

Mr. Speaker, 22 days ago we sent a letter to the President asking him to join us in this effort, but he has refused to respond.

The only thing we have heard on the matter is what the President said to the newspapers: "It depends on what our spending commitments are."

In other words, he would rather add billions of dollars in new spending than pay down the debt, and that is what Governor Bush means when he talks about squandered opportunities.

APPROVE COMMONSENSE GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

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

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking and soon the 106th Congress may adjourn without passing common sense gun safety legislation. Today, we join people throughout the Nation concerned about young people and gun violence.

Earlier this week, I joined the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the minority leader, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) in calling on the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) to use his influence to complete work on the stalled Juvenile Justice Conference.

With the help of the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT), we can jumpstart the conference to approve child safety locks, to close the gun show loophole and to ban high-capacity ammunition clips. I am pleased that Senator JOHN MCCAIN has endorsed closing the gun show loophole.

Governor Pataki has already brought common sense gun laws to my home State of New York. We need to bring similar legislation to all 50 States. Is there grassroots support for this legislation? You bet.

The Million Mom March demonstrated that people across the Nation want to make their communities safe from gun violence. Just this week, college students around the Nation participated in First Monday 2000. I am pleased that students from Long Island's Hofstra University participated in this grassroots educational issue.

To date, the gun lobby has prevented the Congress from approving national gun safety legislation. We do not have to repeat the past. I ask the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) to consider this.

DEBT REDUCTION STILL BEING HELD HOSTAGE

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

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, today is day 23 of the debt reduction held hostage by the Clinton-Gore administration. It has been 23 days since Congress proposed to lock away 100 percent of

the Social Security and Medicare surpluses and dedicate at least 90 percent of the total budget surplus for debt reduction, but still no answer from the Clinton-Gore administration.

There will be an estimated \$268 billion surplus this fiscal year alone. Our question is simple: Should it be used to pay off our public debt, or should it be spent on ongoing Federal programs? Republicans are for using the surplus to pay off public debt.

Where do President Clinton and Vice President GORE stand?

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President and the Vice President to put debt reduction ahead of spending and agree to our 90-10 debt reduction proposal.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT OF 2000

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, the women in my district and women all across this country need to have the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 reauthorized.

The act was first passed in 1994 and has been a lifeline to women who are victims of violence. The current act would go even further by improving existing provisions and adding new ones, such as dating violence, the provision of transitional housing, the creation of supervised visitation and exchange programs for children, and expanding services to reach the elderly and previously underserved populations.

The new reauthorization was passed by this body on September 26, but it remains a top priority, because the other body has yet to pass it.

Mr. Speaker, the Women's Coalition of St. Croix, the Women's Resource Center in St. Thomas, and the Safety Zone in St. John are depending on us, the women and the families they care for, especially their children who also become victims and have a high risk of themselves becoming perpetrators, are depending on us.

I join the other distinguished women of the House and all of my 415 colleagues who voted for its passage in calling on the Senate to do the same and give us a Violence Against Women Act before we adjourn.

ANOTHER INVITATION FOR DEBT ELIMINATION

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, as you heard my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), say, it has been 23 days since this Congress asked the President to join us in dedicating 90 percent of next year's surpluses to paying off the debt; and once again, they still have had no response to that request.

The Clinton-Gore administration made it very clear they have a priority

on reducing the debt for Third World nations, in distant countries away from our shores. Yet they remain silent on this issue of debt elimination for our own country, for our own American working men and women.

Under this Republican-led Congress, we have already paid down \$350 billion in debt since 1998, and our plan is to further reduce the debt by an additional \$240 billion in the year 2001 and completely eliminate the debt by 2012, while at the same time preserving and protecting Social Security and Medicare.

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Eliminating the public debt is good for the economy and lowers interest rates for minor consumers on everything from home mortgages to credit cards, saving American families over \$5,000 a year.

Once again, I call upon the President to join me and my colleagues on this responsible middle ground to eliminate the public debt and ensure a stable future for Americans through generations.

URGING CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

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

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of the 106th Congress, there are a few bills that Congress must pass before we go home. To me, one of those "must pass" bills is the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. The House passed VAWA, but the other body has not yet acted on the bill. There is no more time to waste. This law must be reauthorized this year.

The program has done so much. Over the past 6 years, VAWA has helped millions of women, children, and families who have been victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault. This bill is not controversial. The leaders in the other body have a choice: they can continue to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, or they can turn their backs on them.

To turn their backs when they know that VAWA is working would be unconscionable. VAWA must reach the President's desk before Congress adjourns.

AMERICA NEEDS INTEGRITY IN THE ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, guess who made this claim: I have been a part of the discussions on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve since the day it was first established.

