

"Scalito," and Judge Edith Jones, a severe critic of death penalty appeals. She overruled a decision that a Texas death row inmate deserved a new hearing, even though his lawyer literally slept through part of the trial.

□ 1845

These judges are not the extreme on Bush's list. They are the list. They are not the exceptions to the rule, they make the rules, and we will have to abide by them.

If you believe in women's rights, AL GORE should shape the court. If you believe that minorities should be counted and respected; if you believe everyone is innocent until proven guilty; and if you believe, like I do, that justice should be blind and not asleep, AL GORE should shape the court.

AL GORE, not Scalia, Thomas and Bush, should protect our rights for the next generation.

When we vote, we will elect a President for 4 years. Supreme Court appointments last a lifetime. Two words, Supreme Court; one vote, one choice, AL GORE.

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THE HORRIBLE DEBT OUR NATION FACES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), my colleague, for joining me tonight.

Madam Speaker, I have come to talk about what I consider to be one of the greatest threats to our Nation, and that is the horrible debt that our Nation faces and the absolute reluctance on the part of both Presidential candidates and almost everyone who seeks higher public office to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, when I go down the street in my home State of Mississippi and folks ask me where do their tax dollars go, they are almost dumbfounded when I tell them that the largest expenditure of their Nation is interest on our Nation's debt.

Yesterday our Nation spent \$1 billion on interest on the national debt. We did the same thing today. We did it 3 days ago. We did it 5 days ago. We have done it every day for the past year. Unless we change the way we are doing business here in our Nation's capitol, we will spend at least a billion dollars on the national debt tomorrow, the next day, and every day for the rest of our lives.

What do we get for that? It does not educate one child. It does not build one inch of highways. It does not build one war ship to defend our Nation. It does not pay the kids in uniform. It is squandered down a rat hole and most appropriately, and something most Americans would find very disturbing, is about one third of the interest on our Nation's debt is fully paid to for-

eign lending institutions. See German and Japanese lending institutions actually control the papers on about one third of our Nation's debit.

For my father and your fathers, those who fought the great World War II to save us from the tyranny of then Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, you have to imagine how upset they would be to realize that the nations they saved us from now control America's financial future because they control our debt.

Madam Speaker, I often wonder how this incredible misperception of a big budget surplus could come from, because we hear it every day. I hear otherwise educated people talk as if they are mindless idiots. So when they talk about an alleged surplus, I really wonder again where it comes from.

I think I know one of the places that it came from. This was an ad that was run in several national publications, including the USA Today. It was run December 6 of 1995, and it features then head of the Republican National Committee, a face that most of you would remember, a guy named Haley Barbour from the State of Mississippi.

It is a full-page ad. He is holding a million dollar check, and it says up top, heard the one about the Republicans getting Medicare? It says down here the fact is that the Republicans are increasing Medicare spending by more than half. I am Haley Barbour. I am so sure of this fact that I am willing to give you this check for a million dollars if you can prove me wrong.

He goes on down here to have the actual terms of that challenge. Here is why you have no chance for a million dollars. The Republican National Committee will present a cashier's check for \$1 million to the first American who can prove the following statement is false, in quotations, in November of 1995, the U.S. House and Senate passed a balanced budget bill. It increases total Federal spending on Medicare by more than 50 percent from 1995 to the year 2002 pursuant to congressional budget standards.

Madam Speaker, what was called to his attention in a hand-delivered letter just a few days later is that the bill that they passed for that year to run the Nation was not a balanced budget bill.

For you at home, for me, for our Nation, for my State, a balanced budget is when you spend no more than you collect, where you are collecting your salary and what you spend or what this Nation or my State collects in taxes and what they spend. If you spend more than you are collecting, then it is not a balanced budget, that is a deficit budget.

Remember this change was made on a budget that passed in November of 1995, so that would have been the budget for the fiscal year 1996, running from October 1 1995 through September of 1996. As we can see, and this is for those of you who have your computers at home, the source for this is the

United States Government annual reports for the fiscal years 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999, all taken from the monthly Treasury statements for the month of September for those years.

What you can see is for the fiscal year 1996, the first year that the challenge would have been in effect, the Republican Congress passed a budget that was \$221 billion, \$960 million in deficit. That is almost a billion a day that they were spending more than they were collecting in taxes, so maybe they did not get to the balanced budget quite as quick as they thought they could.

For fiscal year 1997, Federal funds were \$145,217,000 in deficit. As you can see, these are the trust funds, things like the Social Security trust fund, but for the Federal trust funds, the real portion that we determine, there was no balanced budget. Fiscal year 1998, \$88,088,000 in deficit. Fiscal year 1999, \$82,998,000 in deficit.

