

he has not read and studied his own tax plan, and that these are innocent, though major, mistakes.

The first is that the Governor of Texas tells us that under his plan, every American who pays taxes will get tax relief. He has said this over a dozen times, and it is false a dozen times. In fact, under his tax plan, 15 million American families who pay Federal taxes will get not one penny of tax relief.

Of course, over \$700 billion of tax relief over 10 years will go to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans, but not one penny will go to 15 million American families who work every day, who pay taxes to the Federal government in the form of FICA taxes taken from their wages, and who work at the lowest-paying jobs in our society.

The second false statement made by the Governor in both the second and third debates was that his plan provided only \$223 billion over 10 years of tax relief to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. He was off. It is really closer to \$700 billion of tax relief, because in stating the degree of tax relief that he provides to the wealthiest 1 percent, he simply forgot that his plan involves the repeal of the estate tax, which will eventually cost this country \$50 billion a year, or \$500 billion over the 10 years that is our traditional measure of the effect of tax proposals.

That is why it is true that the Governor's tax plan will provide more to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans than he proposes to provide to strengthen our military, improve our education, improve Medicare, and provide for our health care system, or improve our health care system, combined.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to address the need for school construction, which is also a tax issue, because the tradition in this country is that the Federal government provides help for those school districts that have old schools that have need for new schools because of growth, or that need schools with smaller classrooms to provide for smaller class sizes, and therefore need more classrooms.

The tradition is that we do that through the Tax Code by allowing school districts to issue tax-exempt bonds. We on the Democratic side have urged that \$25 billion of urgently-needed capital be provided to these school districts, not in the form of tax-exempt bonds but in the form of tax credit bonds, which will be even better for the school districts because they will not have to pay even reduced interest, they will pay no interest at all. The Federal Government will pick up the tab.

In fact, though, the tax bill that left this House provided only half of the \$25 billion of tax credit bonds that these school districts need. But that tax bill did address another problem. That problem appears to be that the sub-specialist tax lawyers who specialize in tax-exempt bonds feel their job is too boring. I could not agree with them more.

I myself am a tax nerd of long standing, but even I, after many years of reading the tax regulations, had but one solace, and that is, at least my job was not as boring as those of my brethren who subspecialized in tax-exempt school bonds.

Now these bond counsel want something exciting, and they have persuaded this House to supposedly help school districts by changing the arbitrage rules so that school districts will be encouraged not to use school bond money to build schools, but to delay that for up to 4 years, and to take that money on an exciting trip to Wall Street. Mr. Speaker, school bonds should be used to build a school on Elm Street, not a skyscraper on Wall Street.

But the main component of the tax bill that this House passed designed to help school districts is one that does not provide them with tax credits, does not cut their interest costs, does not provide capital to build schools, but instead, encourages those school districts to gamble with the school bond money.

Mr. Speaker, that is how Orange County, California, went bankrupt. That is no help to school districts at all. We need to take back that bill and provide a full \$25 billion of tax credit bonds so schools can be built around the country.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY STANDARDS ON CLOTHES WASHERS ERODES FREE MARKETPLACE AND ELIMINATES CONSUMER CHOICE

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, over the last few years, the extreme green have colluded with appliance manufacturers, with the rubber stamp of the Department of Energy. This collusion, if left unchecked, will erode the free marketplace, and it would eliminate consumer choice.

I am talking about the DOE's recent decision to propose mandates for clothes washers. On October 5, the Department of Energy rolled out its latest tome of regulations on American household appliances. Their proposed mandate would require that consumers buy clothes washers that are available now but which consumers refuse as a rule to buy.

Those requirements mean only one thing, that the type of washing machine in tens of millions of American homes will soon become a thing of the past. It means that the reliable, affordable, effective washers to which we are all accustomed will have to be replaced.

The Department of Energy, the appliance manufacturers, and a handful of extreme special interest groups together wrote this new mandate. They left out a few people: the consumers and the taxpayers. In my opinion, the

consumers and the taxpayers are the biggest stakeholders when it comes to home appliances. They are the ones who have to shell out their hard-earned money when their washer breaks down.

Unfortunately, it is the 81 million owners of washing machines in homes across the U.S. who were the only ones left out of this decision. The average American family is not yet even aware of the proposed mandate.

Mr. Speaker, how many working families do we know who come home after a long day at the office to sit down and read the tedious technical Federal Register every day? I can assure the Speaker, not very many. It is for exactly this reason I am raising this issue, to make the public aware of the flawed regulations coming out of the DOE.

Not only is the Federal government going to take away their choice in the marketplace, but to add insult to injury, it is going to force them to shoulder the inordinate additional cost of meeting the new mandate.

