

this shell game. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support my legislation, which will wall off social security by removing it from the unified budget calculations.

WHY DO REPUBLICANS WANT TO GIVE TAX CUTS TO THE WEALTHY INSTEAD OF PROTECTING AND EXPANDING MEDICARE WITH THE BALANCE OF THE SURPLUS?

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY 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. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I have been pleased to hear some of my Republican colleagues express a willingness to go along with President Clinton's plan to devote 62 percent of the budget surplus to social security. But what I cannot understand is why they would rather take the rest of the surplus and give a tax break to the wealthy, instead of protecting and even expanding Medicare so that it covers prescription drugs.

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Before I was elected to public office, I served as director of the Illinois Council of Senior Citizens, and I learned a lot about how hard it can be to grow old in America. Making ends meet on Social Security is not easy, even if one is pretty healthy. But if someone has high blood pressure or diabetes or heart disease or cancer, they could be in real trouble. As any senior can tell us, there are many things Medicare does not pay for, including prescription drugs. In fact, seniors today are paying more of their incomes on health care than before Medicare was enacted in 1965.

Social Security and Medicare. They go hand-in-hand. Seniors understand this. The President understands this. Before giving away the surplus to the rich, I hope the Republicans will get it, too, and support our plan to protect Medicare.

CONGRESS SET TO ELIMINATE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, I rise to really announce some good news, and that is we are ready to make progress on some unfinished business, and that is the issue of eliminating discrimination against married working couples.

My colleagues, let us ask a few questions. Is it not time we eliminated the marriage tax penalty? Is it right—really, is it right—that under our Tax Code married working couples pay higher taxes just because they are married? Is it fair that 21 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more just

because they are married than an identical couple living together outside of marriage? In Illinois \$1,400 is one year's tuition at the local community college.

It is simply wrong we are punishing married working couples. Yesterday, we introduced H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, legislation that now has 224 cosponsors. Think about that; 224 cosponsors. How often do we have a majority of the House as cosponsors of legislation on its first day? That is good news.

I believe we can work together this year to eliminate the most unfair discrimination in the tax code. Let us work together, let us work in a bipartisan way, let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Madam Speaker, I include for the RECORD a letter from a constituent of mine and a press release from the Speaker of the House on the subject matter of my speech this morning.

JANUARY 6, 1999.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WELLER: Over the past year or so, my husband Shad and I have read with some surprise and some relief about your efforts to eliminate the "marriage tax penalty." When we set out to marry, no one warned us such a tax even existed on married couples. Our relief, of course, came in knowing that our U.S. Representative is trying to do something to right the wrong.

Shad and I are both teachers in Will County. Shad teaches 11th grade English and I teach junior high reading. Neither of us make a lot of money, but we are dedicated to our jobs and the children we teach. You can imagine our surprise when we realized how the marriage tax affects us. When we followed up with tax preparers and your staff, we learned that our 1997 salaries are facing a \$957.00 marriage tax penalty.

We have actually read articles in the paper where scholars have dismissed the marriage tax as inconsequential on a working family's day to day struggle to make ends meet. Instead, they argue that the amount of money lost to the government by eliminating the marriage tax would be a great "tragedy." In fact, during last year's elections, I heard a candidate suggest that if \$1,400 plays such a large stake in a couple's decision to marry, perhaps they have no business getting married in the first place. Although I am no economic scholar, and Shad and I would be married despite the financial consequences the government places on our marriage, I take offense to that sort of thought process.

Fourteen hundred dollars may not seem like a lot to some, but as we prepare to bring our first child into the world, we will face a penalty of \$957. That \$957 could buy 3000 diapers or pay for a year's worth of tuition for our graduate school education. Aside from the poor message the marriage tax sends to young couples like ourselves, the money it costs—no matter how large or small the amount—could be used on things we need now. It troubles me to know that as Shad and I continue to teach and earn a little more money as time goes by, so too will our "marriage tax" grow.

It appears to me Congressman Weller, eliminating the marriage tax seems to be the right choice. Shad and I will continue to follow your efforts in Washington with great interest (as will our married friends back home). Last year it appeared that Washington was ready to eliminate the marriage tax. What went wrong?

Sincerely,
MICHELLE AND SHAD HALKLAN.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT ON RESERVING H.R. 6 FOR REPEAL OF MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

WASHINGTON, D.C.—House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) today released the following statement on reserving H.R. 6 for the Marriage Tax Penalty Elimination Act:

"It's ridiculous that our onerous tax code makes it more expensive to be married than to be single. The government should not punish married working couples by taking more of their hard-earned money in taxes than an identical couple living outside of marriage. I am proud to reserve one of this Congress' top bills, H.R. 6, for the Marriage Tax Penalty Elimination Act.

"The Republican-led Congress has a strong commitment to returning more of each American's hard-earned money to his or her own pocket. The government often acts as if it owns the earnings of all Americans, as if each American worked for the government and not the other way around. This is wrong. We believe that all Americans deserve to keep more of their own money—after all, it's your money and you can save and spend it more wisely than Washington can."