All of these years later, the Nation finally turned a surplus in September of the year 2000. It was not easily accomplished. I came to the House floor in the month of July to point out that through the end of June, our Nation was running an \$11 billion annual operating deficit. Again, these are from the monthly Treasury statements, Department of Treasury, table 8, page 30.

What you do not see is what you do not hear is when they talk about a big surplus, they are not telling you that that surplus is in the Social Security trust fund, the military retiree trust fund, the Medicare trust fund, the highway trust fund. The key word in each of these sentences is the word trust.

These are taxes that are collected from a specific group of people and set aside by people who trust our Nation to spend them on nothing but that one purpose. When my young daughter teaches sailing lessons during the summer and she pays Social Security on that paycheck, she trusts that money will be set aside so that years from now when she is a senior citizen that money will be available for her Social Security.

When you go to the gas pump and pay gasoline taxes, you trust that that money will be set aside to build roads.

When a military person serving our Nation in places like Korea, places like Bosnia, Kosovo pays into his trust fund, he trusts that that money will be set aside for when he retires so that his retirement check is sent every month.

When someone pays into the Medicare trust fund, all of us are counting on that money being set aside so that when we need those services, that money will be there.

The only surpluses that are out there are in the trust funds. So to say that I am going to have a big tax break or we are going to spend a whole lot more money because of these big surpluses, my question to those people are, who are you going to steal it from? Are you going to take it from people's Social

Security trust fund? Are you going to take it from their Medicare trust fund? Are you going to steal it from the military retirees? Are you going to steal it from the people who bought gasoline and paid the tax on that?

Madam Speaker, the one bright light of this year, I think, as far as this Congress is concerned is that for the first time in 30 years, the Nation collected more than it spent. It collected about \$8 billion more than it spent on expenditures for the Nation. So for the first time in 30 years, there actually was a surplus.

What that fails to note is that there was an extraordinary amount of money collected in the month of September and a reduction in normal operating expenditures. It was an accounting game that was played so that we could have a surplus.

One of the games that was played was a very unfortunate trick to the people who serve our Nation in uniform. They are normally paid on the last of the month, but because September 30, 2000 fell into fiscal year 2000 and October 1 was in fiscal year 2001, Congress voted to delay their pay to October 1, so that that \$2½ billion accounting cost would go on this year and not on last.

If you are a Congressman, and everybody knows congressmen make good money, having to wait between a Friday and a Monday for your paycheck, not that big of a deal. But if you are an E-3, an E-4, an E-5 out there, if you are a young lieutenant with a couple of kids running around the house, that weekend of waiting to buy baby formula or Pampers or whatever was an incredible inconvenience to them.

So from my Republican colleagues who are regularly telling me that they support the troops, I ask my colleagues if they support them so much, why did they delay their pay just so they could pretend to balance the budget?

Madam Speaker, this is the American financial portfolio that the next President of the United States will inherit. There is no surplus. Our Nation is almost \$6 trillion in debt. The public debt on September 30, 2000 was \$5,674,178,209,887.

For George Bush or AL GORE to say because we had an \$8 billion surplus that we should go out and start great, new spending programs or cut taxes by over a trillion dollars is literally like a fellow who has not made his way for 30 years.

He has not broken even 1 month for 30 years, and he finally clears a profit of \$1,000 and he is getting ready to celebrate with that \$1,000 and going on a spending spree, totally ignoring that during those 30 years he has grown the equivalent of \$686,000 of credit card debt, \$686,000 versus 1; that is what \$8 billion compares to this debt that we owe and we continue to pay a billion dollars interest every day.

Madam Speaker, that is the public debt of the United States, again, contrary to what my Republican col-

leagues are saying, they are not paying it down. It increased by \$17,970,308,271.43 last year.

For those of you who doubt my figures, I would encourage you on your computers <http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/opd/opdpenny.htm>. It is public record, that is what we owe.

Mr. Barbour, since my Republican colleagues have made such a good point about the need for people to be honest, to be forthright, to stick to their word, I am asking you tonight on national television to stick to your word. You made a promise. You made a pledge. You laid down a challenge. I accepted your challenge. I hand delivered my response to the Republican National Committee a couple of blocks from here.

□ 1900

Your response to my challenge was to sue me and about 80 other Americans who did nothing more than to answer your challenge.

I am a Congressman. It is pretty easy for a Congressman to find a lawyer. Some of the people that you sued served in the United States military. Many of them were retirees on fixed income. I call that low-balling tactics. So in response to your suing me, I have also had to hire an attorney. But I will make this promise to you when you keep yours. And after I have to pay the attorneys that I had to hire because you sued me, I will take that million dollar check and what I do not have to pay to the lawyers and donate it to the University of Southern Mississippi.