I do not know how many Members of Congress have been out shopping for a front-loading washing machine lately, but if they had, they would come in with a clear case of sticker shock. Many models meeting the proposed efficiency levels are well over \$1,000; yes, I said over \$1,000. Compare that to the typical top-loading machine that sells for around \$400.

Even by the scantest DOE calculation, the consumer will have to part with at least \$240 extra for washers that meet this new requirement. All told, that adds up to over \$1,000 more per household. Again, those are the low estimates.

The administration's own analysis shows that millions of customers and consumers will never be able to recoup the higher prices. Low-income households, households with fewer occupants, such as senior citizens living alone who use washers less frequently, and those households in areas where energy costs will be disproportionately higher are the ones most affected. Those who can least afford it are unlikely to recover the additional cost that is required.

Then, after having to pay hundreds more at the appliance showroom, the proposal provides for the manufacturers to recoup millions of taxpayer dollars. Let us get this straight. That is right, the back-room deal includes \$60 million per manufacturer in tax breaks, tax breaks for the manufacturers, not for the consumers.

Mr. Speaker, several points need to be made concerning these proposed regulations. First, the regulation would hurt working families by severely limiting what type of clothes washers, and it also includes air conditioning and heat pumps, can be purchased.

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It forces homeowners to buy products they have shown they do not like. Front loading machines make up less

than 10 percent of current washer sales. The special interest groups have even publicly stated that American consumers simply do not want this type of washer.

Let me quote for my colleagues what some of the appliance manufacturers have said, I am quoting, "selling in the marketplace is easy if there's a standard in place. It's not a matter, necessarily, of consumer acceptance."

Another executive from the appliance industry claims, and I am quoting, "Federal standards provide the only meaningful route to appropriately higher energy efficiency for appliances."

Here is where it gets downright sad. Taxpayer dollars are being spent for outlandish trumpeting public relations events the new mandates. The examples include tax dollars spent on a few country western music series to promote the regulations and also to give away free washing machines. Who do you suppose pays for those? Try the Department of Energy.

Back in May, May 23, the Department of Energy stated that the new regulations would be proposed in June of 2000. Finally, in October, DOE got around to publishing the proposal with a deadline for public comment only 60 days later. It would appear after months of bureaucratic delay, the Energy Department now appears in a rush to regulate. Secretary Bill Richardson said that the department is, I quote, "on a rush to establish a legacy."

The Department has done the absolute minimum it can do to allow the people's voice to be heard by setting the minimum comment period of 60 days. That is why I introduced legislation to extend the public comment period to 120 days.

I ask for consideration from all of my colleagues. I have over 20 cosponsors at the present time. Please, come on board, support a common sense bill.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, the "Extreme Green" have colluded with appliance manufacturers with the rubber stamp of the Department of Energy. This collusion, if left unchecked, will erode the free marketplace and eliminates consumer choice. I am talking about DOE's recent decision to propose mandates for clothes washers.

On October 5, the Department of Energy rolled out its latest tome of regulations on American household appliances. Their proposed mandate would require that consumers buy clothes washers that are available now, but which consumers refuse, as a rule, to buy. Well, those requirements mean only one thing—that the type of washing machine in tens of millions of American homes, will soon become a thing of the past. It means that the reliable, affordable, effective washers to which we are all accustomed, will have to be replaced.

The Department of Energy, the appliance manufacturers and a handful of "extreme" special interest groups together wrote the new mandate. They left out a few people—the consumers and the taxpayers. Well, in my opinion, the consumers and taxpayers are the biggest "stakeholders" when it comes to home

appliances. They're the ones who have to shell out their hard-earned money when their washer breaks down. Unfortunately, it is the 81 million owners of washing machines in homes across the United States who were the only ones left out of this decision.

The average American family is not yet even aware of the proposed mandate. Mr. Speaker, how many working families do you know that come home after a long day at the office and sit down to read the tediously technical Federal Register every day? I can assure you—not many. It is for exactly this reason that I am raising this issue, Mr. Speaker, to make the public aware of the flawed regulations coming out of DOE.

Not only is the Federal Government going to take away their choice in the marketplace, but to add insult to injury, it is going to force them to shoulder the inordinate additional cost of meeting the new mandate. I don't know how many Members of Congress have been out shopping for a front-loading washing machine lately. But if they had, they would have come home with a clear case of sticker-shock. Many models meeting the proposed efficiency levels are well over \$1,000. Yes, I said over \$1,000 for a home washing machine. Compare that to the typical top-loading machine that sell for under \$400. Even by the scantest DOE calculation, the consumer will have to part with at least \$240 extra for washers that meet the new requirements. When it comes to the regulations on new air conditioners and heat pumps, the additional initial costs are estimated to be at least \$274 and \$486 respectively. All told that adds up to over a thousand more dollars per household. Again, those are the low estimates. The administration's own analyses show that millions of consumers will never be able to recoup the higher cost.

