

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Fidel Castro shows only his open hostility to the United States by pursuing biological warfare research. He has what are considered to be the most sophisticated biomedical capabilities in Latin America. Cuba stands as one of the few developing nations who plays a significant role in drug and biotechnology activities.

Mr. Speaker, there is evidence that Cuba is experimenting with anthrax, as well as a number of other deadly pathogens. Some experts believe that Cuba is even capable of making genetically modified germ weapons that are able to defeat vaccines and antibiotics.

Unfortunately, the possibility that a rogue nation only 90 miles from our shores is producing biological weapons is not the worst of our problems. Mr. Speaker, intelligence officials have evidence that Cuba may be selling its bioterrorist knowledge to other nations hostile to the United States.

Last year, Castro visited Iran, Syria and Libya, three nations that occupy spots on the State Department's terrorism list, along with Cuba and three nations that are currently attempting to develop weapons of mass destruction. During his visit to Tehran University, Castro stated that together Iran and Cuba could "bring America to its knees." An unnerving thought when we consider that Cuba is closer to the United States mainland than Washington, D.C., is to my home in New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we put the debate about Cuba and the Castro regime into the proper perspective for the American people. Too often people are only willing to see the economic benefit of trade with Cuba and lifting the trade embargoes. They do not understand that by lifting the embargo, without agreements by Castro to stop biological weapons production and without commitments on human rights or civil liberties, that we are giving Castro exactly what he wants.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we see Castro and his regime for what they really are, a continued threat to the security of the United States.

RURAL TANF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow this body will take up the reauthorization of the 1996 welfare law. Much has been said about this bill and no doubt debate will go on for some time. However, remarkably little has been said about one aspect of it, the rural aspect.

It will not be surprising to Members of this body that there is a difference between urban and rural areas. In fact, let me just tell my colleagues, 237 out of the 250 poorest counties in the United States in 1998 were nonmetropolitan, and that persists today.

One-half of rural American children and female heads of household live in poverty. Rural workers are nearly twice as likely to earn the minimum wage and 40 percent less likely to move out of low wage, entry level positions. Six out of 10 rural people in poverty do not own a car. The rural urban earning gap persists and actually has widened through the latter part of the 1990s. There is a gap of 73 to 70 percent.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at making work an essential part of the welfare effort, and I believe that work should be, in fact I think work is very honorable and we should encourage everyone to find the satisfaction as well as the responsibility of doing something that is valuable to themselves but also will have income, but the reality is this: Labor markets in rural areas are often very limited. There is a high unemployment rate in rural areas because the opportunities are not there.

So if we are indeed encouraging that more people should work, we need to then speak to putting in the infrastructure for training, jobs, day care and transportation, particularly those areas in the Mississippi Delta, the Appalachia and the Lower Rio Grande Valley and in Indian Country. It is in 240 of those 250 counties I talked about. So there are 240 counties in this country, the poorest counties, indeed will have difficulty finding jobs, maintaining the same work they had 3 years ago. Their unemployment indeed has gone up and the job opportunities have gone down.

The third exemption from time limits for counties with high rates of unemployment failed, let me say that again, failed to address the problem adequately in more rural areas. Official unemployment statistics underestimate the true rate of unemployment. There are many discouraged workers with few opportunities that do not even bother to go to the unemployment office or go seeking assistance because they know there are so little job opportunities. They know jobs do not exist, and therefore they do not even bother.

So if we use the known statistical data, that in itself is false, but also what we do know is that there is a lack of opportunity, and if indeed we wanted to find how States were responding to that, I have just submitted an amendment to the Rules Committee they ought to have to require each State governor to say to the Secretary in their plan how they propose to ensure there are job opportunities or if there are work opportunities, training opportunities, are there day care opportunities, transportation. All of that means new resources. So if we are not making any differential in adding new resources to rural areas, we are putting the governors in the States throughout the United States, putting them in a decisive difficult fiscal position, and we should ask them how they propose to meet that obligation that they are given.

So, in fact, in some rural areas the true unemployment is double. For ex-

ample, the official unemployment rate of Indian reservations often are 20 and 30 percent. However, according to the Department of Labor, it is sometimes higher than that, and yet we are requiring that individuals in those communities will have the same rate for the very poor.

Therefore, provisions of the legislation that are based on the official statistical data of unemployment is a false premise in order to give the governors the response to make a way. We need to find other ways of speaking to that.

So there needs to be a recognition, Mr. Speaker, that child care that is so essential for mothers to leave their children and go to work, that is not available in rural areas. Unless we are willing to provide for education and training, transportation, day care, the rural community will not be able to respond to the citizens who need that help, and the current proposal that is before this House has nothing in there. In fact, I will be asking for unanimous consent that we add that provision to the bill on the floor.