But I am going to remind every American that I do not want to hear you or any of my Republican colleagues talk about honesty in government until you keep your word.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Mississippi for yielding to me, and I thank him for continuing to come to the floor and to make the very valid points about this so-called surplus.

I also appreciate him bringing up the word "honesty." Because each and every one of us that is elected to this body are basically honest people, 435 Members; but many times in the heat of political battle we tend to stretch the truth when it is perceived to be politically advantageous.

And when we start talking about the debt and the fact we are here tonight, Mr. Speaker, three of us in this Chamber right now working, at least three of us are working, and I would renew the invitation to any of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who might be back in their offices working to come to the floor and to participate in this discussion, challenge the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) on that which he has said and challenge me on some of the things that I am going to say. Because I do not intend to misrepresent the truth tonight.

But things are getting a little ridiculous around the House of Representa-

tives. The Senate went home today. "With the budget unresolved, the Senate agreed to adjourn until after the election." And they are gone. But yet, we have already heard speakers on this floor today saying we are going to work throughout the weekend.

I would like to work throughout the weekend to resolve this budget impasse before the election, because I am not real sure we are going to do a very credible job after November 7, any better than we are doing before. There are a lot of people out in the country now beginning to talk about the job that the 106th Congress is doing.

The San Jose Mercury News, on October 24: "Congress has been doing very little but doing it very expensively. What the Republicans have not needed from Clinton is any encouragement to spend money. Facing a close election, they have not only been giving Clinton what he wants but pumping money into their own districts with a fire hose."

Eight of the 10 appropriations bills that Congress has passed and sent to the President would spend more than the President had requested. According to the estimates of the Congressional Budget Office, the 10 appropriations bills that this Congress has sent to the President would spend \$505.5 billion in outlays, which is 10.7 more than the \$494.8 billion the President requested including the supplementals calculated by the Congressional Budget Office.

The increase in discretionary spending caps for fiscal year 2001 adopted by the House on a party line vote as part of the Foreign Operations appropriations conference report, rollcall No. 545, would allow Congress to increase discretionary spending above the amount requested by the President by \$13 billion in the budget already and \$8 billion in outlays.

Now, what has this got to do with what the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) has just been saying? Everything.

Discretionary spending is that which the Congress appropriates. The only way we can spend that money, the only way the President can spend that money, and we keep hearing about the President spending money, and I have now been privileged to serve in this body with four Presidents and they are all alike regarding the Constitution, but no President may spend money that the Congress does not first appropriate, whether it is for foreign aid, whether it is for highways, whether it is for agriculture, whatever it may be.

According to the bipartisan Concord Coalition, if discretionary spending continues to increase at the same rate it has over the last 3 years under the Republican Congress for the next 10 years, nearly two-thirds of the projected \$2.2 billion surplus that is non-Social Security will be wiped out.

Now, that is a fact. That is why the chart of the gentleman and what he says about the surplus is critical to the actions that we are taking today.

Let me quote another newspaper. Everybody gets all upset when we talk about newspapers from the Northeast, but let us talk about the Des Moines Register, October 27: "If nothing else, this session of Congress should lay to rest the cliché about Democrats being the party of big spenders and the Republicans being the party of less government. The Republicans that control this Congress are setting the record for big spending. The Republican majority stands accused of wallowing in classic pork barrel politics."

Now, here is the main point that I want to plug into the discussion tonight. We should have completed our work we said by October 5 or October 6. We are now 32 days into the new fiscal year, and we still have not gotten an agreement.

Now, there is a lot of finger-pointing going on. And, oh, have we heard it again today, who is to blame for the stalemate, and a lot of rhetoric about who wants to work. And I think it is going to get even more ridiculous tomorrow. Because here we are basically having completed our work for today at 4 o'clock in the afternoon as far as legislation is concerned and we will not go back into the session for any work, "legislation," until 6 o'clock tomorrow evening. But most of us and my colleague and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) and I, we understand that the work we are talking about should be going on in a conference between the appropriators and the House, majority and minority, and appropriators in the Senate, majority and minority.

But we have already heard the Senate has gone home. There are no meetings going on. And again, if someone can clarify this, if there are meetings, then I want to stand corrected. Because I do not wish the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD tomorrow to have me saying something that is untrue. If there are meetings going on at this moment or were there any meetings to work out the differences yesterday, I would love for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to show documentation that there was one meeting to resolve the budget differences that we are talking about that have kept the House in and that are going to keep us here through the election.