Low-income households, households with fewer occupants—such as senior citizens living alone—who use washers less frequently, and those households in areas where energy costs will be disproportionately harmed. Those who can least afford it are unlikely to ever recover the added additional cost.

Purchasing a new washer, air conditioner, or heat pump for one's home or apartment is not a trivial matter. These appliances cost several hundred dollars and the purchase is typically required with little if any ability to plan for such a large expenditure. Now the administration is making such a purchase much more expensive and eliminating consumer choice in the process.

Then, after having to pay hundreds more at the appliance showroom, the proposal provides for the manufacturers to recoup millions of taxpayer dollars. That's right—back-room deal includes \$60 million per manufacturer in tax breaks. Tax breaks for manufacturers—not the consumers. This new tax shelter for appliance manufacturers means that the U.S. taxpayer carries an even larger share of the Federal tax burden in addition to the higher appliance costs.

In crafting their backroom deal, the special interests—these so-called joint stakeholders—decided that U.S. consumers and taxpayers would gladly accept their decision. I for one, don't think they should. America was founded upon the fundamental principles of freedom. Freedom to choose our words, freedom to choose the type and location of where we work, and the freedom to make individual choices in a free and open marketplace. Gov-

ernment should not be in the business of regulation, for the sake of regulation. Too many Washington bureaucrats and lobbyists are spending too much of the taxpayers money on needless regulations.

Mr. Speaker, several points need to be made concerning these proposed regulations. First, the regulation would hurt working Americans by severely limiting what type of clothes washers, air conditioning, and heat pumps can be purchased. It forces homeowners to buy products that they have shown that they don't like. Front loading machines make up less than 10 percent of current washer sales. They are available out there in the marketplace, the simple fact is that the consumer doesn't want to buy them. The special interest groups have even publicly stated that American consumers simply don't want this type of washer.

Let me quote for you what some of the appliance manufacturers have said. "... selling it in the marketplace is easy if there's a standard in place. It's not a matter, necessary, of consumer acceptance." Another executive from the appliance industry claims, "... Federal standards provide the only meaningful route to appropriated higher energy efficiency for appliances, because consumers have historically shown a disinclination to pay more for products that are more environmentally friendly. That is true even when the total cost of owning and operating such products is less than that of current models."

Now here is where it gets downright sad. Taxpayer dollars are being spent for outlandish public relations event trumpeting the new mandates. The examples include tax dollars spent on a free country/western music concert series to promote the regulations and also to give away free washing machines to the people in Bern, Kansas, and Reading, Massachusetts to promote the front-loading washers.

Mr. Speaker, back on May 23, 2000, the Department of Energy stated that the new regulations would be proposed in June 2000. Finally in October, DOE gets around to publishing the proposal with a deadline for public comment only 60 days later. It would appear that after months of bureaucratic delay, the Energy Department now appears in a rush to regulate. Secretary Bill Richardson has been stated that the Department is "on a rush to establish a ... legacy."

The Department has done the absolute minimum it can to allow the people's voice to be heard by setting the minimum comment period of 60 days. Working Americans should not suffer as a result of gross bureaucratic delays and ineptitude. Americans should not have their input limited as a result of bureaucrats rushing through midnight regulations before the close of this administration. The Department has given Congress and the American people virtually no time to examine the new rules. The people deserve more time than the minimum to defend our rights.

That is why I have introduced legislation to extend this public comment period and to defend the people's right to fully participate in government and to retain some measure of control over own lives against an insatiable administration, seeking ever-greater powers over them.

My bill would extend the public comment period on the flawed regulatory proposals pertaining to clothes washers, air conditioners, and heat pumps. I am proud that a bipartisan

group of now over 20 esteemed colleagues have now joined me in my efforts.

Americans should be granted more than the absolute minimum 60 days allowed by law. The special interest groups had several years to craft this new mandate—the people need more than 2 months to respond. The special interest groups exploit the disparity to tread on the will of the people. This bill seeks to rectify that disparity and to protect the best interests of the people.

All the elements for a comment extension are present. Nearly all American families are directly and substantially affected, the inclinations and desires of the people are thwarted, the cost increase of the mandate is high—more than doubling costs in some cases, and a last minute rush for “Midnight Regulation” is being pursued by the administration.

Apart from the higher cost and reduced freedom of choice, the Administration has not been fair to consumers and taxpayers during the development of the standards. DOE is supposed to disclose potential standards and impact analyses in a public process. Instead it bases its regulatory decisions on proposals submitted by special interest groups meeting in backrooms. Persons and groups who normally would speak to—and defend—the interests of consumers and taxpayers, and who have in years past been invited to participate, have been excluded.

Congress must assure that consumers are protected against faulty administration regulations. A public comment period of 120 days is required, given that the public has been largely excluded from the entire rulemaking process. This additional time will allow a thorough review and evaluation and a proper determination that has the consumers best interests in mind. I urge all Members to join me and fight to stop the erosion of the free marketplace and to prevent the elimination of consumer choice.