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

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MINK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RAISING THE DEBT LIMIT

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, tonight we want to come again before the body and talk about raising the debt limit.

□ 1930

It is fascinating, having been around this place for now almost 23 years, to hear and to see how various Members of this body react to certain situations that come up, depending on whether they are in the minority or in the majority. And there is no question that we have a serious problem facing our Nation coming up beginning this week, and then about June 28 it becomes of crisis proportion. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill has formally requested Congress to increase the statutory limit on the publicly held debt by \$750 billion, and that is billion with a "b," up from the current level of \$5.95 trillion to \$6.7 trillion.

Just today, Secretary O'Neill wrote the Congress again telling us that he will use up our borrowing authority by the end of this week and that we will have to begin juggling with the books in order to avoid a default, and by the end of June, at the latest, he will run out of maneuvers.

Last week, the Congressional Budget Office issued a report indicating that revenues are coming in much lower than expected and the deficit will be much higher than they projected earlier this year. It is likely we will borrow the entire Social Security trust fund and then some and still have a deficit of over \$150 billion this year.

The need for an increase in the debt limit of the magnitude requested by the administration cannot be explained by the economy and cost of the war. The administration projects that under the President's budget policies the national debt will be roughly \$2.75 trillion more debt than was projected at the beginning of last year, before the President's budget policies and this body enacted them. The cost of the war and the downturn in the economy explain roughly \$800 billion of that increase in projected debt, which leaves nearly \$1.9 trillion more debt than was projected a year ago that is not explained by spending on the war on terrorism or the economic downturn.

In fact, the administration acknowledged prior to September 11 that the debt limit would need to be raised much earlier than it projected when the President submitted his initial budget proposal in January. Last August, the administration indicated that it expected that the debt limit would have to be increased in 2003, 5 years earlier than they projected when the budget was submitted. Well, a year ago, the administration indicated that we would not need to raise the debt limit for 7 years and actually claimed that there was a danger that the government would actually pay off the debt held by the public too quickly.

The Blue Dogs warned about the danger of making long-term commitments for tax cuts or new spending programs based on projected surpluses and proposed setting aside half of the on-budget surplus for a cushion to protect against unforeseen changes. In fact, we supported a budget here about a year ago that would have been much more conservative than the budget that passed and was signed into law; but we, being in the minority, lost.

It is interesting when one listens to the leadership of this body, and here let me give a little quote. When President Clinton asked for a new bill to increase the debt limit, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), now the majority leader of this body, said: "He will get it, but with conditions." That was January 23, 1996. The same majority leader of this body, responding on April 9, called the debate over raising the debt limit "an academic question" and described the whole idea of a debt ceiling as "political." He said, "My

recommendation is to take the President's number and move it. Whatever number that is, I don't care." On January 23, 1996, the majority leader said, "House Republicans insist that any increase in the debt limit must be tied to substantial concessions by the White House in talks over balancing the Federal budget." On April 10, 2002, the same majority leader of this body said, "Congress and the House of Representatives should quickly approve President Bush's request for a \$750 billion increase in the on's borrowing authority."

Now, I agreed with Majority Leader Arme 6 years ago when there was a Democrat in the White House that was not putting forward a plan that would bring us into balance as quickly as we needed to. I agreed with the majority leader then, but I disagree with him tonight; and I disagree with the leadership of this body in refusing to put forward a plan to get us back on a balanced budget for our country.

That is what the Blue Dogs wrote the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), last Friday. The leadership of our Blue Dogs sent a letter to Speaker HASTERT in which we offered in good faith to work with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to put together a blueprint, a new budget, if you please, that would get us back on a path of balancing our budget and getting out of the Social Security trust funds.

Now, I do not know why the leadership of this House has suddenly taken such a turn that we have seen taken over the last several years in which very seldom are ideas from this side of the aisle ever taken into serious consideration. Just last Thursday, we had the defense authorization bill on this floor, supported tremendously in a bipartisan way, as they always are. But we had a situation there that I do not recall seeing in previous years, in which Members on this side of the aisle had amendments but were denied the opportunity to have their amendment taken up and voted on on the floor of the House.

My colleague who will join me in just a moment, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), had a couple of not unreasonable amendments. He felt very strongly that this body, the Congress, and the House of Representatives in particular, should have had an opportunity to debate whether or not we are going to have a new base closing commission. Not an unreasonable request. We had amendments that were allowed that had 10 minutes, 20 minutes; but the gentleman from Mississippi was denied. He exercised his right to express himself, and I hope the leadership of this body listened to what the gentleman was saying last Thursday.

