

of tobacco by children. Eighty-eight percent of voters say they are at least somewhat concerned about youth tobacco use, including 60 percent who say they are very concerned. Among suburban women, 70 percent say they are very concerned about youth tobacco use.

Mr. Speaker, this poll shows voters want Congress to act. They are sending a message to Congress: Protect our kids, and not the tobacco companies. Voters clearly agree with the view that tobacco use is the most significant public health threat in the United States. They are telling us loud and clear they want Congress to enact legislation like the bill myself and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) which would grant the FDA authority to regulate tobacco and protect America's families and children.

Mr. Speaker, it is now up to Congress to provide strong protections for America's families. I ask my colleagues to join me in fighting America's number one health care threat, the death and morbidity associated with the use of tobacco products.

So as I finish, Mr. Speaker, let me just show a few of the recent cartoons that we have seen. Here are two little kids looking at this billboard. It says, "Yes, smoking is addictive and causes cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and other serious diseases." Then we have this beautiful lady in a bikini. The little boy is saying to the little girl, "What exactly is the message here?"

Finally, Mr. Speaker, here is big tobacco standing giving a talk with their own chart that says, "Fantastic Lights. Warning, these babies will kill ya," and big tobacco says, "... and as a good-faith gesture . . .".

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 327, SMALL BUSINESS PAPERWORK RELIEF ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (during the special order of Mr. GANSKE) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-22) on the resolution (H. Res. 89) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 327) to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, for the purpose of facilitating compliance by small businesses with certain Federal paperwork requirements and to establish a task force to examine the feasibility of streamlining paperwork requirements applicable to small businesses, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1445

ELECTION OF MEMBER TO COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 90) and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 90

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct: Mrs. Jones of Ohio.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE BUDGET AND TAXES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, during this next hour of Special Order time, a group of House Democrats known as the Blue Dog Coalition would like to talk about the subject of the budget and taxes. The Blue Dog Democrats led the effort during this past week to try to urge this Congress to adopt a budget first before we take the important votes on tax cuts for the American people.

The Blue Dogs and the 33 Members that are members of that coalition believe very strongly that our future prosperity depends upon our ability as a Congress to stay on the course of fiscal responsibility.

In order to provide tax cuts to the American people, in order to ensure our future prosperity, we believe that we must look at the whole budget picture of the United States before we can determine what size tax cuts we can afford.

The Blue Dogs as fiscal conservatives want the largest tax cut that we can afford. We believe very strongly that we need tax relief, and we want to vote for tax relief for the American people; but we also understand very clearly that it is important to give equal priority to paying down our \$5.5 trillion national debt.

A lot of folks do not understand all of this talk about the national debt. Why does it matter? The truth of the matter is, you might conclude that the Congress and the Presidents for the last 30 years did not understand it either, because the Congress and the Presidents who have served over the last 30 years are the ones that created the \$5.5 trillion national debt by running deficit spending in every year in those last 30 years. Only last year did the Congress and the President see a balanced Federal budget.

For the first time, we have been able to return this country to a course of fiscal responsibility and the Blue Dog Democrats believe very strongly that

we should not return to those days of deficit spending.

There are basically two ways we can return to deficit spending in this country. We can start spending too much money, and if we do not hold down spending, we are going to see deficits return.

Another way we can return to deficit spending is to cut taxes larger in a larger amount than we can actually afford, because both spending and tax cuts, if pursued in excess, will result in deficit spending on an annual basis by the Federal Government and return us to those days from which we just departed only last year.

Some people say, how big is the national debt? Frankly, the number is \$5.6 trillion, but I have no way of fairly reflecting to you how much \$5.6 trillion is, except to tell you that it is a whole lot of money. And it is going to take us a long time of fiscal discipline to pay it down.

Now, when I was a boy growing up, my dad always told me that the first order of business in terms of managing my finances is to pay my debts. I think the Federal Government should operate by the same maxim, pay our debts. After all, the debts that we are unwilling and unable to pay today will be paid some day by the younger generation who will follow us.

Our Federal Government, we are told, has a surplus. But do you realize that the surplus that we are talking about is only an estimate of what may occur over the next 10 years? The surplus is only an estimate. There is no place in Washington where you can go to a lock box or to a safe and find the surplus. It is an estimate of what may happen.

The surplus from last year was the first we have had in 30 years. It is very small. The surplus we are going to have this year is a little bit larger, but when you hear these optimistic discussions about tax cuts coming your way based on the surplus, keep in mind it is only an estimate of the surplus.

The surplus estimates we are talking about over the next 10 years largely comes in the second 5 years of this decade. Very little of the surplus comes in the short term.

When I was in a town meeting in my district in east Texas a few months ago, I was trying to explain all of these numbers, and a gentleman in the back row in overalls stood up and he said, Congressman, how can you folks in Washington talk about a surplus when you owe over \$5 trillion? Frankly, he stumped me for a few minutes.

It is hard to imagine how we can talk about a surplus when we owe over \$5.5 trillion. But that is what we are doing. In fact, if all the numbers on the projected surplus turned out to be true and we enacted the President's tax cut, it would be the last tax cut we could vote on in this Congress for the next 10 years, because it would virtually spend the entire surplus that is estimated to show up in Washington.