This is the rhetoric going on. That is fine. We can talk about work all we want to. But if there is no work going on, who are we kidding? Why did the congressional leadership not accept the President's offer to meet yesterday to discuss an agreement on responsible tax relief and a Medicare package that provides assistance to health care providers as well as beneficiaries instead of providing over 40 percent of the funding for HMOs? Why was there not that invitation?

You would think, based on the rhetoric that we have heard on the floor, that the President has been out of town campaigning. But I believe if you check the White House attendance

record you will find that the President was available all day last Friday, all day last Saturday, all day Sunday, of which the first meeting that occurred, the first work that occurred in the Congress over the weekend occurred beginning at 10 o'clock Sunday night and concluded at 1:20 with an agreement that then blew up. The President was available all day Monday. He was available until 1 o'clock yesterday. He was in town today. His schedule is flexible for the remainder of the week. Why has the leadership of the Congress not engaged the President on any one of those days? That is, I think, a serious legitimate question.

The administration and the Democratic negotiators tell me that they continue to be available and will be available to meet with the Republican leadership to negotiate on these items. Can anyone from the other side tell me of a single invitation to meet and negotiate over the remaining items that the administration or Democrats from Congress have refused to attend?

Now, we can stay here and pretend that we are working by having one vote each day or two. We will approve the Journal and then we will have a 24-hour extension. But who are we kidding? Who are we kidding if there are no negotiations going on between our leaders?

Now, I think it is important to remember that the leadership of this House said early this year we were going to complete our work on time, we were going to run the trains on time, but we would not negotiate with the President of the United States. That is fine. That is a prerogative of leadership to make a plan. But I think again a little practical constitutional reminder is in order.

This President, the previous three Presidents, the next President, you cannot be a President in the Congress unless you have two-thirds of the vote. You can disagree. You can dislike him. You can call him names. That is one of the great privileges that we have in this country is to criticize the President and criticize the Congress. It is one of the marvels of our system. It is called freedom of speech. We can be as critical as we want to. But in the end, it is incumbent upon the Congress to get our work done.

And the majority party in the Congress is responsible for getting our work done. It is not the minority. You cannot blame it on the minority leader as some are doing now. You cannot blame it on the minority in the Senate. Oh, you can do it. It is the easiest thing in the world to say it. But the truth is, under our constitutional form of government and our rule of majority, the only action that can be taken is that which is approved by the majority.

Now, if you want to override a Presidential veto, there is a way to do it. You find 73 Democrats to vote with you, assuming all Republicans are in agreement. It is called two-thirds. To

get two-thirds, though, you have to at least try to work with the other side of the aisle. At no time in these last few days as we are talking about working has there been any serious overtures over to this side of the aisle that I am aware of to begin working on compromises. We are basically down to three or four things that are keeping us from completing our work and going home for the election. Immigration. A lot of controversy on that one. But there is a good solid middle ground that I think the majority on both parties can support. School construction. Again I think there is a good solid middle ground that could be worked out if folks sat down and just worked on that issue or awfully, awfully close.

The appropriators, the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), have done great work and they are deserving of no criticism. And I mean no criticism of the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and the other appropriators. That is not the problem.

We have a crisis of leadership of refusing to do that which is necessary to get the work of the House completed. And here I have seen charts, bringing up charts here saying, "How much is enough?" I hope we have burned those charts because they are inaccurate. They are inaccurate. We have stated how much money is going to be spent in 2001. The majority party very clearly voted to increase the cap by over \$100 billion more than the budget that they had originally called for in the 1997 Budget Act.

□ 1915

So that is all behind us. Anyone that is proposing to spend new money or more money, whether it is the President or anyone else, knows that if it is an appropriated dollar, that it is going to have to come out of somebody else's pocket. The gentleman from Mississippi has pointed out that when we start talking about spending, we are taking it out of somebody's pocket. It is coming right out of somebody's pocket, no matter how you choose to spin it.

Well, I hope that sometime tonight, or tomorrow or by 6 o'clock tomorrow that the leadership of this House will realize that it makes no sense to continue to say that we are working if nothing is going on.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. I thank the gentleman from Texas. The gentleman from Texas and I come from different parts of the country and therefore represent different interests. The gentleman from Texas comes from an extremely agricultural part of Texas. He chose to serve on the Committee on Agriculture. As a matter of fact, he is the ranking Democrat on that committee. I come from an extremely patriotic part of the country. I happen to be fortunate enough to know two living Medal of Honor recipients, and we have a number of military installations and defense contractors in

south Mississippi, one of them being Ingalls Shipbuilding, built over half the ships in the fleet.

