

at the seams. I am not talking about the fact that tens of thousands of children are being kept out of Head Start or the fact that hundreds of thousands of children are losing after-school programs. I am not talking about the fact that some areas, like Sunset Park in my district, do not even have high schools, making access to education difficult, if not impossible.

No, these facts make us mad; they make us angry. They make parents around the country shake their heads and wonder just what exactly we are doing in this body. But these are not the tragedies I am talking about.

The tragedy is that we know what we need to do, but, thanks to the Republican leadership, we are not doing it. In fact, judging by the Labor-HHS bill they are trying to pass, we are moving backwards, while another generation of our youth is in danger of being lost, and that is the tragedy.

ENFORCE EXISTING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM LAWS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing a lot lately about campaign finance reform. However, some of those pushing for new laws fail to mention the fact that our existing laws have been broken.

It is against the law to use foreign money in election campaigns in America. It is against the law to launder money in election campaigns. It is against the law to sell access to your office or influence or even seats on a foreign trade mission to highest bidders. It is against the law to use public offices, telephones, equipment, staff, computers in election campaigns.

We have heard about "no controlling legal authority." The Attorney General not only fails to enforce our existing laws on campaign finance reform, but the Attorney General blocks efforts to investigate existing laws.

We should have full disclosure, but we should also have our existing laws enforced. It is a scam on the American people to pass new laws on finance reform, while not enforcing existing laws.

BRINGING AWARENESS TO THE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF LAND MINES

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as cochair of the Women's Caucus, along with the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY), together we are hosting a bipartisan meeting with Queen Noor of Jordan, who is making her first official visit to Capitol Hill today, to bring awareness to the devastation caused by land mines around the globe.

More than 60 countries are infested with land mines, 60 countries that have the potential of killing or maiming innocent civilians, claiming 26,000 new victims every year. Land mines cannot tell the difference between the footfall of a soldier or a child at play. Every 20 minutes someone steps on a land mine, killing or leaving them maimed. Fewer than 10 percent of the survivors have access to proper medical treatment.

I urge my colleagues to support the efforts of Queen Noor and the Land Mine Survivors Network to bring awareness to this important issue and to provide a voice to those survivors who do not have the opportunity or ability to speak for themselves.

STOP THE RAID ON SOCIAL SECURITY

(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, people I talk to are often surprised to learn that the Republicans forced the President and the Democrats in Congress to accept our Social Security lockbox legislation. They are even more surprised to learn why a Social Security lockbox law needed to be passed in the first place.

For 32 years Congress had raided the Social Security trust fund to pay for Washington programs that had nothing to do with Social Security. Of course, in the private sector a CEO who ran his personal business like that, using the retirement money as a personal slush fund, would be put in jail. But Washington plays by some strange rules.

I think it is time to put an end to this practice that Lyndon Johnson began in 1967 at the height of the Great Society Program. The Social Security trust fund is supposed to be a trust fund, not a slush fund.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to draw a line in the sand. Take the pledge not to pass any of the President's efforts to raid the Social Security trust fund. Stop the raid on Social Security.

AN INNER CITY TRAGEDY

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, no one should forget where the tragedy at Columbine began; not in the suburbs of Colorado, but in the streets of the inner cities, where guns were first made available like free lunch. Now, astonishingly and tragically, that is the case throughout America.

On Friday evening a youngster, 17 years old, in the District, going to see his girlfriend, minding his own business, was shot on a bus by somebody who hoisted himself and shot him through the window. For 10 minutes the bus rode and did not even know the kid had been shot.

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This youngster is described by his teachers and all who knew him as an excellent student, talented and energetic. He was in the marching band at Ballou High School. He was on his way to Howard University next year. He participated in the Arthur Ashe tennis program. He is the kind of kid we are so pleased to see come out whole from the inner city.

Mr. Speaker, guns are everywhere. They are in our districts. Please pass gun safety legislation before we go home this year.

POLICE LAWLESSNESS IN HAITI, AMERICA'S TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to call to the attention of my colleagues a very disturbing article in this morning's Washington Post. American taxpayers have invested approximately \$75 million to build and train a new national police force in Haiti, a department that would replace the feared security forces from previous military dictatorships.

Sadly, the new national police force appears to be just a new version of the old one. The Post reports that in a 3-month period earlier this year, 50 killings attributed to the police occurred, and police involvement in drug trafficking has also been charged.

Mr. Speaker, it just goes to show that when our government gets involved in virtually every predicament that occurs around the world, we tend to lose control of where our tax dollars are going. \$75 million, and the result from all that money? Meet the new boss, same as the old boss. Just the latest in this administration's failed Haiti policy.

MANAGED CARE REFORM WILL NOT COST WHAT THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY CLAIMS

(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. Mr. Speaker, for months now we have been hearing from the insurance industry that we cannot pass a Patients' Bill of Rights because it would increase costs and open employers to lawsuits, both of which would supposedly force employers to drop coverage.

Essentially, the insurance companies are trying to kill meaningful HMO reform with half truths and scare tactics.

The insurance industry, managed care organizations, HMOs and even big businesses have repeatedly tried to scare the American people saying the bill would dramatically raise premiums and force employers to drop health insurance for their employees.

