

percent of gross domestic product, it is the lowest since 1974.

Now, some of our opponents on the other side of the aisle would like to say that we have passed these larger and larger budgets, but the truth is we have been in negotiation with the White House and we have tried to reach an agreement with him.

As other speakers have said earlier, we have matched him on most of the bills that have been passed. There are just a few outstanding that are still being negotiated. But the President wants to continue to add more and more money in and start more and more new programs.

We are protecting Social Security. We are protecting the surplus on Social Security. We are protecting the surplus for Medicare. We have even passed a bill that gives some tax relief and also strengthens Medicare by adding more than \$12 billion and to strengthen hospitals, including more than \$1 billion for rural hospitals. In Kansas, rural hospitals are in desperate need of this legislation and this bill. But the President is holding it hostage and is refusing to do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just hope that he will sign these bills into law and we can finish this session.

#### PRESIDENT THREATENS TO VETO FEDERAL EXCISE TAX ON TELEPHONES

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, we are still here tonight for one very simple reason. We are here with another battling with the President of the United States. He would like us to spend more money, and he would like us not to cut taxes for the American people. It is unbelievable.

As we are working here tonight, the President is threatening to veto very reasonable, even targeted tax relief that helps people save more for retirement, helps people obtain health care, helps people be able to improve our schools and construct more schools around this country.

He has even threatened to veto tonight the repeal of the Federal excise tax on telephones. This is the 1898 temporary luxury tax put in place on telephones that lives on today. This tax hits particularly people that have fixed incomes very hard.

Think about it, everyone in America needs a telephone. It is very important to those of us who are worried about our economy and worried about what is going to keep our economy going that telecommunications not be taxed. Yet the President believes this tax, this 3 percent tax that is on every one of our phone bills that goes into general revenues that was put in place in 1898 as a temporary luxury tax ought to continue in existence.

We have a surplus all created by the American people. Let us hope this

President begins to give a little meaningful, serious, reasonable tax relief.

#### LET CONGRESS STAND UP FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS AT LOCAL LEVEL

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

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, we are in Washington today talking about some very important issues. Over the last 3 years, my subcommittee has had the opportunity to travel around the country and take a look at education to see what is working in America and what is not working in America.

It is exciting to go down to the State and local level and see what parents, teachers, and local administrators are doing to bring about excellence in education. We need to reinforce those efforts and let people at the local level continue to innovate and move forward.

We contrast that with what is going on here in Washington. We have a Department of Education that has failed its audit for the last 2 years, has numerous cases of waste, fraud, and abuse. And now the President wants to put additional programs under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education so that there are more Washington programs and bureaucrats telling our local parents and administrators what to do in education.

This is a discussion and a debate about who controls our local schools. Let us stand up for parents and teachers at the local level.

#### WHY CONGRESS IS IN SESSION ON SUNDAY NIGHT

(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, we are here on a Sunday night. I want to tell my colleagues, I am kind of sad. I would rather be with my family. But I will tell you one thing, it is my duty to be here and fight for the things that I believe in.

One of the things that I am fighting for is little old Brantley County, Georgia. Because, see, the President has a scheme to federalize school construction. He wants to have school construction run out of Washington, D.C., for every county school board in the United States of America. We want local control.

I want to tell the folks back in Brantley County, Georgia, that you are going to continue to be in charge. We are here to fight for classroom size. I am with the President on that. We need to reduce the size of the classroom. But I am away from the President on Medicare reimbursement. He has threatened to veto a bill that has been endorsed by the American Hospital Association. I am here because the President has threatened to veto a

bill that would take away 100 percent health care deductibility, which would make health care affordable for small businesses and farmers. That is worth fighting for. And I am here for the Social Security lockbox, which the President has yet to commit himself to.

That is why we are here on a Sunday night, and I am not going to leave until we get this thing done.

2115

#### LET US SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, we have heard discussion of the school construction provisions of the tax bill. Let me set the record straight. We Democrats want provisions where school boards are given a chance to issue bonds, where the Federal Government pays the interest costs and the bond money is used immediately to build schools. Unfortunately, this tax bill, while it provides some of those bonds, provides not enough and then provides over a \$2 billion cost to the Federal Government to liberalize the arbitrage rules in which school boards will be told by the Federal Government to delay building schools, take the money, put it on Wall Street and try to make money by arbitrage provisions. That is how Orange County, California, went bankrupt. That is not a way to help our local schools. The way to help our local schools is to reject the tax bill that passed through this House and instead provide a full \$25 billion worth of bonds where the Federal Government will pick up the interest cost. We need to build schools on Elm Street, not skyscrapers on Wall Street.

#### HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

(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, how much is enough? Three and a half weeks ago we were supposed to have been adjourned, but we are here because of the politics down at the White House, the politics of putting partisanship ahead of people.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder how many of our colleagues ever saw the movie "The Jerk." It is a rags to riches to rags story wherein the main character is evicted, and he is kind of hanging on to the last bits of furniture and items in his home as he is walking out the door, as he says, I don't need anything else. I have everything I need except for this lamp.

We are seeing that go on over at the White House today: We do not need anything else except for amnesty for illegal aliens. We do not need anything else, I got everything I need except

needles for heroin addict. I do not need anything else except for more Government employees, and that is all I need, except for this, I need more Government construction. That is what we are seeing going on at the White House, *The Jerk*. It is a great movie. Everyone ought to see. How much is enough, Mr. Speaker?