I have a chart here to my right that depicts a little bit about the uncertainty of that surplus. The surplus that I want to talk to you today about is the non-Social Security surplus, because we have surpluses projected over the next 10 years in the Social Security trust fund. We have surpluses projected in the Medicare trust fund; but Congress, at least half a dozen times in the last year, has voted that we should never, ever again spend the Social Security or the Medicare trust fund surplus. And we should not.

When the baby boomers begin to retire, and I am one of them, we are going to see a real financial crisis in Washington, because the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare trust fund, whose funds have been used during all these 30 years of deficit spending to finance things other than Social Security and Medicare, those funds are going to be needed.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, in about 14 years, for the first time in our history, the payroll tax that is collected to pay your Social Security and mine will be less than the amount of money we spend every year for Social Security benefits. You may say we have been real lucky for a long time.

We took more in payroll taxes every year than we paid out in benefits, but that is going to change in the year 2014.

Some people wonder what is the deal on this trust fund if you all have been taking all of this money in. Where is the money? Frankly, there is no money in the Social Security trust fund. It has been used for other things. The Social Security fund, if you went and looked at it today, it simply is an IOU backed by the taxpayers of the United States saying all that money that we borrowed we are going to promise that we will put it back some day, and it is backed by the taxing power of the Federal Government.

It does not sound too promising for those of you who are here who are under 30, because you are the ones that have to figure out how to pay it back if your Social Security is going to be there for you.

The Blue Dog Democrats believe we need to start now to pay back that money that we borrowed from Social Security and borrowed from Medicare and get ready for the retirement of the baby boomers when the Social Security trust fund is going to be the biggest financial problem faced by the Federal Government.

The Social Security Administration estimates that by 30 years from now, that if we kept everything the same, the same Social Security benefits for everybody, we would have to have a payroll tax that equalled 50 percent of your payroll check.

Now, you know we are not going to have a 50 percent tax on your paycheck to support Social Security, but it simply indicates the degree of the crisis that we are going to face as more and more people retire and become eligible for Social Security. In fact, in about 50

years, there will be two people collecting Social Security for every 1 person that is working in the workforce.

That is the real problem that Washington needs to be talking about. I think you can see from the discussion thus far that to say we have a short-term, 10-year estimated surplus that may not show up yet is telling only half the story. Because if you look out about 30 years, there is no surplus. Let us talk about 10 years.

This chart shows the 10-year non-Social Security surplus projections. The Congressional Budget Office has given us the estimate that there will be \$3.22 trillion in surplus over the next 10 years. That is their estimate.

They also warn us that they could be wrong. They say they could be wrong because it could be more than that. Their most optimistic projection is that there will be a \$6 trillion surplus outside Social Security and Medicare over the next 10 years. Their most pessimistic scenario is that we will be back into deficit spending by half a trillion dollars. That is without any tax cuts, by the way. This is just going forward like we are going now.

You can see the unreliability of the estimate of the surplus that everybody in Washington seems so anxious, as we say, to give back to the American people.

To be honest about the rhetoric, you cannot give back something that you do not even have yet. We do not have that surplus yet. It is a projection, and an iffy projection at best.

Here is the chart that shows you a little bit about the projected surplus, even assuming that the surplus turns out to be just as projected. Forget about the uncertainty, 84 percent of the projected non-Social Security surplus comes after the next Presidential election.

I have heard some people tell me that folks in Washington might be a little bit bold to suggest that we are going to project the surplus for the next 10 years and we are going to give 80 percent or 90 percent of that in the tax cut which, as I said, would be the last tax cut we could vote on for 10 years if the projections even turned out to be true, because the truth of the matter is, 84 percent of the surplus occurs after President Bush's first term.

Mr. Speaker, now, a lot of us may not be here to see these numbers in future years, the average tenure for a Member of Congress is about 6 years, and there may be some folks who are serving here in later years who might also like the opportunity to vote for a tax cut. But if we go down the course that the President is proposing, and even if the numbers turn out to be true, we are going to spend all of this surplus estimated for 10 years in one tax cut.

Some people say that is just not fair. Others behind us may have an interest in voting on tax cuts, too. Some have suggested that perhaps a tax cut to spend the surplus that is going to accrue over the next 2 years, 3 years, or

4 years might be an appropriate thing for us to do. But to think about granting tax cuts based on a surplus that is not here yet, that will not arrive for 10 years, may be a little bit more than this Congress should be doing.

□ 1500

The next chart looks ahead 5 years and then looks back and shows us how far off the projections have been in the past. Now I should have mentioned when I started showing my colleagues these charts where they came from. They are not charts that I put together or anybody in the Blue Dog Coalition. All of these charts were provided to us by a nonpartisan group called the Concord Coalition.

The Concord Coalition is made up of a respected group of business executives who try to provide the Congress the truth with regard to these numbers. The Concord Coalition has brought these charts to the floor to allow us to show you what they project with regard to the surplus and the tax and the budget issue.

So here are the projections, and it shows us how far off they have been in the last 20 years. Fortunately, in the most recent time frame, the estimates by the Congressional Budget Office have been conservative, and we have had larger surpluses than were projected. But in all of the years prior to 1995, the surpluses or the estimates of the Federal financial condition was off, and it was off in the wrong direction; and we found out that there were deficits there that the Congressional Budget Office had not projected.