One of the misstatements that is often said on this House floor is that it is somehow President Clinton's fault that the fleet is shrinking, that there are fewer airplanes, fewer people in uniform. I would like to remind my colleagues that say that, and I am sorry that none of them are on the floor here tonight, to read the Constitution of the United States. Article 1, section 8, that part that gives Congress its responsibilities, says it is Congress' job to provide for the national defense, that it is Congress' job to provide for the Army and the Navy.

I would further remind my colleagues that article 1, section 9 of the Constitution, and I encourage all of you to read it at home, says that no money may be drawn from the Treasury except by an appropriation by law. So what does that mean, when they say the President did not build enough ships, he did not build enough airplanes? No, what it really means is that they have not put enough money in their budget that passed with an overwhelming majority of their votes to build those ships.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the American public that on January 1, 1995, the day the Republicans officially took over the responsibility of running both the House and the Senate, our Nation's fleet had 392 ships in the Navy. Today, the fleet is 318 with the *Cole* being out of commission. So it is 317. Our fleet is now the smallest it has been since 1933. This with a Republican majority in the House and the Senate that can put all the money they choose to, if they choose to, into the defense budget.

Mr. Speaker, my criticism is that in search of tax breaks geared mostly toward the wealthiest Americans, you have shortchanged the troops. We have got kids flying around in old helicopters 30 years old. The newest Huey out there that our soldiers are flying around in is over 30 years old. The newest C-141 out there that our Air Force crews are flying right now is nearly 30 years old. We have the smallest number of ships that we have had since 1933 during the Depression. Again, article 1, section 9 says that no money may be drawn from the Treasury except by an appropriation by Congress.

Now, somebody out there will say, maybe the President vetoed those defense bills. And he did veto some of them. But never over spending. He vetoed them over social issues, and I disagreed with him on those social issues. I do not think we ought to be performing abortions at military hospitals. I was not for the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. But those are social issues. He never vetoed a defense bill over spending. So when I hear people come to the floor and say, Well, it's Clinton's fault, I beg to differ. It is your fault. In search of tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, you have shortchanged America's defense, and I

will scream it from the highest mountaintop because I know it to be true.

One of the things that I hope the next President will concentrate on is America's defense, because again I hear many of my Democratic colleagues talking about everything but defense, and quite frankly I hear far too many of my Republican colleagues talking about everything but defense. We have a Nation that wants to get involved in school construction. Where I come from that has traditionally been a local responsibility. We are talking about getting involved in all sorts of things that are normally State and local responsibilities when the greatest national responsibility is to balance our budget and defend the Nation. That is what we ought to be doing, and that is what we ought to be doing very well.

I want to point out to my colleagues that I do not think my Republican colleagues have done that very well.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, another area that we have been very derelict on in the 106th Congress and that has to do with energy policy. We paid a pretty good price, it was not nearly as bad as it could have been, with Desert Storm. But we had to send our youngest and finest into harm's way, and it was one of the toughest votes that I have had to cast in support of President Bush's move to send our troops over to the Middle East. Everyone knew we did not go over there to put the emir back on his throne in Kuwait. We went over there to defend the Free World's access to oil.

There for a while after that, I thought that Congress and the administration would begin to recognize that the lack of an energy policy in the United States is a national security policy. But we have gone through one more Congress now and one more administration without dealing with an energy policy. Oh, the finger-pointing has been going on, but you do not solve problems with finger-pointing. One of the things that I think the gentleman from Mississippi and I, and I believe the gentleman in the chair fits right into this mix, whether it is Idaho, Mississippi or Texas, my folks do not like to hear criticism of the other guy. They do not like to hear Democrats criticizing Republicans, Republicans criticizing Presidents unless you offer a constructive alternative, unless you say, I'm against this but here's what I'm for.

And here I believe that the reason that we are here tonight and we still have not completed our work, it has been a failure of leadership, of recognizing that we had, or we should have, passed a budget that could have restrained spending. We did not agree with the President's original call. We, the Blue Dogs, did not agree with the President's original spending call of \$637 billion. And we did not agree with the Republicans' call for \$625 billion, because we did recognize there needed to be some additional spending, in the defense area in particular but in rural

America, in education; and, therefore, we suggested a compromise between what the President proposed and what the majority in the Congress proposed.

We got 138 Democrats to support our budget, and we got 37 Republicans to support it. Hindsight being 20/20, I just wonder where we would be tonight had we passed the Blue Dog budget and had 290 votes if that was a problem, but I do not see where that would have been a problem with the President. If he had 138 Democrats and all of the Republicans saying let's hold spending down, I doubt seriously you would have had a President saying, let's spend more. We will never know the answer to that. That is the kind of rhetoric that everybody has fun with.