What the gentleman was saying is, this body, the House of Representatives, has been the envy of most of the rest of the world since our very creation, in which individuals have the

right and the opportunity to bring up their ideas and have them discussed on the floor of the House and voted upon. What is so unusual about that and what is it that seems now that in most cases we do not have the kind of committee hearings, we do not have a rule that allows various Members to express themselves on this floor?

Well, tonight, we take this hour to talk about our willingness on this side of the aisle to work with our colleagues, if there are any on the other side that are interested, in restoring fiscal sovereignty, fiscal strength to the budget of the United States of America. We say this and we are prepared to offer some suggestions. In fact, it is interesting, there are very few of these suggestions that are new. They have all been tried. It matters not which side of the aisle. So this is what we want to talk about tonight.

We would like to see, before we vote to increase how much money our country can borrow, we would like to see a new plan, because the current plan is now telling us that we will have deficits as far as the eye can see. And as one Member who has spent a good part of the last 6 years trying to work in a bipartisan way, in a bicameral way on Social Security reform, it pains me quite a bit to see that we cannot even bring that subject up and talk about it. I hope that changes also.

Tonight we just want to again renew our offer, our plea to the majority of this body that before we increase our debt ceiling, let us take another look at the budget plan that we are operating under. If my colleagues on the other side want votes on our side, we have already said we will give those votes to increase the debt ceiling, but not \$750 billion with a blank check.

We are perfectly willing to give an increase in the debt ceiling that will get us to September 30 of this year. Let us wait and see how the CBO reestimates the spending and the revenue that are going to be coming in; and then let us take that new estimate and when we come back in September, let us pass a new budget, one of the better things we could do for the economy of this country.

And in so doing, then we would be prepared to offer another short-term debt ceiling increase to get us to next April or May. Again, let the new Congress come back, the new Congress that will be elected in November, and let us see what our economy is doing come January and a new round of budget discussions and budget debates. It seems to us that that makes sense. But it seems to the other side of the aisle that, no, we passed a budget last year, and we are going to stay with it no matter what.

The budget that was passed last year assumed 100 percent of the projected surplus and left no margin for error. We put ourselves on a course to run up our debt. Now that circumstances have changed, the projected surpluses have disappeared. And while we agree that

the unforeseen war on terrorism and economic downturn have had an impact on the budget in the short term, we do not believe that these events should be used to justify a return to chronic, long-term deficits or hide a \$750 billion increase in the debt ceiling.

The leadership of this body has indicated that they plan to slip language into the supplemental appropriation bill that will allow them to hide an increase in the debt limit in an omnibus conference report without any debate or vote. We do not believe that we should use a spending bill to fight the war on terrorism to hide or justify a long-term \$750 billion increase in the debt ceiling absent a plan to improve our long-term fiscal position.

Members on the other side were very willing to stand up and take credit when we were passing legislation that put us into the situation we face today and made an increase in the debt limit necessary. They should be willing to stand up and be counted now that it has come time to pay the bills by raising the debt limit.

We need a plan. Before Congress votes to raise the debt ceiling by \$750 billion, the President must work with Congress to put the fiscal house back in order, just as a family facing financial problems must work with a bank to establish a financial plan in order to get approval to refinance their debts. We will not vote to approve an increase in the debt limit to allow the government to continue on the current course of deficits as far as the eye can see.

Let me quote another leader of our House, my fellow colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), when he said, "We said from the beginning of this Congress that we want to negotiate with the President. But we cannot negotiate with a President that does not want to balance the budget. We do not want to negotiate over whether to balance the budget or not, we want him to submit a budget that balances by CBO, which he called for. We will negotiate with him in the parameters of a balanced budget and negotiate over the priorities within that balanced budget. But if the President cannot submit one, how do we negotiate apples with oranges? You know, the saying goes, if at first you do not succeed try, try again."

Here again, this is one Member that agreed with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) back when he was talking to a different President. We agree tonight. And I do not believe that we should have a confrontation with this White House over this matter. I think the confrontation is right here within the House of Representatives. And that is what the Blue Dogs are offering again, the willingness to work with our friends on the other side of the aisle to come up with a new budget plan that does get us back into balance.

□ 1945

Mr. Speaker, with those opening remarks I turn to the gentleman from

Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) and yield to him to continue this discussion.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am sure the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) will note that in the 6 years that our Republican colleagues have controlled the House, despite the talk of desiring a balanced budget, they have scheduled but one vote on a balanced budget amendment. I regret to say they are not as serious about a balanced budget as they promised the American people. But then again, they make a lot of promises that they do not keep.