In order to have surpluses into the future, the economy has to stay strong, because the budget projection is based on an assumption about economic growth. The Congressional Budget Office, when they told the Congress a month or so ago that we are going to have a surplus, were estimating that the economy was going to continue to grow at close to the rate that it was growing about a year ago.

I know all of my colleagues have seen what is happening to the economy, and right now they say that growth is zero. If growth is zero and stays there very long, all of these estimates of the surplus are going to be flown out of the window because they will not be worth the paper they are written on.

This chart shows us based on the past track record of the Congressional Budget Office for 5-year projections what the variation could be in the estimated surplus just for the next 5 years, not the next 10, just the next 5.

Here we are at the year 2001. We have been given this optimistic projection of a surplus right here on this middle line. But the CBO says, well, it could be up here; and it could be down here. Should we bet the future on a surplus estimate that is as uncertain as this is, even in the hands of the Congressional Budget Office that prepared it? I think not.

Here is what some of the experts have to say about the estimate of the

surplus. The Congressional Budget Office that prepared it says looking forward 5 or 10 years allows the Congress to consider the longer-term implications of policy changes. But it also increases the likelihood that the budgetary decisions will be made on the basis of projections that later turn out to have been far wrong. That is the folks that prepared the estimate.

How about the Controller General of the United States, David Walker. He recently warned members of the Senate Committee on the Budget, and I quote, "No one should design tax or spending policies pegged to the precise numbers in any 10-year forecast, no matter who prepares it."

Let us read what Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, told the Congress, specifically the Senate Committee on the Budget on January 25 of this year. Mr. Greenspan said, "Until we receive full detail on the distribution by income of individual tax liabilities for 1999, 2000, and perhaps 2001, we are making little more than informed guesses." Informed guesses. That is what your Congress is using to determine the financial future of your Federal Government.

We have several other Blue Dogs here who are well versed on some of these issues, and I want to recognize the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF). He has worked long and hard on trying to balance the budget; and I know he is as familiar as I am, if not more so, with some of these statistics.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) to talk to my colleagues a little bit more about this very critical issue.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, we had in the past decade the fiscal discipline to continue paying down the national debt of this country. Although there is much debate about what credit the previous administration ought to have for the incredible economic successes of the last decade, I think it is plain that one of the most significant things that that administration did was get our fiscal house in order; was continue paying down our national debt; was maintaining the discipline that kept interest rates low; that made homeownership possible for hundreds and thousands of families across this country that had never enjoyed the benefits of homeownership, by allowing them to have mortgage payments that they could make by keeping their families together under one roof.

Our successes I think over this last decade are owing in some strong measure to that discipline. Now that discipline is never easy to maintain. It is not easy to maintain when times are difficult when we would rather spend the money on programs that will help people that are hurting in this country. It is not easy to maintain that discipline in the good times.

One of the things that I admire about the Blue Dogs and the reason that I joined, as a new Member of this Congress, the Blue Dogs is that they have

consistently fought in good times and hard times not to lose sight of the need to pay down this debt in this country.

The surplus that we are enjoying is our surplus, the American people's surplus. The debt that hangs over our heads is the American people's debt. More accurately, much of the surplus that we enjoy is owing to the people that went before us, to our parents' generation who made the sacrifices, who built the universities, the roadways, the waterways, the infrastructure in this country that made this period of prosperity possible.

It is their money as much as our generation's. It is their Social Security and their Medicare that are underfunded.

We talk about a surplus in Social Security. Well, I suppose if we look at today, we can call it that. But if we look at the 75-year life of Social Security, what at the moment looks like a surplus over 30 years or over 75 years looks like a \$30 trillion deficit.

Maybe we should be talking about the Social Security deficit. What are we going to do about that? The only plan we have for dealing with Social Security solvency is the abstract idea that we will come together on some reform in the future. We do not know what that reform is going to look like. We do not know what the reform of Medicare is going to look like. We do not know, as we stand here today, what the budget looks like.

Yet, here we are making plans for tax expenditures over the next decade and beyond based on projections of the surplus that may or may not materialize, that even the people who gave us those projections say are at best informed guesses about the future; and we are ready to bet the farm on those guesses when we have no plan for Social Security and Medicare.

So I became a member of the Blue Dogs because they are committed to making sure we maintain the discipline in good times and in bad times to pay down that debt, that we consider that we are, not only talking about our parents' generation, the people who made this prosperity possible, but we are talking about our children as well and their future. Because, while it is the American people's surplus and the American people's debt, it is our children's future that we are talking about. If that debt goes on, if that debt grows, it is not you and I who will pay it. It is our children and their children.

So here today we have to talk about those that will come after and think about those who come after while we stand so ready to take credit for surpluses that will not materialize for 5 or 10 years.

Now, we have a tax plan; and we will have a major tax cut this year, and we should. And we should. The question is how large should that tax cut be? How large prudently can it be?

What I think we ought to be debating just as vigorously, though, that I hear so little about in this Congress and this

administration is what is our economic plan. Tax policy is simply one part of an economic plan and the economists say not even the most significant part. There are limitations to what we can do with fiscal policy in terms of our economy.