I want to mention one other area and this one really bothers me today. That is in the area of health care. The balanced budget agreement of 1997 cut the Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates way too much. We have literally destroyed our small hospitals, and quite a few of our large hospitals are having trouble. Therefore, I do not choose to say just rural, that happens to be my district, and a lot of times communities like Abilene and San Angelo of 100,000 population do not consider themselves rural but for purposes of health care come a lot closer. But we have reached an impasse. The Senate has gone home without even taking up the so-called tax cuts and/or balanced budget giveback for 2001. If we should end up doing nothing, we will do irreparable harm to the health care delivery system. Nursing homes, we have, I am told, over 200 bankrupted today. I know I have several in my district that, unless we do our work and recognize that we do have to put some more money back into Medicare-Medicaid, we have got real troubles.

But yet the chairman of the committee has said unequivocally we will not renegotiate that which the committee did in a purely partisan way, with no input from the administration, no input from our side of the aisle. The same gentleman that wrote the balanced budget agreement health care provisions in 1997 is the same gentleman that tonight is saying under no circumstances will we renegotiate the health care provisions, because he believes he is right.

Well, he may be right. But some of the rest of us may also be right, and this is where our Constitution provides that you seek compromise. Compromise is not a four-letter word. There are sincere Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle that would like to sit down and to reach a compromise on some of these issues and not have a confrontation. But you cannot do that from the minority side of the aisle.

I spent the first 16 years of my life here in the Congress in the majority and found myself defending myself from some of the same things that I hear my colleagues today accusing me of today, big-spending, liberal Democrats. How can this be, Mr. Speaker?

When you are in the minority, you do not control what comes out of the Congress. When you control both the House and the Senate, it is your game plan. If the President is from the other party, you have got to override him. To override him, you have got to reach out to folks on the other side of the aisle and the current leadership of the House; and I want to say this very respectfully, the current leadership has chosen confrontation over compromise. That had something to do with political strategy. And we are sure going to find out come next Tuesday what worked and what did not.

But in the meantime, look at what we are doing. We will have a new President come November 7, at least elect a President-elect, and we will have a new Congress. I do not know whether it is going to be a Democratically controlled Congress, which I kind of hope for, or Republican, but whoever is in control is really immaterial. It is really immaterial. Somehow, some way we have got to get back on track. We have got to listen to the gentleman from Mississippi when he points out validly that our debt is still going up.

My last comment at this stage is yesterday I was back home in my district, and I had a group of seniors from Paradise High School that came out. We got into a little bit of this budget and impasse and you do not want to get too detailed because most folks' eyes glaze over when we start talking about these numbers, but I made the point of \$4.6 trillion projected surplus and how can you spend projected surpluses when you cannot predict tomorrow and that the Blue Dogs have said we ought to use most of this money to pay down the debt because that is the only way you change the charts of the gentleman from Mississippi where they are meaningful is by paying down the debt.

One young lady raised her hand and said, "Mr. Congressman, how can we have a surplus when we owe \$5.7 trillion?" Try answering that question to a senior and getting away with it.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. I thank the gentleman. Just two last points I would like to make because I know the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) has been very patient waiting on us.

Number one, getting back to defense. I would gladly compare the last 6 years that the Democrats ran the House versus the first 6 years of the Republicans. In the last 6 years of the Democratically controlled House, this Nation funded 56 new naval vessels. In the first 6 years that the Republicans ran the House, they funded only 33. I have heard people this day give speeches about Democrats being weak on defense; and yet in the 6 years, the last 6 years we controlled the House, we built almost 20 more ships than the present majority.

I would also remind people that as we begin to look at paying off this horrible debt, I would ask every American from a patriotic point of view to keep one thing in mind. Almost \$5 trillion of

this \$5,676,178,209,886 worth of debt occurred in the lifetimes of those of you born since 1980. One of the common misperceptions is that, well, if we are this far in debt and our Nation has been around for almost 200 years that we somehow have done a proportional share of that debt. That is wrong.

□ 1930

Almost all of this debt, if you have been born since 1980, has occurred in your lifetime on benefits that were there for you, either winning the Cold War, building roads, taking care of health care, whatever.