THE WORK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS NOT DONE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this is the latest a Congress has met, absent a national emergency like World War II before an election. Now the work is not done. We do not yet have a fiscal year 2001 budget and the fiscal year began on October 1, which means that many essential government functions have yet to receive regular funding.

In an effort to achieve that, furious negotiations took place over the weekend. In fact, at 1:20 in the morning, night, agreement was reached between the Republicans in the House and the Senate, and the Democrats in the House and the Senate, and the White House.

There has been much talk on the other side of the aisle about the fact that the President was not in the room. They are right, the President was not in the room. They had 210 items in disagreement. This was grinding work for legislators and staff, but the President did something that the Republican

leadership did not do. The President empowered and sent his head of office of management and budget and gave him the authority to negotiate and said I will stand behind you. Go get the best deal you can get.

At 1:20 in the morning the people in the room decided they had the best deal they could get. Now, the next morning, the President stood behind his negotiator. The Republicans in the Senate stood behind their negotiator. The Democrats on the Senate stood behind their negotiator. The Democrats in the House stood behind their negotiator, but the whole agreement was blown up and Congress is still here because of one group, the Republican leadership.

When their negotiator came in who they had thought, he thought they had, empowered to negotiate for them, they said you did what? You did what? You reached an agreement on workplace health and safety? Do you not know that the people who are paying for our elections, paying for us to keep the House of Representatives and win the Presidency object to that. And the phone has been ringing off the hook. They already heard about it.

The National Association of Manufacturers called. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce called. By God we would not even want to have contingent, contingent workplace health and safety regulations, which is what the agreement was. Everybody says we do not know who the President is going to be, and what the Republicans negotiated was we will have new workplace health and safety regulations, but they will not go into effect until next June.

Apparently, the Republican leadership who is touting they are leading in the polls for the House and for the Presidency does not even trust their candidate for President not to sign these reasonable workplace health and safety regulations come next June, because they blew up the negotiations.

Since then they have pretended, by keeping us here, that we are negotiating. We are not negotiating. In fact, the Republican who last night, the leader who stood up to engage in the discourse with the Democrat side of the aisle, when he was asked where and when will the negotiators next meet, he said, we will get back to you on that. Well, guess what? They have not called. They have not called.

The Senate left town in disgust, Democrats and Republicans alike. We are still here, and they are pretending that they are being reasonable in negotiating, because they are trying through a stealth agenda to hide what they are going to do if they control everything next year, and that is something people need to think about is what if they control everything. Workplace health and safety increases out the window. Deal with global warming, very serious problem, no way. They do not believe in it.

How about the oil companies? The oil companies are gouging the heck out of

the American people. I have introduced legislation here to deal with that problem. No, cannot deal with the oil companies. They are big contributors too.

We heard earlier about a Medicare prescription drug benefit. Well, that was pretty inaccurate, because actually what the so-called bipartisan agreement which had about a dozen Democrats on it, Blue Dogs, that passed here was not on Medicare. It was to set up a new, very expensive, privatized system of pharmaceutical coverage for seniors that provided actually nothing. Because the head of the Health Insurance Industry of America said, well, you know, we are really not interested. None of my companies are interested in offering a pharmaceutical benefit only.

Then the Republicans came up with a new plan, we will bribe you to do that. We will give subsidies to you. We will give you the subsidies. You get the subsidies, you take them, no matter what, if you say you will offer a plan, with no conditions on the plans they will offer, no conditions on deductibles, no conditions on who they would redline out and not cover, no conditions on patients' appeals or rights.

They said that is not enough, some of those drugs are pretty expensive. They said well, we do not want to get in the face of the pharmaceutical industry, then they give subsidies to the pharmaceutical industry also. This is a farce.

REFUTING STATEMENTS REGARDING LACK OF PROGRESS OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am here in Washington, D.C. representing the constituents of the 16th district in Florida, and I have heard a lot of conversation tonight about the lack of progress of this Congress. I must refute those statements vehemently and personally.

I came to Congress in 1994 with a freshman class of the 104th Congress. What we inherited at that time was 40 years of Democratic leadership which brought us to record deficits, annual deficits, huge amount of monies owed, the U.S. Treasury or the taxpayers, \$5.7 trillion of accumulated debt, a government that was spending money out of Social Security, Medicare and every other trust fund that they could find, and borrowing money out of Social Security in order to camouflage the real size of the deficit annually.

When we were elected, we were told that we could expect, if we allowed the President and the majority party at that time to continue their spending ways, we would be probably this year spending in excess of \$200 billion or \$300 billion over and above what came in in revenues.

Interestingly, 6 years later, as I am about to celebrate my sixth anniversary of being elected to this important