Now we lost massive, multitrillion dollar equity in the stock market this week. There are a lot of Americans very concerned about the downturn in this economy and what it means to their families. Many thousands of Americans have already lost their jobs.

What is the economic plan of the administration and the Congress? How does this tax proposal fit into that plan? The reality is there is no plan. There is no plan.

It is far more important that we focus here and now on what we can do to turn around these recent downturn signs, that we can put ourselves back on the road of incredible prosperity which we have traveled down for the last 8 years. We have to start focusing on the economy and what is our economic plan.

So I urge the Congress and all Americans, let us turn our attention together in a bipartisan way, in a bipartisan tradition that the Blue Dogs represent to finding a tax cut that works for all of the American people that is the size that we can afford that does not squander the investment that our parents made, and their Social Security and Medicare and does not squander the investment that we owe our children in good schools and in their future and in low mortgages and giving them the American dream of homeownership.

Let us work together across party lines and do what is right for this country over the long term.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) has shared, I think, the thoughts that all Blue Dogs share, and that is the importance of fiscal responsibility and the importance of paying down debt as well as providing tax relief to the American people.

One of the members of the Blue Dog Coalition who has been the most eloquent and outspoken on the issue of public debt and the importance of trying to deal with the public debt while we have the opportunity is the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) to discuss this issue.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) for yielding to me. I want to thank the young people and not-so-young people in the audience today. I hope I can make this halfway interesting. And since you cannot talk back to me, I am going to pretend like you can.

Now, I have town meetings in south Mississippi. I try to have at least two a month. On almost every instance, somebody in the crowd says, Gene, you know, we would have plenty of money for all those really important things,

like taking care of our military, taking care of military retirees, building roads, educating kids if you just did not waste so much money.

So I am going to pretend like one of you all said that. I would counter by saying, and probably shocking you when I told you that the most wasteful thing our Nation does, we squandered \$1 billion yesterday, the day before that, the day before that, tomorrow, and every day of the rest of our lives on interest on the national debt.

Now think about it. If you were to come down to Pascagoula, Mississippi, a town I am very proud to represent, and go to Greenville Ship Building, you would see that we are one of two suppliers of naval destroyers, surface ships, for our Navy. The DDG 51, the greatest destroyer in the world, half of them are built in Greenville Ship Building.

And if you were to see a DDG 51 loaded with weapons, loaded with fuel, getting ready to set sail, to go join the fleet, you would probably know that one of those destroyers cost about a billion to build. Yet, we only built three of them last year because the folks in this House, the Committee on the Budget, said, Well, we do not have enough money to build destroyers. But we had enough money to spend \$1 billion a day on interest on the national debt.

Now, let me show you, I do not get any great kick out of showing this to people, but I think it is important for Americans to visualize. When you think of 5.7 of anything, whether it is biscuits or dollars, it does not seem like many. So 5.7 trillion probably does not sink in until you look at it.

That is \$5,735,859,380,573.98 that your Nation was in debt on the last day of last month. So when the President or the Speaker or anybody in this town, and many reporters get caught up in this game that there is a surplus, tell you that there is a surplus, I would remind them, this is coming straight out of the United States Treasury figures. That is how broke we are.

Now, what is really frightening for you young people is, on the day you were born, if you were born before 1980, our Nation was less than 1 trillion in debt. So the debt has grown just in the past 21 years by over \$4.700 trillion.

Now, how does that affect you? Well, think about it. If we go to war tomorrow, you 18-year-olds, who is more likely to fight in it, me or you? You, because you are 18, and I am 47. If the schools get messed up, who is more likely to suffer, me or you? Again you, because you are still going to school; and I doubt I will ever go back to school. And if we run up horrible debts as a Nation, who is going to pay the interest on it the longest, me or you? Once again the answer is you.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, that is why I get disturbed when young people do not take time to vote because they are getting

stuck with this bill. The politicians in Washington are telling you that they are paying this debt down, and they are lying to you. I use the word “lie” because to intentionally mislead the public is to lie.

Since September of last year, the public debt has grown by \$61 billion. \$61 billion, guys, with a “B,” \$61,681,170,687.12. We could have built 61 destroyers for that. We could have built 12 aircraft carriers for that. There is no telling how many miles of highway or how many schools we could have built to help improve the lives of people, how much veterans’ health care we could have provided. The entire veterans’ health care budget for our entire Nation is only \$20 billion a year. But that is the increase in the national debt, and a billion a day is squandered on the interest on the national debt, the most wasteful thing we do.

Now I see some of you not-so-young folks in the audience who are probably close to Social Security age.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). The Chair must remind the gentleman from Mississippi to refrain from speaking to the gallery. All comments should be directed to the Chair.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Okay, guys, they called my bluff, I cannot speak to you anymore.

Mr. Speaker, for those Americans who are paying into the Social Security system and have paid into it, some a lot longer than others, you would probably be shocked to know that our Nation owes the Social Security trust system \$1.7 trillion. That is money collected out of every working American’s paycheck with the promise starting in the Reagan years, a Democratic House, a Republican Senate, a Republican President which promised that money would be set aside for retirement. They took the money, but they did not set it aside for retirement, it was spent on other things, and the Nation now owes the Social Security trust system \$1.7 trillion.

