

quickly go. Some stay and leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same.

My constituents, Betti and Carlos Lidsky, are such people. Three of their four children, Isaac, Daria and Ilana, have an irreversible, incurable, degenerative eye disease known as retinitis pigmentosa which will eventually cause blindness. The Lidsky children are among the 6 million Americans who suffer from sight-debilitating diseases, and that number is poised to skyrocket as an additional 9 million Americans have presymptomatic signs of retinal degeneration.

I learned of these statistics through Betti and Carlos, who work tirelessly every day to raise awareness on these issues. They raise funds for research, and they work closely with researchers. They have testified before congressional committees, and this week they will be here in Congress lobbying us to make sure that each and every one of us works toward making blinding diseases extinct.

Betti, Carlos and their children, Isaac, Daria and Ilana, are the reason why we need to support research funding for the National Eye Institute. Promising clinical experiments are underway, and with our continued support, we can be sure that a cure is just around the bend.

PERMISSION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I have at the desk a personal request.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the leave of absence request.

The Clerk read as follows: Leave of absence requested for Mr. SKELTON of Missouri for tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman's written request will be granted.

There was no objection.

GENE DARNELL

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will attend and participate in a funeral for a long-time friend from my home area, former sheriff Gene Darnell, one of Missouri's truly outstanding law enforcement officers.

It is with sadness that I report his loss, which is a great loss to our State.

VOTE AGAINST THE TAX-CUT PROPOSAL

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I also wish to add that were I here tomorrow, I would be speaking and voting against the tax cut proposal. It is important that we in this House protect our farmers, strengthen our armed forces, preserve Social Security and Medicare, and invest in our schools and eliminate the Federal debt.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned we are getting the cart before the horse. We

need a budget before we can make this important decision.

TAX CUTS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, unlike the Soviet Union or the old kings of Europe, this country has always believed in limited government; but some here in Washington, D.C. seem to have changed their minds about that. Over the next 10 years we are going to collect more than \$5.5 trillion more than we need. That is almost an unbelievable amount of money. It is more than we need to pay off our public debt, shore up Social Security, fix Medicare, implement the President's education plan, and cover just about every other reasonable expense we have. Even then we will have more than \$2.5 trillion left over.

It is almost unbelievable that some in this body think we should keep that money in the Treasury until we can find something else to spend it on. This money is not the government's money. We are not supposed to take more than we need. We are supposed to be legislators, not thieves. We need to give this money back to the taxpayers who paid it. We need to pass the President's tax cut plan, and we should do it quickly.

DEFICIT-BUSTING TAX CUT IS WRONG

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

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, during previous Congresses, I made many tough votes to balance our Federal budget with balanced priorities: I voted for the 1993 Clinton budget; I voted for Penny-Kasich, the first bipartisan effort to cut spending significantly; I voted for a constitutional amendment to balance our budget; and I voted for the 1997 balanced budget.

For my efforts, I received the Concord Coalition Deficit Hawk Award and four very close election victories. I have paid my dues on this issue, and I believe my votes have benefited all our constituents.

I rise today because tomorrow's vote on the first installment of a deficit-busting tax cut is wrong. It would benefit my family and me, but it is wrong. We need a budget first to make certain we pass tax cuts we can afford. We need a budget first to make certain we will pay off our debts in this decade, the best tax cut for all Americans.

CUT TAXES NOW

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, taxes today are at an all-time high as a percentage of our economy. The fact is the Federal Government is currently sucking up more of the American economy than it took to win World War II. That is simply wrong.

But that is not all. At the same time the Federal budget is running record-level surpluses, we are also experiencing the largest tax overpayment in history. That is not only wrong, it must be changed as soon as possible.

Tomorrow is the opportunity. Tomorrow, we consider H.R. 3, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act of 2001. This bill will increase fairness in the Tax Code, allow every American income taxpayer to keep more of their own money and provide support to our economy at the same time.

This is a historic opportunity. It is a proper reaction. It is the right thing to do, and I hope Members on both sides of the aisle will join me in voting for this responsible and much-needed tax relief.

CONGRESS SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT NARCOTICS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, every major city in America is experiencing booming heroin sales. Kids with eyes watering and noses running are running the streets and dangerous. Now, if that is not enough to scare the welcome wagon, our borders are wide open. Wide open big time.

While Congress is building halfway houses, narcoterrorists are coming across the border and treating it like a speed bump. Beam me up.

I yield back the fact that we are wasting billions and billions of dollars on a failed narcotics policy that could provide for a prescription drug program for every senior in America. Wise up Congress and let us really do something about narcotics.

TAX RELIEF FOR EVERYONE

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, the surplus means it is time for immediate across-the-board tax relief for all taxpayers to boost our economy, create jobs, and give Americans more confidence by returning some of their surplus taxes to help them get through these uncertain times. We need to cut taxes for every American, especially low-income families.

President Bush's tax plan will get the tax surplus out of Washington and back into the pockets of working men and women. The Republican Congress has united behind it. It is time that Americans get tax relief, sooner rather than later.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is going to take in about \$28 trillion in taxes over the next 10 years. We are proposing to give back \$1.6 trillion. That is about 6 pennies out of every dollar. That is not a whole lot. We are saying that taxpayers should take this money and buy their kids school clothes, buy appliances for their homes, use it to pay utility bills, to help their house payment or their car loan.