I remember this one in particular. I remember flying up from my district in 1995 around Christmas when there was a government shutdown going on. The children of folks who had a mom or dad in a veterans' hospital were concerned. People in the shipping business wanted to know if the channels were going to get dredged. Americans were worried about illegal immigration and if the staff of a veterans' hospital were going to show up. There were a lot of concerns about shutting down the government.

One of the ways that the Republican leadership tried to mislead the American public that everything was fine, they ran this ad. This is Haley Barbour, the former head of the Republican National Party, a fellow Mississippian. It starts off, heard the one about the Republicans cutting Medicare, and he is holding a check for a million dollars, your name here.

It says, the fact is the Republicans are increasing Medicare spending by more than half. I am Haley Barbour, and I am so sure of that fact that I am willing to give you this check for a million bucks if you can prove me wrong. Sounds simple, right?

So here is the challenge. Here is why you have no chance for the million dollars, and it is a form to be filled out. It says, "The Republican National Committee will present a cashier's check for \$1 million to the first American who can prove the following statement is false: In November, 1995, U.S. House and Senate passed a balanced budget bill. It increases total Federal spending on Medicare by more than 50 percent from 1995 to 2002 pursuant to the Congressional Budget Office standards." Responses must be postmarked by December 20, 1995.

I guess I am one budget wonk, I do follow these things, and I knew from the minute that he printed that ad, that it was a lie. You see, the budget that passed in 1995 was projected to be \$200 billion in deficits; and let us remember, we are not talking a small amount of money. A lot of Americans pay \$1,000 a month on their house or rent note. If you made that payment 1,000 times, you have spent a million dollars. If you made that payment a thousand more times, you have then spent a billion dollars. The budget that he is calling balanced was \$200 billion in deficit.

So I called the Congressional Budget Office, and I got a copy of their budget

projections; and I went over to the Republican National Committee and left a letter for Mr. Barbour saying you have misled the American people. As a matter of fact, it is false, and I would like the million dollars. And since I used my office to do this research, I do not think it would be fair for me to keep the money, so I am going to give it to the University of Southern Mississippi to train people to be better mathematicians than you are. That was in December of 1995.

At the time Mr. Barbour said this, our Nation was \$4.973 trillion in debt, but he promised the American people to have passed a balanced budget bill. At the end of that year, their budget added \$250 billion to the deficit. A year later, \$190 billion more. A year later, \$113 billion more. A year later, \$146 billion more; all of the way up to year 2000, another \$20 billion.

What particularly irks me is after answering Mr. Barbour's challenge, and about 80 other folks around the country did so, the Republican National Committee, instead of saying gee, we misled you or maybe admitting they made a mistake, they sued us. I had to hire a lawyer to defend myself for filling out their form. The case is still now in court, interestingly enough. But Mr. Barbour, not only did you not balance the budget, but since the passage of that bill, we have added over \$1 trillion to the national debt.

See, like the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), I was appalled when a year ago a lot of my colleagues, the Speaker of the House, the majority leader, the majority whip were running around saying Washington is awash in money, huge surpluses as far as the eye can see. We do not know what to do with the money; therefore, we have to pass these tax cuts.

When the President said that a year ago right now, our Nation was \$5,661,347,798,002.65 in debt. Since the passage of the tax cuts, the debt has increased by \$323 billion. For those following this debate, I am going to do something a little different than what the Speaker or the majority leader and the President of the United States did. I am going to ask Americans to check my numbers. They are available to every American at www.publicdebt.treas.gov/, and see for yourself just how broke America is.

What is particularly galling, for those with teenagers who have a job, and who look on their pay stub and say, What is this FICA?, that is your Social Security taxes; and they are taken with the solemn promise that they are to be spent on nothing but Social Security.

If we could find the mythical lockbox that a lot of presidential candidates talked about, and opened it up, all that would be there is an IOU for \$1.260 trillion.

Further down on the pay stub we see money is deducted for the Federal health insurance program, Medicare. In that lockbox all we would find is \$263

billion is owed. The money has been spent on other things.

If you work for the Department of Defense and wanted to find their so-called lockbox, \$167 billion is owed to it. The Civil Service Retirement Fund, a lot of people work for our Nation, border agents, people in the Customs Department, Coast Guard, \$527 billion is owed to their trust fund right now.

Mr. Speaker, you have been the Speaker for almost 4 years. You come from the party that claims to be for fiscal responsibility. Yet in the 4 years you have been Speaker, you have not scheduled one vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Almost every city has that.

