknowledge the importance of collaboration between our law enforcement entities and to encourage the continuation of such collaboration which will, hopefully, correct the initial problem that allowed this gentleman, this person, to get away after crossing the border. We must fight illegal immigration but we must recognize the value of those hard-working immigrants.

I want to applaud again the collaborative work of our law enforcement agencies for a job well done.

FAIRNESS IN TAX CODE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AS WELL AS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I want to insist that as we look towards tax changes and towards the budget, we set first and foremost the priority of paying down the debt and of protecting Social Security and Medicare.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to address tax cuts, there is one which we should address first and foremost, and that has to do with restoring fairness to the tax code. Currently, a small number of States subsidize the rest of the Federal Government. Those States in which we have sales tax but no income tax pay higher taxes than those in other States with an income tax. The reason is that those with sales taxes are not allowed to deduct their sales tax from their Federal income tax returns. Some of the States include Washington State, my own, Tennessee, Nevada, Texas, and Florida.

Mr. Speaker, hard-working men and women and their families deserve the same tax break in those States as in the rest of the country. And if we are going to make changes to the tax code,

let us begin by restoring fairness, by allowing a simple change to the code and allowing people to deduct either their State income tax or the amount they pay in State sales tax from their Federal tax return.

REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS DIFFER IN CORE BELIEFS

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

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, today we are hearing the debate as to what we are going to do with the projected taxpayers' surplus. As Americans follow this debate, I think they should just be concerned with where we are going in our core principles.

In the way I view it, we have one side that agrees with personal freedom and the other side that wants more government control; one that says lower taxes, another that says we need higher taxes; limited government versus big government; economic growth versus bureaucratic growth here in Washington; more jobs across America or more red tape that will only stifle growth, stifle inhibition, stifle creativity and decrease the number of jobs.

So as we debate the taxpayers' surplus that the Americans have generated each and every day, let us remind ourselves of what the core principles are: Do we believe in the American people; do we believe in the American spirit; do we believe in economic growth? Or do we believe that total faith on how to spend the taxpayers' money should be made here in Washington?

WE SHOULD CONTINUE DOWN THE PATH OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad I am coming right after that last 1-minute. It is pure nonsense.

This \$864 billion bill that was reported out of the Committee on Ways and Means last night is fiscally irresponsible. It sacrifices the future of Social Security and also of Medicare on the altar of that kind of political hype from the Republicans.

Let me read from a Republican, his comment, the gentleman from Delaware. "I am not exactly sure in all of this," and I quote, "how Medicare is going to be solved. And there is no consideration for debt retirement; virtually no consideration for emergency spending. This is all very problematical. The size of it creates some real problems." And then he goes on to say that it is a political statement.

It is indeed a political statement. It gambles with the future of Social Security and it gambles with the future of Medicare. Look, that is not conservatism, it is fiscal radicalism. We need

to continue on the path of fiscal responsibility.

H.R. 2439, PREVENTING EXHAUSTION OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND SAVING MONEY

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, for all Americans who are struggling with new telephone area codes, I have introduced a bill, H.R. 2439, to prevent the exhaustion of telephone numbers and save the economy about \$150 billion in emergency remedial measures.

If the rate at which new telephone area codes are being introduced continues, we may run out of area codes as soon as the year 2007. If that occurs, we would be forced to add one more digit to all U.S. phone numbers. The FCC and other reliable sources estimates that the cost to the economy of adding an extra digit to all telephone numbers and reprogramming all computer networks and databases to recognize the expanded numbering format could be as high as \$150 billion, which is about the same cost as fixing the Y2K bug.

□ 1030

But unlike the Y2K problem, the coming crisis in telephone number allocation is entirely preventable. My bill requires the telephone company to stop wasting potential telephone numbers. It promotes competition by ensuring that consumers can take their telephone numbers with them if they choose to switch carriers. It restores the ability of consumers to dial only seven digits and reach anyone in their area code. And it will save the economy \$150 billion in unproductive emergency and preventable remedial action.