At the same time, they increased the fees on Medicare. It is a line item on pay stubs, and they are taking money out and setting it aside. It is supposed to help subsidize the cost of your health care after you reach 65. It will not pay for all of it, but it helps a great deal.

Right now our Nation owes the Medicare trust fund \$229.2 billion. Right now. The much-vaunted lockbox that my colleagues talk about, if you opened it up, you would discover it is nothing more than Tupperware; and if you opened it up, all you would find is an IOU for \$229 billion.

How many Americans have devoted their lives to defending our Nation? In my life time there was a war in Vietnam. There was the invasion of Grenada, there was Desert Storm, Panama, Kosovo, Bosnia. Americans are risking their lives today; there was a horrible accident that took place in Kuwait just 2 days ago which reminds

us how dangerous that job is. And they are in some really crummy places. They are in some nice places like Biloxi, but they are in some crummy places like Bosnia and Kosovo right now where it is cold, no fun whatsoever.

But the promise made to them is that you are not going to make as much money as you would if you were working in the private sector, but we are setting aside a good chunk of money so you will have a better-than-average retirement.

It is sad to find out that of the money set aside, our Nation now owes them \$163.5 billion. There is not a penny in that account. It has been spent on other things, and yet the President and the majority leader and others will tell us there is a surplus. When you owe a trillion here, \$229 billion here, \$163 billion here, you do not have a surplus, and it gets worse.

What about all of these nice folks who work at the Capitol, one of whom gave his life defending a Congressman’s life a couple of years ago. They pay into a public employees’ retirement system with the promise that money is set aside and spent on their retirement. They would be very disappointed to find out that our Nation owes the Civil Service Retirement System \$501.7 billion. So again, where is this surplus that people keep talking about.

The truth is that there is no surplus, and the truth is I think one of the reasons Americans are disillusioned with their government is for too long politicians have been promising them a surplus when there is not. They have been saying everything is rosy when it is not.

I think the best Americans are those Americans who tell the truth, and I think it is time for this Congress to rise to the occasion and tell the American people the truth. And before we do anything else, before we make any new promises, let us fulfill the promise to Social Security that we already made. Let us fulfill the promise to Medicare that we already made, and let us fulfill the promise to our military retirees that we have already made, and let us fulfill the promise to civil service that we have already made.

Mr. Speaker, I had a nice lady from home write me and say I would like to have that tax break, and put the money back in Social Security. Mr. Speaker, you cannot do both. Last year’s surplus when you pulled out the trust fund surplus was only \$8 billion.

Now \$8 billion to me is a lot of money, but it was not really \$8 billion because there were some accounting gimmicks; just as if you chose not to make your mortgage payment 1 month and the mortgage was \$1,000, and you decided at the end of the month, I have a thousand dollar surplus. No, you have a thousand dollars more than you owe on your mortgage, and you have to pay \$2,000 next month to break even.

Mr. Speaker, one of the tricks that was played last year that I am furious,

we normally pay the troops on September 29, a Friday. Almost half of the force now is married and a great many, almost half, have children. So you have a lot of young guys, onesies, twosies, threesies, fours who do not make much money who have one, two or three children. That is tough to do on an enlisted man's salary.

One of the gimmicks that the Republican majority passed last year was to delay their pay to October 1. Now for a Congressman, we make plenty of money. If you delay my pay for a couple of days, I am going to do okay. But for an enlisted guy, that means a weekend of digging around under the couch for nickels and dimes for baby formula and Pampers just so they could move that account from last fiscal year to this fiscal year so they could show that \$2.5 billion pay period like they saved that money. They did not save that money. So the \$8 billion surplus was only \$5.5 billion, and that is one gimmick that I caught. No telling how many others there are.

But they are the party that keeps saying that they love the troops. Doggone it, if you love the troops, pay them on time.

Mr. Speaker, how about replacing some of that old equipment. All of the folks who have been talking about a surplus, they have been in the majority for 6 years. And in the 6 years that the Republicans have controlled the House and the Senate, the United States fleet has shrunk from 392 vessels to 318. But they keep telling us they are for a strong national defense. If they are for a strong national defense, why do we have 74 fewer ships than when we started?

The Constitution says it is Congress' job to provide for an army or a navy. No money may be spent from the Treasury except by appropriation from Congress. Would it have been nice if the President had asked for more ships? Absolutely. But last year the Republican Congress did not even build as many ships as Bill Clinton asked for. Now, I think that is a shame, and I think we could do a heck of a lot better.

Let us take the last thing I want to mention before I turn this thing over. When they say we have all this surplus, if we have a surplus why are so many young American 18-, 19-, 20-year-old Marines and Army personnel riding around in 20, I am sorry, 30-year-old helicopters? If my colleagues were to go out today and see a Hughey flying over with Army and Marine markings on it, if they are lucky, they will be looking at one of the new ones. The new ones were built in 1972. If they look up and see one of the helicopters with the twin rotors on top, which is the CH-46 or CH-47, depending on which branch of the service, again if they are seeing one of the new ones, it was built in 1972.

So all these folks out there telling us we have a surplus cannot find the money to replace 30-year-old heli-

copters that young Americans are defending us with right now, risking their lives in right now, but they say they have enough of a surplus for tax breaks. I say they are wrong.

