

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

the country opposed clemency for the FALN terrorists. The Government Reform and Oversight Committee asked President Clinton to explain himself to the American people, to release the papers that showed why this was done, and not hide behind executive privilege. Mr. President, release those papers.

WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE FACTS AND NOT AT FICTION

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to speak this morning, but one of my colleagues on the other side aroused my interest and curiosity sufficiently to make me rise and speak to this issue.

Mr. Reagan's new biography is already controversial because it is predicated on the insights of a fictional character. Well, we have just had a fictional representation of what happened to the American economy in recent years. It was in 1993—when without a single Republican vote in the House or in the Senate—we changed the course of this economy which is now resulting in huge budget surpluses.

It is remarkable that a book that has not even been released already has such a major impact that my colleagues on the other side engage in a fictional representation of what happened to the American economy during the last 7 years.

Our economic indices are at an all-time favorable position; low unemployment, low inflation, high productivity, and the Clinton-Gore administration was in charge.

WE SHOULD STOP PRETENDING AND FACE THE REAL ISSUE, WHICH IS THE NATIONAL DEBT

(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, following up on the previous speaker, I would just like to suggest that since this administration took office, the public debt has increased \$1.5 trillion, but that is not just the President; that is Congress and the President who control borrowing and spending.

We have decided to keep on borrowing and spending. So every year we have increased the public debt of our federal government.

To suggest that tax increases result in a stronger economy would be contrary to what almost every economist says. The previous speaker is correct—the 1993 largest tax increase in history was passed by Congress and the President without a single Republican vote.

I am going to send a copy of our debt history out as a "dear colleague" so that everybody is fully aware of what is happening to our public debt. We

now owe roughly \$5.6 trillion. Ten years ago, it was half that amount.

It seems important to me that we understand that we have three parts of our public debt. One is what I call Wall Street debt, about \$3.6 trillion. One is Social Security debt, approaching \$1 trillion, and then the other 122 trust funds and intergovernment transfers, which is another \$1.2 trillion. We cannot pretend to pay down one part of the debt without considering what we are doing to the total debt of this country. It is all debt. It all has to be paid back, if not by us, by our kids and grandchildren.

WE MUST PUT A STOP TO THE RAID ON SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, the President and House Democrats want to continue their 30-year raid on the Social Security trust fund but Republicans have drawn a line in the sand. First, we forced the President to agree to our lockbox provision, which walls off the Social Security trust fund from Washington politicians who want to use it for new Federal spending. Now we want to protect the Social Security money from the big government liberals who want to increase spending and increase the size and power of the Federal Government.

The President's budget would spend \$57 billion of the Social Security surplus in the fiscal year 2000 budget alone. We must put a stop to the raid on Social Security. Stop the raid. Let us put an end to 30 years of fiscal irresponsibility.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken later today.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING EAST TIMOR

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 292) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the referendum in East Timor, calling on the Government of Indonesia to assist in the termination of the current civil unrest and violence in East Timor, and supporting a United Nations Security Council-endorsed multinational force for East Timor, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 292

Whereas on May 5, 1999, the Governments of Portugal and Indonesia and the United Nations concluded an historic agreement intended to resolve the status of East Timor through a popular consultation based upon a universal, direct, and secret ballot;

Whereas the agreement gave the people of East Timor an opportunity to accept a proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary Republic of Indonesia or reject the special autonomy and opt for independence;

Whereas on August 30, 1999, 98.5 percent of registered voters participated in a vote on the future of East Timor, and by a vote of 344,580 to 94,388 chose the course of independence;

Whereas after the voting was concluded, violence intensified significantly in East Timor;

Whereas the declaration by the Government of Indonesia of martial law in East Timor failed to quell the violence;

Whereas it has been reported that hundreds of people have been killed and injured since the violence began in East Timor;

Whereas it has been reported that as many as 200,000 of East Timor's 780,000 residents have been forced to flee East Timor;

Whereas it has been reported that East Timor militias are controlling the refugee camps in West Timor, intimidating the refugees and limiting access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, relief agencies, and other humanitarian non-governmental organizations;

Whereas it has been reported that a systematic campaign of political assassinations that has targeted religious, student, and political leaders, aid workers, and others has taken place;

Whereas the compound of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was besieged and fired upon, access to food, water, and electricity was intentionally cut off, and UNAMET personnel have been killed, forcing the temporary closure of UNAMET in East Timor;

Whereas Catholic leaders and lay people have been targeted to be killed and churches burned in East Timor;

Whereas the international community has called upon the Government of Indonesia to either take immediate and concrete steps to end the violence in East Timor or allow a United Nations Security Council-endorsed multinational force to enter East Timor and restore order;

Whereas on September 9, 1999, the United States suspended all military relations with Indonesia as a result of the failure to quell the violence in East Timor;

Whereas on September 12, 1999, Indonesian President B.J. Habibie announced that Indonesia would allow a United Nations Security Council-endorsed multinational force into East Timor;

Whereas on September 15, 1999, the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 1264, authorizing the establishment of a multinational force to restore peace and security in East Timor, to protect and support UNAMET in carrying out its tasks and, within force capabilities, to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations, and authorizing countries participating in the multinational force to take all necessary measures to fulfill this mandate; and

Whereas on September 20, 1999, the multinational force led by Australia arrived in East Timor and began to deploy for an initial period of four months until replaced by a United Nations peacekeeping operation, or as otherwise determined by the United Nations Security Council: Now, therefore, be it