I think that this generation has a moral obligation to pay our bills. I am the father of three. I am not going to stick my children with my bills. To do so would be morally wrong. As a United States Congressman, I think it is morally wrong for this generation to stick the next generation of Americans with our bills. I would pray that those seeking this office, I would pray that those seeking the office of the Presidency of the United States, would come to the conclusion that before we talk about trillion dollar tax breaks, mostly geared towards those people who could write thousand dollar contributions to their campaign, or before we talk about new spending for new programs that have traditionally been handled by the States, that we pay our bills and not stick our kids with our expenses.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, he reminded me of two other points that need to be made regarding the debt. Nothing up on your chart shows the unfunded liability of our Social Security system; almost \$8 trillion that that system is unfunded. Now, that will not affect anyone on Social Security today. Anybody 55 years of age and older does not have to worry about that, but my two grandsons have to worry about it because no one disagrees that unless we make some changes soon in the Social Security system that our children and grandchildren are going to have a real, real problem. That is the relevance of the charts that the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) was pointing out to us a moment ago. When you start borrowing from the trust funds, which we did, which we did for year after year after year, but now we have an opportunity to stop it. When you have an opportunity to stop it, we would like to really stop it, not just rhetorically but actually.

The record is going to show that this Congress has spent a good bit, we do not know how much yet because we are not through, will have spent a good part of this projected surplus.

Now, I want to also call attention to the alternative Medicare and Medicaid give-back bill that some of us would like to see considered. It is a much better bill than the one that we have been told by the current majority that we have to take or leave. It offers stronger protections for beneficiaries. It makes major improvements for beneficiaries,

especially low-income seniors, children and working families. It will really help your hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and hospices get the help they need so that they can stay open and provide access for seniors. It gives them certainty. Instead of giving just 1 year of guarantee of certainty, we say give our hospitals, our nursing homes, 2 years so that they can begin to plan to undo the terrible damage that has been done over the last several years.

It requires HMOs to offer a stable 3-year contract of service to your constituents as a condition of getting increased payments. What is wrong with that? Or at least why would we be opposed to giving 3 years guarantee if you are an HMO while at the same time saying we cannot give but 1 year certainty, why not give a little more certainty to all involved in health care? Now, this is an alternative. I mentioned that if you are going to be opposed, as I very strongly am, to the version that we have been given on a take it or leave it basis, we have offered something that negotiators could sit down and not give everybody everything of what they want perhaps but at least have a good discussion.

Mr. Speaker, that is the problem. I want to repeat so that every one of our colleagues who are hard at work in their offices tonight, that we are getting a little bit ridiculous in saying we are going to stay here and work when the only people that are required to stay here and work are our staffs, when the negotiators that are responsible for pulling together this last bit of compromise necessary are not even meeting. Some of the most vocal critics on this floor have missed vote after vote after vote, which indicates they have been on the floor criticizing inaction and pointing the finger at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue but have not been here themselves and working.

We can stop there. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of folks on our side of the aisle that are willing to help stop it, but it has to start somewhere and it has to start with leadership. Let me remind everybody again, the Senate has gone home. They have said in the climate that we are operating in now we cannot get any more work done.

If that is true, and that was the will of the Senate, the majority in the Senate have said let us go home. If we are not going to work, which we are not, then what are we going to do, Mr. Speaker? Let us not indicate we are going to work over the weekend and all we are going to do is cast two votes every day, a 24-hour CR and an approval of the journal. We will look awfully foolish. In fact, we have already looked rather foolish.

In the meantime, we are spending this surplus at a record rate. One Member, a very, very distinguished Member on the other side of the Hill has stated that he has found \$21 billion in this \$645 billion that is questionable spending. Well, that is done. Boy, it really makes

our challenges for the future greater. In the short term, we are sure looking ridiculous as a Congress. Quit pointing the finger at those on our side of the aisle. We are in the minority. You cannot blame the minority for not getting our work done. That is a responsibility that comes with the majority; and I hope after November 7 I can get the criticism honestly.

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REPUBLICAN AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the House tonight. Many of the Members are curious as to what is going to happen. The House and Congress have a responsibility to pass measures to fund our Government. I do want to say that the two previous speakers on the minority side, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), are not usually part of the problem; they are usually part of the solution. They are conservative and very moderate in their views and also very fiscally responsible, and I applaud their efforts. I worked many times with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), on the balanced budget amendment. I remember coming as a freshman with a gleam in my eye, coming from the private sector saying that we must balance the budget. He, in fact, was one of the leaders on the other side calling for fiscal responsibility. So I do not consider the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) or the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) part of the problem.

We do have disagreements on some of the reasons why we are here. The reason why we are here is we have 435 folks. I always joke that my wife and I almost not a day passes, although I love her dearly, been married 28 years and there is only two of us but there is not a day that the two of us do not disagree on something. That does happen. As the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) says, imagine serving in a place where you have 435 class presidents and all of them think they are right; not to mention that we have to deal with another body, the very esteemed Senate that Bob Dole used to say one of the things he enjoyed over there with the Senators is watching paint dry.