When I was a city councilman down in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, I remember the city attorney telling me next month we are going to put together the budget and it has to balance. If it does not balance, you and other council members are personally liable for the difference between what is collected in taxes and what is spent. I can assure Members, we balanced the budget.

A couple of years later I was elected to the State senate. Mississippi has a balanced budget amendment to its constitution. Again we were informed that if we spent more money than we collected in taxes, that we could be thrown out of office. Those are good rules. They are very good rules because it prevents this kind of nonsense from happening.

What is particularly distressing about this \$5.984 trillion debt that the President wants to raise by another \$750 billion, if the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) were on this floor on January 1, 1980, that number would have been less than \$1 trillion. What is particularly disturbing is that the children of the greatest generation, if they do not change the way they are doing things, could be remembered as the worst generation. I do believe that my parents' generation was the best. They survived the Great Depression, got us through World War II, Korea, Vietnam, built the highway systems, the Intercoastal Waterway; and they did it all for less than \$1 trillion in debt. As a matter of fact, if we went all of the way from the time George Washington became President until Ronald Reagan became President, our Nation was less than \$1 trillion in debt. Now 20-something years later, we are almost \$6 trillion in debt, and yet we cannot have a vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I know you are a busy man, and I know the time on this floor is very busy. But you know what, today you scheduled a vote on the Nutria Eradication Act, and it is important to protect the marshland on the Chesapeake, it is important to those folks, and I know that they are doing a lot of damage to the marsh; but you scheduled 40 minutes of debate on the Nutria Eradication Act, and yet we cannot have a vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

You scheduled another vote on concessions maintenance and wildlife refuge repair, and wildlife refuges are very important to a lot of Americans and seeing that they are properly maintained is important. You scheduled 40 minutes of debate on that, and yet you cannot find time to have a debate on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

We found time to talk about the Waco Mammoth Site Area Study. They want to see whether or not they want to put a park there. You scheduled 40 minutes of debate, yet you cannot find time to have a debate on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

As a matter of fact, you found time for all of those things, yet you did not have time to let this body decide whether or not we wanted to vote to kill the whole base closure process.

I particularly think base closures is a particularly dumb idea. It is not saving the taxpayers a dime; it puts a heck of a lot of people out of work. It has lost us vital defense installations like Cecil Field outside of Jacksonville, Florida. Three 8,000-foot runways, another 10,000-foot runway. Right now our military is looking for a place to put the new Joint Strike Fighter, they are looking for a place to put the F-18 E and Fs, and they are going to spend billions of tax dollars to build a brand new field for them when Cecil Field would have been a perfect match. The problem is that a previous round of base closures closed Cecil Field, and we gave the property away.

That was not done just once or twice; it was done over a hundred times around the United States of America. Places like the Presidio in San Francisco, given away. Places like Governor's Island off New York City, just a month ago the President gave it away. I was stationed on that island. It is probably worth half a billion dollars. The President gave it away.

Time after time, the so-called savings of BRAC were not; but there was one thing they did not tell the American public, before they gave these properties away, they had to clean them up. And we spent over \$13 billion of money to clean up bases that were given away so that the local governments could do what they wanted with them. In many instances, they sold them, and their city reaps a profit.

Mr. Speaker, you find time for a lot of fund-raisers and charitable events, and that I applaud. I would hope in the time remaining when you are Speaker, and you are guaranteed to be Speaker until December 31, that you would find time for this House to vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution so this generation can start digging itself out of the label of being the worst generation.

There is not one parent in America who would walk into the local Cadillac or BMW dealership and say, I want the most expensive car on the lot, and you

can bill my 5-year-old 20 years from now when they are working, and let them pay the interest on it, too. There is not one American who would say I want the most expensive house in the county, I do not care what it costs because I have a 4-year-old grandchild, let them pay for it. But that is precisely what this generation of Americans is doing by running up \$5 trillion worth of debt in the past 22 years. There is no end in sight.

Mr. Speaker, if you care about kids and grandkids, if you really care about the future of this country that so many other Americans sacrificed their lives for, why not schedule a vote to see that it is here for our kids and grandkids? What is so terrible is not only owing that money, but until it is paid off, every single day, \$1 billion of the taxpayers' money is squandered on interest on that debt; and one-third of that interest is owned to German and Japanese lending institutions.

If the thought of two lending institutions of two foreign countries owning one-third of the American debt and being in a position to wreck our economy anytime they want, if that does not frighten the gentleman, I am sorry. It does frighten me.

I applaud the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and the Blue Dogs for writing the Speaker and asking for a vote on a balanced budget amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I am putting you on notice right now: I will not vote to raise the debt. Enough is enough.