Mr. Speaker, this money belongs to the American taxpayers. We need to give it back to them.

BUDGET SHOULD BE AGREED UPON BEFORE TAX BILL IS DEBATED

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

Mr. CARSON of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this, my maiden speech in the House of Representatives, to protest the policy conceived in haste, offered without consultation, and prosecuted almost without discussion.

The question before us is not whether a \$2 trillion tax cut is a good idea or a bad one, nor is it whether a tax cut is consistent with our acknowledged duties to protect Social Security and Medicare and to invest more resources in an increasingly burdened military. The question, instead, is whether or not a budget, a budget, the master plan guiding spending and investments decisions of the Federal Government, should be agreed upon before we proceed to debate the merits of a tax cut.

I support a tax cut, as do most of my colleagues. But a budget that sketches our spending needs against the backdrop of anticipated revenue will allow us to determine, and more importantly allow the people to determine, the magnitude of the appropriate tax cut. The sense of this approach is obvious, save to those people more interested in short-term political gain than the long-term solvency of our Federal Government.

NEW ADMINISTRATION MUST SUPPORT NEEDS OF MILITARY

(Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, in Newport News, Virginia, I attended the christening of what will soon be the U.S.S. *Ronald Reagan*, a new magnificent aircraft carrier. Mrs. Reagan, the President, Mrs. Bush, and other leaders were in attendance to witness the christening of this vessel and to honor our former great President.

It is only appropriate that this awesome vessel be named after the leader who led us to victory in the Cold War. This Nimitz-class aircraft carrier rep-

resents the "peace through strength" philosophy which played such an integral role in President Reagan's successful foreign policy.

It is crucial that we recognize President Reagan's extraordinary foreign policy achievements. This awesome new addition to our fleet will be a testimony to Reagan's enduring legacy of military dominance. America is a better and safer place for having had President Reagan in the White House. However, we cannot sit back and admire his achievements without noting that our world remains a dangerous place.

We must direct more attention to our armed forces by reforming and revitalizing our military. When President Reagan left office in 1988, the Navy had 15 aircraft carrier battle groups, and 594 ships in service. It now has 12 carrier battle groups and a fleet numbering about half as many ships. The new administration must support the needs of the military to ensure that our armed forces are well equipped and trained to carry out our Nation's priorities while providing support to our allies abroad.

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THE PRESIDENT'S TAX CUT

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

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I came to Washington to set aside partisan differences and bring common-sense logic to our debates. With breathtaking speed, we are rushing the President's tax cut proposals toward a vote. We have little time for questions, analysis or discussion.

There is no question that tax relief is one of the primary concerns for families and businesses across my State. During my campaign I supported tax relief proposals such as elimination of the marriage penalty and estate tax relief. But let us not kid ourselves. The breakneck pace adopted by many in Congress right now leaves no time to consider our priorities. We are sacrificing the wisdom of the longer view for the instant gratification of an easy tax cut.

Unfortunately, rather than having a thoughtful debate and review of an overall budget framework, Congress is set on a path to consider individual pieces of the tax relief package without first understanding their combined impact.

I come from Utah. In Utah we live within our means. We pay our bills, we balance our family budgets and we save for our future. Why should our government not behave the same way?

TAX CUTS ARE THE RIGHT THING TO DO

(Ms. GRANGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, the hardworking American people deserve a break. The economy is slowing down. Consumer confidence is low. A tax cut now would put money back in the pockets of those who know best how to spend it; that is, the American taxpayer.

A tax refund would provide the average family of four in Texas with over \$1,800 in relief. That may not seem like a lot of money here when we talk about billions and trillions, but that can make a real difference to a family in Fort Worth, Texas. That \$1,800 could pay credit card debt down or pay down a college loan or help with a down payment on a new home.

Just because the government has extra money in its possession does not mean it should spend it needlessly. If a contractor is building a house and comes in under budget, he does not get to spend that estimated surplus on marble counter tops or solid gold fixtures. The unspent money would go back to the homeowners.

These surplus tax dollars should go back to their rightful owners. The American taxpayers deserve a refund of their money. It is the right thing to do, and it is the right time to do it.

THE PRESIDENT'S TAX CUT

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

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, country singer Alan Jackson croons, "Who says you can't have it all?" We need tax cuts in America. We deserve tax cuts in America. We support tax cuts in America. But the American public is not fooled by the charade that is before us today. It is time to do what the American people do every day. It is time to do what American families do, American farms, American businesses. We simply must know what our budget is before we pass massive tax cuts in this country. There is no other responsible way.

Because make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, if we pass massive tax cuts without a budget, there is absolutely no way to address prescription drugs, to address education, to address military readiness in this country. The only way to do that is to spend the Social Security Trust Fund. That is just not right.

In closing, let us reflect on the musings of President Herbert Hoover, he of fiscal fame, who said, "Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt."

Mr. Speaker, we do not need another Herbert Hoover. We do not need anything like that. We need responsibility. We need discipline. We need a budget, Mr. Speaker.

TAX RELIEF AND A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET

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