That boast was made a few days ago by AL GORE, who was not even elected

to Congress until 2 years after the Strategic Petroleum Reserve was established. He took credit for it, but he was not even in Congress when it happened.

Two days ago in the Presidential debates, GORE claimed that he was at a Florida high school when a student had to stand in class because the classroom was so overcrowded.

The principal of that school laughed when he heard the claim and said, "We have never allowed a student to stand in the back of a classroom or to stand in a classroom." He also added that the classroom in question, a science lab, has about \$150,000 this year alone in new equipment.

Why does he have to keep making these things up? What drives him to take credit for so many things that he clearly had nothing to do with?

Mr. GORE has a problem with the truth. We need leadership that knows the difference between self-serving fantasy and reality. Our country is hungry for integrity.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Members are reminded not to make personal references to the Vice President.

ASKING MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THE AMBER ALERT PROGRAM

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) introduced a resolution that recognizes the importance of a community initiative, a successful and effective way to combat child abduction called the Amber Alert Plan.

The Amber Alert is named after Amber Hagerman, a 9-year-old girl who was tragically abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas, in 1996. The tragedy of Amber's case was felt throughout north Texas, and it led to a search for new and innovative community responses to help law enforcement officials find missing children.

The Amber Alert is a partnership between broadcasters and law enforcement agencies. When law enforcement determines a child is missing, they activate the Amber Alert, by notifying area-participating radio stations. The stations agree to interrupt their programming and broadcast an emergency report, much like an emergency broadcast system. Their report gives details, like the description of a child or any cars involved. TV stations would broadcast Amber Alert crawlers across the front of their screen, which would resemble severe weather warnings.

I unveiled the Amber Alert in my district. Please join me and the gentlewoman from New Mexico in our efforts to recover missing children and curb

abductions as a cosponsor of the bill. The health and safety of our children is in Members' hands.

THE DEMOCRAT EDUCATION AGENDA

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), delivered an important address outlining the education agenda our party will pursue next year under a Democratic Congress. This agenda reflects our commitments to take bold action to make public schools strong and effective and to add, not replace, the efforts being made at the local level.

I applaud the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), for his efforts that began more than a year ago in a series of meetings at the Madison Building over dinners and good conversations.

Here is what we as Democrats propose on education: establish a major new partnership with States to lower class size and assure that every child has a qualified teacher; offer new investments while holding schools accountable for the results; make quality preschool available to every child; and provide direct grants and tax breaks to upgrade and modernize school facilities.

We have set down our marker. I look forward to working with the then Speaker, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), in a Democratic House to move it forward.

PASS THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT BEFORE THE END OF SESSION

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the women of America want the other body to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. This landmark legislation, which the House has reauthorized, has saved lives and rescued countless women from the vicious cycle of family violence.

From 1993, when the act was enacted, to 1997, the rate of intimate partner violence fell and the number of female victims of intimate violence dropped. American women have VAWA, the Violence Against Women Act, to thank for these gains.

But there is so much more that needs to be done. In 1998, three out of four victims of intimate-partner homicide were women. The number of women killed by an intimate partner increased 8 percent between 1997 and 1998. Women need VAWA so they can protect themselves and their children from domestic violence.

The Violence Against Women Act saves lives. I urge our colleagues in the other body, pass VAWA before the end of this session.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members should avoid urging action by the other body.

THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT MUST BE REAUTHORIZED NOW

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is just unthinkable that we should leave Washington and end this session without reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act.

Last week, by a powerful 415 to 3, this body overwhelmingly affirmed our responsibility to addressing and protecting the needs of all victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. Every 15 seconds someone in our country is battered. Every day, four women die in this country as a result of domestic violence.

Every person, woman, man, or child, should feel safe at home and in their neighborhoods. We must ensure that all victims, including immigrant women, are able to report and flee from domestic violence without threats of persecution or deportation.

We have the opportunity in these remaining days to pass VAWA. We should do it now.

TIME FOR CONGRESS TO PASS VAWA

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

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I will follow the Speaker's instructions in terms of not admonishing any other entity of the United States Congress. I would simply rise today to say that we need to have the Violence Against Women Act passed by the Congress and sent to the President for his signature.

Last Wednesday this House unanimously passed VAWA by a vote of 415 to 3. We must urge anyone else who can do that to do that.

VAWA expired on September 30. On September 30, the light went out on justice across this country on behalf of all of the women and children who are victims of violence or who are potential victims, including immigrant women.

Without this critical funding, programs serving women and their children will cease to exist. This is not a political game. It is the lives and well-being of women and children across