□ 2000

Mr. STENHOLM. I thank my colleague for that historic lesson there. I happened to remember one of the happiest days in my legislative career here in this body was in 1995 when Speaker Newt Gingrich did schedule a vote on the balanced budget constitutional amendment and it passed with the required two-thirds vote. I remember one of the saddest days standing in the back of the Senate a few weeks later and watching it lose by one vote. If it had passed the Senate at that time, we could not have passed the budget last year that we passed and we would not be here tonight talking about asking for a new plan, or increasing the debt ceiling.

You could have borrowed money to fight the war. That is totally permissible. Emergency. But you could not borrow the money, \$750 billion, to give this generation a tax cut with our children and grandchildren's money. You could not do that, any more than State and local governments could who have to operate under a constitutional requirement.

That is what we are here tonight to talk about, and lest we get into what I understand happened last week when our colleagues were here and the next speaker came up and started lambasting the farm bill because it spends too much and, therefore, it too is contributing to the problems that we have with our debt ceiling. Criticism

has arisen that Congress has passed a budget-buster farm bill. Yet Congress has been passing ad hoc emergency assistance legislation for the last 4 years because direct payments to support farm income were fixed and did not increase when farm incomes fell. Ad hoc assistance has totaled \$28 billion on agricultural programs, \$36 billion when you include nutrition programs. I can show you CBO's estimates of the bill that passed and the President signed yesterday that shows that we will spend less dollars of our taxpayer dollars each year beginning this year, 2002, and each year through 2011 under the bill that the President signed yesterday. That is less dollars. That is not inflation increases. That is less dollars. Since farm prices declined in 1998, farm program spending has averaged \$24 billion per year. We will be below \$19.5 billion in each year projected currently under the farm bill that passed.

Many will say that is too much money to be spent. On that we can argue. We can argue that, yes, it is too much money to be spent, but not if you live in farm country, not if you have been experiencing prices received at the marketplace that approximate Depression-era prices. Does this farm bill solve all of that? No, it does not. But one thing it does do, it gives predictability to our farmers and gives us an opportunity to answer the long-term problem, one of which I hope the Senate will soon do, and that is pass trade promotional authority so our President and his representatives can sit down and begin negotiating away the tremendous amount of subsidies that are present in the world today, including our own.

The spending for this bill the President signed yesterday was approved in the congressional budget passed in 2001 that contained the \$1.6 trillion tax cut. The spending for the ag bill was in the same budget. Congress has stayed within this budget in passing the bill. New estimates have shown both the cost of the legislation increasing \$9.3 billion and the cost of current farm programs increasing \$8.3 billion. These estimates are part of the same economic changes that have contributed to the surpluses of 2001 becoming the deficits of 2002.

I do not stand here tonight to say we shut our eyes to any part of the budget. The farm bill we passed last week fit within the budget resolution we passed last year. It is not fair to single out agriculture for being a budget buster when we complied with the budget resolution if we are not willing to revisit all other tax and spending items that were included in the budget resolution.

That is why we have come here to argue that we need a new budget resolution that responds to the changes in the budget outlook which looks at the entire budget.

We on the Committee on Agriculture are prepared to do our share in making tough choices to reduce spending on our programs if it is part of a comprehensive plan that puts everything

on the table and makes tough choices across the board.

This seems to escape a lot of people. There are those that believe we should not spend one penny in subsidizing our farmers. They completely ignore what is happening out there in the world. When other countries have the advantage of a weak currency compared to our strong dollar, I do not care whether you are producing cotton, wheat, corn, sugar, widgets, airplanes, you name it, it is very difficult to compete when we have as strong a dollar as we have and other countries have weak currency. That is a temporary phenomenon. It was kind of like seemingly that our income, our tax incomes were going to go up as far as the eye could see because we have come through a very, very good period of economic growth. The 1990s were unprecedented in economic expansion and growth in this country. Some believed, I guess, that it would continue to operate that way, but then, lo and behold, the stock markets quit going up and started coming down and tax revenues came down and it should not have taken a nuclear physicist to figure that out. But from the standpoint of agriculture we are still out there competing in the international marketplace and it is tough going right now.

But I made the argument last week when we passed that bill with 280 votes on the floor of the House that perhaps it is not a bad investment for the American taxpayer to spend a few pennies of their hard-earned money to support an agricultural system that has given America the most abundant food supply, the best quality of food, the safest food supply at the lowest cost to our people of any other country in the world, warts and all, subsidies and all, expenditures and all. No other country in the world's people are fed within 1.5 percent of the GDP, gross domestic product, in that country as well as Americans are, including the cost of the farm bill.