The American people need to know the truth and that is that the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, after thoroughly analyzing each section of the Patients' Bill of Rights, has determined that the bill would cost beneficiaries less than \$2 a month.

In the State of Texas, where I come from, we have 2 years of experience with no increase attributable to the protections that we are trying to pass on the Federal level. That is right, for less than the cost of a Happy Meal, patients in HMOs would have what they really need, which is fairness, protection, and accountability.

Another of the scare tactics is businesses will drop health insurance coverage. There has been no exodus by employers to drop health coverage in Texas after 2 years of the law. What we see is more States following the Texas experience. California just has, and what we need is to make sure we pass a law that affects all Americans and not just those under State insurance policies.

IT IS TIME TO RETHINK THE MINIMUM WAGE AND GIVE STATES FLEXIBILITY

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

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, as we begin to talk about the minimum wage in the coming weeks, our first priority should be to improve the lives of American workers. Although we may disagree on how to do this, we should all recognize the important role that States play in this debate. Our States are all different. Nearly every economic measure that we track varies by State: The cost of living, unemployment rates, tax burdens, welfare caseloads, and average wages. Yet the Federal Government still has a one-size-fits-all wage policy that supposedly works as well in Arkansas as it does in New York.

Mr. Speaker, a State flexibility approach to the minimum wage would address these differences by allowing each governor and State legislature to play a role in determining the appropriate increase for their State. State flexibility is not about whether or not we raise the minimum wage but it is about who raises it. I urge my colleagues to help secure the future for American workers by sending these decisions back home.

WE HAVE THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS TO THANK FOR FAVORABLE BUDGET NEWS

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President showed how easy it is to pick up a magic marker and write some favorable budget information on a

poster. It is quite another thing, as we know, to actually make the tough decisions that have gotten us to a balanced budget. And forgive the partisanship, Mr. and Mrs. America, but we have the Republican Congress to thank for yesterday's favorable budget news.

It is easy to forget back in 1993 and 1994, when President Clinton and the Democrats had this town all to themselves and made no progress on balancing the budget. As a matter of fact, the President would not even try. In 1995, he came before this Congress and proposed budget deficits of \$300 billion a year as far as the eye could see.

Now that we actually have a budget surplus, Republicans want to pay down the debt and give a portion of that surplus back to the taxpayers in the form of tax relief.

President Clinton talks about making additional "investments". From the person who raised taxes but called them "contributions" and "sacrifices", additional national investments sounds like a lot of new Federal spending to me.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The Chair will remind Members to address their remarks to the Chair and not to the viewing public.

OUR SENIORS NEED TO KNOW THAT SOCIAL SECURITY FUNDS ARE PROTECTED FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

(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, it is time to stop the Clinton raid on Social Security funds. Just think about this. If someone was working in a business and that business had a 401(k) or a pension plan, say it was the Georgia Widget Company and your name was Peggy and you had been working there for all of these years saving up and putting money into the 401(k) and then your retirement came and the owner of the widget company said, Peggy, I am sorry, we have spent your money on widgets and on tools that we need for the production of widgets and then the new driveway out there and some new trucks last year. Well, of course, that person would have the right to sue, which is what that worker would do.

The American seniors have had the same thing happen to them. After 30 years of Democrat-raiding of Social Security, they have put Social Security funds into a trust that has been taken out for roads and bridges and congressional salaries and government programs. It is time to stop that. It is time to put Social Security money in a lockbox for only Social Security use; no other use.

If the President could get the liberals over there in his party in the other

body to pass the lockbox legislation, which already passed the House, we could go home and tell our seniors their Social Security funds are protected from this day forward.

BY REDUCING THE NATIONAL DEBT, AMERICANS WILL BE ABLE TO AFFORD MORE

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

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to be here today to commend the President for his economic leadership and bringing about a balanced budget back in 1993, and to be able to get our country on a fiscally sound footing and to be able to try to begin the process of retiring some of our debt.

A lot of the small businesspeople in Maine that have spoken to me have said that what we need to do is reduce the interest rates. We need to retire the debt and lessen the interest payments that we are making each year on the debt. This year our interest payments are going to total \$233 billion. By being able to reduce the interest on the debt and the interest that we pay, we are going to be able to afford people an opportunity to afford a house, afford a car, afford a student loan.

For example, by reducing by 1 percent a \$100,000 loan for a home or for a major purchase, that individual will save over \$60 a month; and over a 30-year mortgage will save close to \$24,000. That is going to do more to keep our economy healthy and keep our economy growing. That is the kind of leadership that we have been getting from the White House and we appreciate staying on that track.

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD RELEASE DOCUMENTS ON HIS DECISION TO RELEASE FALN TERRORISTS

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton will not release documents detailing the decision to grant 16 members of the FALN terrorist group clemency. The Clinton administration has an obligation to explain why it has let these terrorists out of prison. They claim the decision was not political and that it had been in the process for years. If so, show us the papers.

By claiming executive privilege, he is telling the American people that it is none of their business.

This is not right. It is the business of the American people. It is certainly the business of Detective Anthony Semft, a victim of FALN terrorism. The terrorism bomb left the police officer without sight in one eye, a 60 percent hearing loss and a fractured hip.

The House opposed and the Senate deplored the President's actions. Virtually every law enforcement agency in