I say the most important thing we can do is to defend our Nation. I say the most important thing we can do is keep our word, quit lying to the American people about the true size of the deficit, and, yes, the most important thing we can do is keep our word to the folks who paid into Medicare, the folks who paid into Social Security, the folks who paid into the military retirement trust fund, and the folks who paid into the civil service retirement fund. Let us pay back the money we owe to them before we start making any new promises to any other Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) very much for the time.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi. I always am amazed at the common sense and clarity with which the gentleman speaks about the very complicated subject of the debt of the United States.

I think most people fail to recognize how much we owe to the Social Security trust fund, the Medicare trust funds, the government employees' trust fund, and the military retirees' trust fund. Those are debts that are going to come due some day and those dollars are going to be needed, and a part of that projected future surplus certainly needs to be put back in to those trust funds to be prepared for those retirements that will inevitably occur.

I am also pleased to have on the floor today a gentleman who is a very active member of the Blue Dog coalition, a prominent member of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER), who will address these issues.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), and others who have come out here this afternoon on the floor to talk about the Nation's debt.

The Blue Dogs agree that Americans are overtaxed, but we will always be overtaxed as long as we have a billion dollars a day in interest going out and as long as we have a 14 percent mortgage on this country. That is one of the reasons we are overtaxed. What we want to do as Blue Dogs is to try to keep our eye on the ball and to retire some of this horrendous national debt that we are leaving to those young people. That is how we give them a tax break. They do not have a voice here now. They cannot vote.

It is up to us and this generation to protect not only our own country, as the gentleman from Mississippi so eloquently pointed out with respect to the military, that we need to support in a

manner that we have not been able to find ourselves in a position to do, but we also need to look out for the young ones coming along and not burden them with \$5-plus trillion of debt with an interest bill of \$1 billion a day.

Now, the other point I would like to make is that the House leadership is asking this country to take a risk that we do not have to take right now. All of these budget projections we have heard about are, by anyone's definition uncertain, speculative in some regards. But more than that, the money is not here. It is not real. It is not even supposed to come in, except over the next 10 years. And then only 29 percent of it is supposed to show up here in the next 5 years, beyond our new President's term of office. Yet we are asked on the floor last week and again probably next week to start spending money, in either a tax cut or some other way, money that has not even shown up yet.

Any prudent businessperson, any person who is a head of a household, a family, I do not think would put his or her family at risk to the extent that we are being asked to do, nor would they put the country at risk or their business at risk if they had a vote here. And this is a risk that we are being asked to take on their behalf that we do not have to accept. We do not have to accept just what those who have more votes in this House than we do say.

□ 1530

We say, let us wait and see where we are. We can do a tax cut that we can afford, and we want to do that. We can do some spending on the military, on agriculture, on education, on medicine that the country desperately needs if we do it across the board in a businesslike fashion with a budget in place so that we at least have some idea of what the trade-offs are going to be. Had we rather retire debt or had we rather continue to pay a billion dollars a day in interest and have our young men and women in the armed services of this country flying around in 30-year-old helicopters? I do not think that is a very hard choice, but until we get a budget so that we know what the trade-offs are, we are flying blind, so to speak, as some of those young men and women are in these 30-year-old helicopters. That is an unacceptable risk to them, it is an unacceptable risk to us and to these young people that are here today, and in my view it is an unacceptable risk for our country.

What we are saying, basically, is two things: one, we are overtaxed and we always will be as long as we are carrying around this 14 percent mortgage on our country; and, secondly, we need a business plan in force and in effect so that we know and we hopefully can make some intelligent trade-offs as to how much of the money that belongs to the people that we should return to the people which we want to do, but, more importantly, what are the needs of this country.

I serve on the NATO parliamentary assembly which is the civilian arm of the NATO military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which as many of my colleagues know came into being after World War II. I have been to several countries as a result of that duty, and I have yet to see a country anywhere on this planet Earth that is strong and free and is broke. There is not one, there never has been one, and there never will be one.

That is why we sound like Johnny one-note on retiring some of this debt. That is why we say, keep your eye on the ball, Congress; continue to pay down the debt. As we can afford and as the money shows up, let us return it to the people who earned it, but let us also take care of the needs of this country and the people who live here. Let us take care of the medicine needs that people have, particularly the aged population, with a prescription drug benefit. Many people need that and need it desperately. There is no reason we cannot do it if we do things across the board with known trade-offs as to where we are and where we are going.

In my own business at home with my brothers and my father, I would not take a risk that we are being asked to take when we have these tax bills come through the House here without any budget. I do not think that you want us to take that risk. As I have said, at the pain of repeating myself, it is a risk the country does not have to take right now. We can do better than what we have done. We should do better than what we have done. And if we can get the support of people who believe that retiring debt and not taking heedless or unnecessary risk is important to the country, it is a fight that we hopefully can eventually succeed in.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas again for taking this time this afternoon and allowing some of us to come down and talk about the priorities of the country and talk about the children of this country and the education that they must have for this country to remain strong and free and also to try to put as best we can the financial integrity of the United States Treasury back where it rightfully belongs.