Could we do better? I will never say that we could not do better. But I think that some of the criticism that we are receiving from that is criticism that should not be given with a full mouth, because many of those who are criticizing are completely ignoring the fact that our grocery stores are full, the prices at least as far as the farmer is concerned and, well, let us just be totally honest, as far as the cost of food to the American people, no other country in the world is fed within 1.5 percent of the gross domestic product, and I submit to you tonight that it is because of farm policy that we followed in the past.

Things like the conservation title of this farm bill, the largest single increase in the history of our country in one bill. Yet some who purport to be environmentalists are criticizing it. It did not quite do it the way they wanted it done. There again, that is the American way. Everyone is entitled to their opinions.

The research, another strong part of this farm bill, continuing to put some investment of our taxpayer dollars into research in finding new and better ways and safer ways to grow our food.

Rural development. Out in rural America, things are not all going real well. Whether it be health care, whether it be education, whether it be jobs, all are directly dependent upon a sound and healthy farm income and we do not have one. That is why I think almost two-thirds of this body and two-thirds of the Senate passed and why the President signed the bill yesterday.

But I repeat, tonight we are talking about the debt ceiling and I am not about to stand on this floor and be as two-faced as some of the leaders of this body are when they say one thing when they are talking 6 years ago and they say another thing today. Increasing the debt limit is serious business. Having a budget game plan for this country that will get us back into a surplus or balanced budget, not so much a surplus although I would like to see us run a surplus and pay down a little more of our debt, and I would like to see us address the problems of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security and do that before we do some of the other things that we are now talking about doing with the current economic game plan. We are not tonight suggesting to play politics with the debt limit, and we are certainly not trying to force a crisis.

Again, I repeat, Mr. Speaker, we, at least a good number of us on this side of the aisle, are prepared to vote to increase the debt ceiling, but not \$750 billion, and not until we have a new economic blueprint in place. We do not think that is unreasonable. It is exactly what you as the majority party were saying when it was a Democrat in the White House, exactly what you were saying then. You were right then. I repeat, you were right 6 years ago in forcing President Clinton to have a new economic game plan that ultimately came and brought us to the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. You were right then. Why are you insisting on being so wrong today?

We are willing to support a temporary increase in the debt limit to meet the expenses of the war and allow government to meet its obligations, but hold off on a long-term increase in the debt until we have a plan in place. We do not want to force a default on the debt, but we do want to use this debate as an opportunity to reexamine our long-term budget policies. It would be irresponsible to provide a blank check for increased borrowing authority without taking action to protect taxpayers from even further increases in the national debt.

The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) spoke about the need of scheduling another vote on the balanced budget constitutional amendment. The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) and others, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) on the other side of the aisle, are pushing for just that. I

hope we will see that vote later this year. We also would like to see some strong budget enforcement rules. They are just as important a component in restoring fiscal discipline and making sure the budget remains in balance once we have done the hard work necessary to bring it back into balance. The provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 expire this year. Unless we renew our budget discipline, Congress will continue to find ways to break its own rules and pass more legislation that puts still more red ink on the national ledger.

Enforceable spending limits will serve as a fiscal guardrail to keep our spending within the Nation's fiscal means. The Blue Dog ABC's plan includes legislation introduced by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) which would extend and strengthen the provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act that are set to expire this year. This legislation is similar to budget enforcement legislation introduced by Budget Committee Chairman JIM NUSSLE, but extends budget enforcement for 5 years and adds several provisions to improve enforcement of budget rules and increase accountability in the budget process.

I know what Chairman NUSSLE wants to do. I think there are some areas that we can in fact have some bipartisan support for because having meaningful caps on discretionary spending, all 13 appropriations bills, meaningful so that we live within them, is something that is good budget policy and will help be a significant part of this new budget plan that we have talked about.

Again, I repeat, those of us on Agriculture do not ask for an exemption. Far from it. We believe that we should be part of any changes in the budget process, including the criticism that is coming of our farm bill from some of our foreign friends, competitors. We have no intention, at least the bill that the President signed yesterday, there is certainly no intention by the President of the United States and no intention of the House Committee on Agriculture that we would not live up to the agreements that we have signed and agreed to live within and under in previous trade negotiations. What we said this time, though, is that we intend to have our negotiators negotiate from strength. We are allowed to spend in support of our agriculture in this country \$19.1 billion per year. We do not intend to spend \$19.1 billion, or less if necessary, and I hope it is necessary that we spend less, because one thing I hope the general public understands, the only reason we are having spending at the level that we are today in support of agricultural products is the fact that we have Depression-era prices.