They sort of take their time in getting things done. That may be the case here, and that was really what the Founding Fathers intended that we do have someone that can look at problems with a longer term and then the House, which is the people's house and immediately responsible, we are all up for election every 2 years and responsive to the people, but we are here because there are differences. Some of them are glossed over by the media and not apparent, and many people in America, my colleagues, are out there

just trying to make a living, get their kid through school and pay their bills and make certain that they provide for their future and they do not pay a whole lot of attention until hopefully an election comes up or some major issue, but there are some differences. There are some things in the bill that are unpalatable that are just not acceptable to us on this side.

I come from a State, Florida, that has suffered from illegal immigration. In fact, I held a hearing in Fort Lauderdale yesterday and after the hearing I met with Coast Guard officials; and they said, Mr. MICA, we have some news for you and it is not too pleasant. They said the numbers of illegal immigrants coming in to Florida off the coast has dramatically increased. I said, where are they coming from? They said, it is from all over, Chinese, coming in through the Caribbean and the Florida waters, Haitians, Dominicans, South Americans in large numbers. We have a number of countries in South America that are undergoing severe crisis, Colombia. The situation in Panama has been difficult since the United States left there. Ecuador, Venezuela has been destabilized by some of its current government and other problems throughout Latin America.

So I think that one of the provisions that has raised some great concern is the President's insistence on granting amnesty to literally millions of individuals. Now, I must also speak from the standpoint of being the grandson of immigrants on both sides of my family, Italian and Slovak immigrants who came here almost 100 years ago, worked in the factories and worked real hard to raise families and did not have any government programs; had to come here in good health; had to fend for themselves and something has gone wrong if, in fact, we do agree to granting amnesty at this time. What a message that would send to so many people abroad. The United States does not pay any attention to its laws. You can come in illegally and you will be granted amnesty and can stay here. It is sad. We have also created sort of a haven and magnet.

One of the ladies that I talked to recently at home came up to me and she said, Mr. MICA, I have a neighbor down the street and she is here. She is not a citizen. And she said to me, Mr. MICA, I get less than \$500 a month in Social Security. I worked all my life. I am an American. I was born here and the lady down the street is not a citizen, not here in the same manner that others have come here. She gets more payments than I do. She has all kind of benefits and health care and other things that she did not have. Somehow the system has skewed in the wrong direction. But for us to cave in at this point and to go along with the President's demand to grant amnesty to millions of people who are here illegally, it just sends the wrong message.

For those who came legally and worked and raised families, were con-

tributing citizens, one of the neat papers I have in my family's little folio is the naturalization papers of my grandparents. I know how much they treasured becoming citizens in a legal manner. Again, we throw a lot of that out the window if we just cave and accept this. What a wrong message we send. Here we are increasing the bipartisan and immigration spending in these bills, but why bother if we ignore the laws that set some parameters and some standards by which you become a citizen in an orderly fashion? Let me say I am a strong proponent of legal immigration.

□ 1945

It has made this country great. It is diversity; it is bringing people from all over the world together in a melting pot and allowing people to be their best. To have the best opportunity is something I would never want to diminish in any way. But this is wrong. It is a wrong message. I am sorry we have a disagreement on this; but again, it is something that I think lies below the surface, but also creates opposition at this juncture.

There are other serious differences: school funding. Now, all of these differences are not money, and I have to agree with the gentleman who just spoke on the other side, we are spending in these bills more than we would want. Some of us like myself and some of the others who spoke again from the other side are fiscal conservatives, and we want to stay within those limits that we worked for in 1997 to create a balanced budget, to get our Nation's finances in order. Mr. Speaker, one can do amazing things when one has their finances in order, whether it is personal or Federal. It is not that complicated. We just had to limit the amount of expenditures not exceeding the money coming in, the revenues; and we balanced the budget in a short period of time. But we have to stick to that formula.

Now, we are very fortunate. The economy has dramatically improved. We have more money coming in. The estimates are somewhere around \$240 billion. We do not know exactly how much we are going to spend of that annual surplus. It may be \$30 billion, \$40 billion, I have heard estimates as high as \$60 billion, and some of us on both sides of the aisle disagree with that.

But at some point we have to stop the expenditure of that surplus, because then our promises and our pledges to balance the budget that we made in 1997 are meaningless. So there are many people who do not want to go home. They will stay here through the election; they will stay here until the Potomac freezes over and we can put up the Christmas lights and begin that celebration of the holiday, because they do not want to spend us back into deficit. They do not want to spend the surplus.