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, tonight is a difficult moment for me because this probably will be my last opportunity to address this House because when this session ends my service in this institution will end. I would just like to take a moment, if I could, and reflect upon these last few years. I think back to my father, who left school when he was 13 years old, the end of eighth grade. He had to do that in order to get a job, in order to support his brothers and his sisters and his mother. He served in World War II and after the end of the war, a friend offered to lend him \$100 to get started in a tire repair shop. He jumped at the chance to take that loan and start that business because he saw that as his only opportunity to realize what we referred to, I guess, as the "American Dream."

What I remember about my parents is how hard they worked because they worked hard all of their lives. My father is no longer living. I can remember my mother even taking care of boarders in our house in order to help our family make ends meet. So if we measure success by how much money people accumulate or how many things they have, then we would not put my parents in the success category. They measured success another way. They believed in certain values. Those values were hard work and family and faith and individual responsibility, and they believed that in this country and in our society that if one works hard then anybody can have their chance to pursue their dream and their idea of success. They believed also that it was every generation's obligation to make sure that they passed that opportunity on to the next generation of Americans.

My sisters and I inherited more opportunities than my parents had. I got to go to college. I raised a family. I had a successful business. I have a terrific wife, three wonderful children, three delightful grandchildren. When I asked

the people of Montana to elect me to represent them here, I told them that for me this was about our children and about our grandchildren.

The people in this country, the people of Montana, were frightened just a few years ago. They thought perhaps this idea, this American dream, was lost for generations to come, and the reason for that was their government. If we remember, we had deficits, \$250 billion or \$300 billion a year going forward as far as the eye could see. The national debt was approaching the size of our national economy.

Social Security and Medicare, two important programs, were in serious jeopardy. Medicare was scheduled to go to bankrupt.

It was not just a budget deficit that the people of Montana were expressing to me. They said there was another deficit, too, and that was the deficit in individual responsibility and personal responsibility that they saw in our society; a runaway welfare system; illegitimacy; broken families. The list goes on and on. We have made a lot of progress in the last few years on these important subjects. The fiscal house of the nation is in better shape than it has been in a long time. We cut over 50 Government programs to help get us there. The budget is balanced, and it looks like it will stay balanced long into the future. Medicare at least is solvent for another 20 years. Social Security, we have ended 40 years of raiding the surplus in the Social Security trust fund, and that money hopefully will be set aside for generations in the future as well.

We lowered taxes for our families so that those families can make more decisions over how their money gets spent, empowering them to make better decisions as well.

This country is a unique place and it is based upon an idea, an idea, I guess we refer to it as the American dream, but it is also important for us to realize it is based upon principles of freedom and the principles of liberty, because that is how we pursue our dreams. That is why we are a creative nation, why we are entrepreneurial, why we are competitive and why this is such a dynamic place to live, is because of these freedoms and this liberty.

I have endeavored throughout my service here to promote those values, the values of competition, of freedom and liberty, to empower people and give people the power to make their own choices.

There are some people that I want to thank tonight, my wife, Betio; my mom, who watches C-SPAN religiously and thinks that the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is the best Congressman, and I am second best; my children, Todd, Corey, and Mike; my grandchildren, Kadrian, Parker, Levy, and one on the way who is not named yet; my loyal staff who has worked so hard.

I especially want to thank the Members that I have served with here. What

makes this such a special place, and sometimes I think people watching or listening misunderstand, is that the people carry such passionate views and so much caring about their constituents and the things they believe in to this floor and debate them on behalf of their constituents. I want to thank you all for your advice and your counsel, your help and your support and your encouragement; and finally I want to thank the people of Montana who temporarily entrusted me with this job, caretaker over this office. I want to thank them for the honor and the privilege they have bestowed upon me to represent them in this special place.

#### GOVERNOR BUSH'S TAX PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, our economic prosperity is fragile and the political reasons, the political rhetoric out there in the country threatens to put that prosperity at risk. The Governor of Texas has mocked the importance of fiscal responsibility. It is in his political interest to tell the country that decisions made in Washington over the last 8 years have nothing to do with the economic prosperity that we have enjoyed over the last 8 years. Not only is he wrong but his statements lay the foundation for some very, very dangerous economic policies.

The Governor of Texas is correct that the lion's share of credit for our economic prosperity goes to American workers whose ingenuity, whose hard work, whose inventiveness are unparalleled; but for political gain, he denies that there is another essential element and that is fiscal responsibility here in Washington. When he denies that the Federal Government has anything to do with how our economy performs, he grants us here in Washington a license to be fiscally irresponsible, because if Government really has nothing to do with the prosperity over the last 8 years, then the Government is free to do whatever we want it to do without putting that prosperity at risk.

The facts are otherwise. During the mid-1980s, during the late 1980s, during the early 1990s, Americans were hard working. They showed ingenuity, did everything possible to give us prosperity and yet the country was not prosperous, and this is because we did not have fiscal responsibility here in Washington. Now for 8 years, the Clinton-Gore administration has insisted that we have fiscally responsible budgets; and prosperity has returned to this country. If we are told that those budgets have nothing to do with our prosperity, that lays the foundation for the kinds of huge \$2.6 trillion tax cuts that this country cannot afford, with the result that Government borrowing will swallow up private savings, returning us to high interest rates and recession.

The second aspect of the Governor's remarks that are clearly false is when