AMERICA SCREAMS OUT FOR US TO PROTECT OUR YOUTH

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is troubling, and there is a difference between the two parties. The Democrats want to try to solve Social Security, improve Medicare, and try to secure our youth from guns.

Each day in America 14 kids age 19 and under are killed by guns. In 1996, almost 5,000 juveniles were killed with a firearm. In 1997, 84 percent of the murder victims age 13 to 19 were killed with guns.

Mr. Speaker, 59 percent of the students in grades six through twelve know where to get guns if they want one. And it seems that no one cares about how many they get. Two-thirds of these students say they can acquire a firearm within 24 hours.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, that we address this issue and get on with the

concerns of the American people. Kids and guns do not mix, yet Republicans refuse to consider common sense gun safety measures that would only serve to protect kids. It is time for us to do it, Mr. Speaker. America screams out for us to protect our youth.

NO REASON FOR DEMOCRATS TO VOTE DOWN GUN CONTROL BILL

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) on the gun issue.

Many of us felt that it was important to close the loophole at gun shows. The question and the argument centered around the question—Is 24 hours reasonable to have a criminal history check?

I am from Michigan. In Michigan we have required a criminal history check to purchase a hand gun for the last 50 years. So the reasonableness of keeping guns out of the hands of felons is something I think most of us should agree on.

To close the loophole, at gun shows where individuals that are not licensed gun dealers sell guns to other individuals at the show, a law change is necessary. The suggestion that came from the Democratic side of the aisle to require 24 hours for a criminal history check.

I called the FBI. They reported that with the current 3 days, sometimes they miss that an individual has committed a felony. But what happens is the FBI immediately call the ATF, the local law enforcement, because they have committed two felonies. Once in their certification and once taking possession of a gun. They immediately go after them. They prosecute them. They confiscate the gun.

There was no reason for the Democrats to have voted down this gun control bill that would have closed this gun show loop-hole.

REPUBLICAN TRILLION-DOLLAR TAX BILL IS A DISGRACE

(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. Mr. Speaker, the Republican trillion-dollar tax bill is a disgrace. It is the height of irresponsibility. It is a trillion-dollar giveaway to the special interests and the high-rollers.

The Republican plan does nothing to protect Social Security. The Republican plan does nothing to strengthen Medicare. The Republican tax scheme does nothing to reduce our national debt.

We are at a crossroads in America. We have an historic opportunity to preserve and protect Social Security, to

strengthen Medicare, and to pay down this awful national debt. We should not, we cannot, and we must not let this historic opportunity pass us by.

We have balanced our national budget. We have put our economic house in order. The Republican tax scheme is irresponsible. It does not address our needs, and it will lead us down the road to economic disaster. The Republican plan is a dangerous and dark step backwards. It should be and it must be defeated, Mr. Speaker.

REPUBLICANS BELIEVE AMERICANS CAN BEST DECIDE HOW TO SPEND THEIR MONEY

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to simply say, my colleague is wrong. My colleague is questioning the motives of his friends and mine on the other side of the aisle.

We simply say this is the American people's money. They deserve to have it back. It is a very simple story. It is not about motives. It is about the fact that it is their money, they should have it back. It is not where it goes. It is whose it is. It is the American people's money. We have taken it from them.

We firmly believe on our side of the aisle that the American people can best decide how to spend their money, not the Government, not a group of bureaucrats in Washington.

HMO REFORM

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to ask my colleagues to stop lollygagging around and to pass meaningful HMO reform as quickly as possible.

Hundreds of Medicare beneficiaries have been dumped by their Medicare HMOs in Texas. Three healthcare plans that I know of, and there could easily be more, have decided not to renew their contracts with the Healthcare Financing Administration.

This is why Medicare HMO reform is needed ASAP. Congress needs to step up to the plate and enact legislation that ensures quality healthcare coverage for all our Nation's elderly. We need to make sure that treatment decisions are made by doctors, like my brother, not insurance company bureaucrats. Plus, we need to hold HMOs accountable for healthcare decisions that people or their doctors disagree with. We must keep Medicare HMOs at the forefront of this Congressional agenda.

LET US NOT GO OVERBOARD WITH IRRATIONAL TAX CUTS

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the