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House.

CONSENSUS IS 62 PERCENT OF BUDGET SHOULD GO TO SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, there is now reaching a point of consensus that 62 percent of the surplus in the budget should go to save Social Security and preserve it at least to the year 2055. With God's good graces, we will all be here to enjoy that extended life of Social Security.

What the President has also proposed is equally important, perhaps even more so, and that is that 15 percent, almost \$700 billion, be put away also to help improve Medicare today, and that includes extending prescription drug benefits to seniors.

As much as we have heard about the proposals for tax cuts, an across-the-board tax cut will not get an average senior even through a single year covering their prescription drug costs. Yet, on the other the other side of the aisle, we hear nothing about improving Medicare for today's seniors. Instead, 37 percent of their plan goes to a tax cut, 1 percent goes to defense, and nothing else goes for things like prescription drugs.

My colleagues, with the cost of living adjustment for seniors this year being only 1.2 percent, we need to recognize that today's seniors, not those a generation from now, need prescription drugs covered.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 2, DOLLARS TO THE CLASSROOM

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

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, today Republicans in

Congress will introduce H.R. 2, Dollars to the Classroom, a bill that is aimed at improving the quality of our public schools.

This bill, we admit, is a threat to those who believe fervently that Washington knows best, no matter how many times it has demonstrated that it does not. This bill will not please those who wish to expand the Federal education bureaucracy. This bill will alarm those professional administrators who hope to increase Federal involvement and intrusion into the decisions made by local school boards, parents and teachers.

Instead, this bill will give local schools the flexibility to spend Federal education dollars as they see fit: higher teacher salaries in some districts, new libraries or classroom construction in others, perhaps a new computer system in another. Those who bear the consequences of the decisions will be the ones making those decisions.

This is an approach which will enrage the liberals, who have done things the old way, the bureaucratic way, so many times in the past. This bill represents common sense. It puts dollars in our classrooms and not more bureaucrats in Washington.

CLOSE THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS ONCE AND FOR ALL

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

Mr. MOAKLEY. Madam Speaker, we have a school in the United States which teaches Latin American students torture techniques and commando skills and costs the citizens of the United States \$18 million each and every year. The graduates go on to commit some of the worst murders and some of the most horrible atrocities in Latin America.

When I led the team that investigated the Jesuit murders in El Salvador, I was horrified to learn that our School of the Americas had actually trained the killers. Nineteen out of the 26 killers were graduates of the School of the Americas.

That is not an isolated incident, Madam Speaker. Each time we hear of another brutal massacre in Latin America, the School of the Americas graduates are involved. In nearly every instance they planned the killings, covered up the truth, or even pulled the trigger.

Today, Madam Speaker, I will file legislation to close the School of the Americas once and for all.

IS THE ERA OF BIG GOVERNMENT REALLY OVER?

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Madam Speaker, the President in his 1996 State of the

Union performance said that "The era of big government is over." Now, I suppose it is possible that he meant it, but one would never know it from looking at his record. The President and his liberal allies in Congress are threatening to shut down the government if Congress does not spend more money to create more bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.

Let us take for example the issue of education spending. Now, Republicans want to spend the money but send it to the classroom. Democrats want to grow the Federal bureaucracy and give the bureaucracy a greater role in managing our local schools.

Republicans think the Federal bureaucrats have done enough damage in education. Democrats want to spend money without setting priorities. Republicans want to send more money to the classroom while also keeping within budget agreement caps, which means there must be spending offsets.

If the era of big government is truly over, then it is time for the President's actions to match his words.

SMALL BUSINESS PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1999

Mr. REYNOLDS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 42, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 42

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 391) to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, for the purpose of facilitating compliance by small businesses with certain Federal paperwork requirements, to establish a task force to examine the feasibility of streamlining paperwork requirements applicable to small businesses, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with section 303 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the min-

imum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) is recognized for one hour.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 42 is an open rule, providing for the consideration of H.R. 391, the Small Business Paperwork Reduction Act Amendments of 1999. The purpose of this legislation is to reduce the burden of Federal paperwork on small businesses.

The rule waives section 303 of the Congressional Budget Act, prohibiting consideration of legislation providing new budget authority or contract authority for a fiscal year until the budget resolution for that fiscal year has been agreed to, against consideration of the bill.

The rule provides for one hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

The rule further provides that the bill shall be considered as read.

The Chair is authorized by the rule to grant priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD prior to their consideration.

The rule allows for the chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and to reduce votes to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, I believe House Resolution 42 is a fair rule. It is an open rule for the consideration of H.R. 391, the Small Business Paperwork Reduction Act Amendments of 1999.

It is my understanding that some Members may wish to offer germane amendments to this bill and, under this open rule, they will have every opportunity to do so.

H.R. 391 is a step in the right direction in relieving our Nation's small businesses from an overwhelming paperwork burden that threatens to bury them.

Time and money required to keep up with government paperwork prevents small businesses from growing and creating new jobs. H.R. 391 gives small