Mr. TURNER. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee, and I appreciate his commitment to trying to restore fiscal responsibility to our Federal Government. It would seem to me that after 30 years of deficit spending when we only last year saw the first surplus in 30 years, that we could somehow, some way figure out how to stay on the course of fiscal responsibility and continue to not only run surpluses but to be sure that we are paying down that \$5.7 trillion national debt that the gentleman from Mississippi talked about a few minutes ago, to allow us to be prepared for the real financial crisis that is coming in the next few years when the baby boomers begin to retire and the Social Security system and the Medicare system experience the great

strains that will come with the large number of people who will be over 65 and eligible for their Social Security and their Medicare.

We talk a lot about projections. The projection of the estimated surplus is no more than a projection, as the gentleman from Tennessee pointed out. It is not here yet. It may never be here yet. But what we do know for certain, and it is indisputable, that there will be many, many people retiring in just a few years that will cause the Social Security system to very quickly become insolvent unless we decide now, in advance, how to fix it.

Blue Dog Democrats have worked hard to try to urge this House to debate and adopt a budget first before we have votes on major tax cuts, because no businessman and no head of household of any family in this country could ever determine how much is available to spend until first they sit down and draw up a budget and stick to it. This House needs to do that. The Senate, on the other hand, has already agreed that they will adopt the budget resolution before they vote on tax cuts. In the House, it seems that it is more important to create the appearance of having tax cuts pass than it is to deal with it in a realistic way to ensure that the fiscal soundness of the Federal Government is preserved for the future.

We are in very difficult economic times. The stock market seems to go up one day and down the next. Many people have said we need tax cuts. Frankly, we all want to see taxes reduced. But the bulk of the surplus that we are talking about in Washington for tax cuts is not here now, and it will not be here for several years. Eighty-four percent of the projected surplus over the next 10 years arrives after President Bush's 4-year term in office. So we do not have a lot of surplus to be spending, or to be giving back in tax cuts. The surplus estimate may never arrive. In my view, the best thing we can do for economic stability in this country is for Washington to show that we know how to balance our books, we know how to get ready for the looming crisis in Social Security and Medicare, we know how to prevent this country from going back into deficit spending, we know how to pay down the national debt so we can quit paying a billion dollars a day in interest payments and so that we can see the lower interest rates that every economist agrees will occur if we will pay down the national debt.

I read the other day that interest rates could go down 2 percent over the next 10 years if we could pay down the publicly held portion of the national debt. That would be a wonderful thing. If you are trying to buy a new home and you have borrowed \$100,000 to do it, 2 percent lower interest rates means \$2,000 a year to you. If you are trying to expand your business and you find out that you need to borrow \$100,000 to do it, 2 percent lower interest rates means \$2,000 in savings to your business.

For the average family under anybody's tax cut proposal, they are not going to see \$2,000 a year from tax cuts. You have got to be up in the upper-income limits to get \$2,000 a year. The Blue Dog Democrats say a combination of responsible tax cuts and paying down debt will put more money in the back pocket of most American families than tax cuts alone, because we will get lower interest rates from paying down debt and more importantly perhaps is we will prepare for the retirement of the baby boom generation to ensure that there is no looming financial crisis facing this country. That is the Blue Dog message. That is what we are going to fight for. That is why we believe we need to have a budget debate and a responsible budget with spending caps before we decide how big the tax cut can be.

Democrats in this House want the biggest tax cut we can afford. But we have not decided yet how much we really can afford. We have never had a budget debate. We have never passed a budget. It does not matter whether the President sends over a budget and says we are going to hold spending to 4 percent a year, or it does not matter whether I send one down here on the floor of the House. The way this place works is we debate it out, we have different points of view, and at the end of the day we take votes. It is that process that determines what the Federal Government's budget will be. Until you do that, until you go through that battle and you decide how much you are going to set aside for Medicare, Social Security, prescription drug coverage, national defense, education, paying down debt and tax cuts, there is no way you can determine how big a tax cut you can afford. That is what the Blue Dogs are fighting for in this House. That is the message of fiscal responsibility that we intend to carry throughout this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield the final portion of our time to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), who has another subject that he would like to address to this House.

CONDEMNING DESTRUCTION OF PRE-ISLAMIC STATUES IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me a little time at the end of the afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn a deplorable act that has taken place halfway around the world with repercussions on our ability to protect the world's heritage and to preserve world history for future generations.

On February 26 of this year, the Taliban ordered the destruction of pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan, among them a pair of massive Buddhas carved out of a mountainside and towering over 100 feet. Two days ago, on March 12, UNESCO's special envoy to Afghanistan confirmed what the international community feared most, the complete destruction of the 1,600-year-old statues in the Bamyan province.

In the words of UNESCO chief Koichiro Matsuura, "It is abominable to witness the cold and calculated destruction of cultural properties which were the heritage of the Afghan people and, indeed, of the whole of humanity."

I have introduced a resolution condemning the Taliban's destruction of pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan and calling for the immediate access for UNESCO representatives to survey the damage. House Concurrent Resolution 52 sends a strong message that religious intolerance of any kind is unacceptable and must immediately be stopped.

One of the most cosmopolitan regions in the world at one time and host to merchants, travelers, and artists from China, Central Asia and the Roman Empire, today Afghanistan is one of the most repressive and intolerant countries in the world as a result of the actions of its ruling Taliban faction. The destruction was ordered and carried out for fear that those ancient statues may be used for idol worship. Destroying those unique creations which had withstood the test of time and the elements of nature on the basis of an irrational fear motivated by intolerance of other cultures and religions is simply unacceptable.

The destruction of the pre-Islamic statues also contradicts the basic tenet of Islam that requires tolerance of other religions. People of all faiths and nationalities, including Muslim communities around the world, condemn the destruction of these statues which were part of the common heritage of mankind. It is imperative we join the people and governments around the world in condemning the senseless act of destruction of our joint cultural heritage and call on the Taliban regime to immediately cease and desist any further destruction of other pre-Islamic relics.

HOUSE BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT

The President notified the Clerk of the House that on the following dates he had approved and signed bills and joint resolutions of the following titles:

November 22, 2000:

H.R. 2346. An act to authorize the enforcement by State and local governments of certain Federal Communications Commission regulations regarding use of citizens band radio equipment.

H.R. 5633. An act making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

December 5, 2000:

H.J. Res. 126. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

December 6, 2000:

H.R. 2941. An act to establish the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in the State of Arizona.

December 7, 2000:

H.J. Res. 127. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

December 8, 2000:

H.J. Res. 128. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

December 11, 2000:

H.J. Res. 129. An act making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

December 15, 2000:

H.J. Res. 133. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

December 19, 2000:

H.R. 3048. An act to amend section 879 of title 18, United States Code, to provide clearer coverage over threats against former Presidents and members of their families, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4281. An act to establish, wherever feasible, guidelines, recommendations, and regulations that promote the regulatory acceptance of new or revised scientifically valid toxicological tests that protect human and animal health and the environment while reducing, refining, or replacing animal tests and ensuring human safety and product effectiveness.

H.R. 4640. An act to make grants to States for carrying out DNA analyses for use in the Combined DNA Index System of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to provide for the collection and analysis of DNA samples from certain violent and sexual offenders for use in such system, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4827. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent the entry by false pretenses to any real property, vessel, or aircraft of the United States or secure area of any airport, to prevent the misuse of genuine and counterfeit police badges by those seeking to commit a crime, and for other purposes.

December 20, 2000:

H.R. 3514. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a system of sanctuaries for chimpanzees that have been designated as being no longer needed in research conducted or supported by the Public Health Service, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5016. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 514 Express Center Road in Chicago, Illinois, as the "J.T. Weeker Service Center."

December 21, 2000:

H.R. 2903. An act to reauthorize the Striped Bass Conservation Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4577. An act making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4942. An act making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5210. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 South George Street in York, Pennsylvania, as the "George Atlee Goodling Post Office Building."

H.R. 5461. An act to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to eliminate the wasteful and unsportsmanlike practice of shark finning.

December 23, 2000:

H.R. 1653. An act to complete the orderly withdrawal of the NOAA from the civil administration of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, and to assist in the conservation of coral reefs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2570. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to undertake a study regarding methods to commemorate the national significance of the United States roadways that comprise the Lincoln Highways, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3756. An act to establish a standard time zone for Guam and the Commonwealth

of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4907. An act to establish the Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission, and for the other purposes.

December 27, 2000:

H.R. 5528. An act to authorize the construction of a Wapka Sica Reconciliation Place in Fort Pierre, South Dakota, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5630. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2001 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5640. An act to expand homeownership in the United States, and for other purposes.

December 28, 2000:

H.R. 207. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to make permanent the authority under which comparability allowances may be paid to Government physicians, and to provide that such allowances be treated as part of basic pay for retirement purposes.

H.R. 2816. An act to establish a grant program to assist State and local law enforcement in deterring, investigating, and prosecuting computer crimes.

H.R. 3594. An act to repeal the modification of the installment method.

H.R. 4020. An act to authorize the addition of land to Sequoia National Park, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4656. An act to authorize the Forest Service to convey certain lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin to the Washoe County School District for use as an elementary school site.

December 29, 2000:

H.R. 1795. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering.

SENATE BILLS APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT

The President notified the Clerk of the House that on the following dates he had approved and signed bills of the Senate of the following titles:

November 22, 2000:

S. 11. An act for the relief of Wei Jingsheng.

S. 150. An act for the relief of Marina Khalina and her son, Albert Miftakhov.

S. 276. An act for the relief of Sergio Lozano.

S. 768. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to establish Federal jurisdiction over offenses committed outside the United States by persons employed by or accompanying the Armed Forces, or by members of the Armed Forces who are released or separated from active duty prior to being identified and prosecuted for the commission of such offenses, and for other purposes.

S. 785. An act for the relief of Frances Schochenmaier and Mary Hudson.

S. 869. An act for the relief of Mina Vahedi Notash.

S. 1078. An act for the relief of Mrs. Elizabeth Eka Bassey, Emmanuel O. Paul Bassey, and Mary Idongesit Paul Bassey.

S. 1513. An act for the relief of Jacqueline Salinas and her children Gabriela Salinas, Alejandro Salinas, and Omar Salinas.

S. 1670. An act to revise the boundary of Fort Matanzas National Monument, and for other purposes.

S. 1880. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the health of minority individuals.

S. 1936. An act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to sell or exchange all or part