□ 2015

Cotton is selling for 30 cents a pound and less; wheat, less than \$3 a bushel; and corn, about \$2 a bushel. These are the same price levels that we saw back

in the 1950s. If one's salary was 1950s vintage, one had better be a lot more productive today than you were then, or you would not be making too good of a living today. That is why, if prices go up, the amount of subsidization goes down.

Certainly I think the whole world would be better off if the amount of subsidization goes down, not up. We are perfectly willing, in the next round of negotiations, assuming the Senate will get on with doing their job in passing the trade promotional authority and we can get on with the negotiating, to reduce the amount of eligibility of subsidization in the United States on a par basis with other countries. The same is true on the budget.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PHELPS), let me just conclude by saying that there are a significant number of Democrats who would be willing to support an increase in the debt limit as part of a responsible plan to restore fiscal discipline. The approach outlined by the Blue Dogs, an immediate, temporary increase in the debt limit with a larger increase allowed as part of a plan to put the budget on a path to balance, accompanied by strong budget enforcement legislation, provides a road map for a bipartisan solution to our fiscal problems and gridlock on the debt limit.

That is our offer. We think it is a reasonable offer. We would like very much to be included in being part of the solution, because borrowing another \$750 billion on our grandchildren's future is not the best option for us to be considering in this year of 2002, one of those years divisible by 2.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PHELPS).

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. The experience and wisdom that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), my good friend, brings to this body is invaluable, and I have watched him very closely since I have been a Member of Congress, almost 4 years now, and I have followed his lead as a member of the Committee on Agriculture and our standing leader and ranking member there, and one cannot go too wrong if one follows the reasoning and the thinking of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). So I thank the gentleman for his input tonight. As a member of the Blue Dog organization and one of the leaders of that group that the gentleman founded, I thank the gentleman for giving me the opportunity to speak tonight on such an important issue.

I know that we have been here week after week, night after night as a group to try to drive a message home, one that many times is not all that popular and not easy to accept. But when we took our oath of office I, for one, took it very seriously to make sure that the citizens in my district, in my State, and in this Nation absolutely understand the truth and the numbers that

we are dealing with and that the decisions we make each day reflect what accuracy is all about, and that we project that on to the taxpayers, to the voters, to the general public.

The Blue Dogs have consistently focused on fiscal discipline, having always advocated honesty and responsibility in the budgeting process. When Congress considered the budget last year, the Blue Dogs warned about the danger of making long-term commitments for tax cuts or new spending programs based on projected surpluses. Now, in less than a year's time, we have seen a dramatic reversal of the once promising budgetary outlook. We now face projections of deficits and increasing debt for the rest of the decade that go far beyond the temporary impact of the economic downturn or cost of the war on terrorism, which we all support and which we must address and do it quickly and effectively.

Congress and the President, as the gentleman from Texas said, need to sit down, roll up our sleeves, and have an honest discussion about what we need to do to put the budget back in order, starting with the program that the Blue Dogs have outlined over the last several weeks, the ABCs of Fiscal Discipline. Remember, we are here to deal with the truth. The numbers that come into the Capitol's coffers, to the U.S. Treasury should be clear. There should not be all that much confusion on what we have on hand, what we have obligated to spend, and what we are thinking about embracing for future costs.

Now, there are a lot of things that have happened in the last year, in the last several months that have been unpredicted. Who would have thought we would have had the horrific events of September 11 that hurt our Nation in many ways, and it impacted us in an economic way. But we have other things that have happened: the recession, the tax cuts, and other spending that has been proposed and on the table now that we can control, that is within our control, and that is why I think people send us here to Congress to represent them.

My father is 81 years old, sitting out there now just recovering from a heart attack not quite 2 weeks ago. I remember his words and his generation, the elders of my church and the people that I think deal with wisdom more so than many of us in this generation. If you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything. Little did I know that a country music artist would come along and make \$1 million on that. If I had known that, I would have written the song if I had thought of it, I say to the gentleman. But it is so true. If one is not solid on something that is very important, a matter of one's convictions, and one does not try to pursue that goal in all the honesty and the fortitude that one can muster up, things go wrong. A lot of things come along that sound good and will divert you this way and that way, distract you from the real goal, from the real truth.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to accept sometimes what the real truth is, but the fact of the matter is, we have a huge debt, and we have to assure the American people that we will be honest and accountable. People out there that work hard and play by the rules every day, surely, surely their elected officials such as us that are here in this body can afford them accountability and honesty in dealing with the numbers.

The Congressional Budget Office has reported numbers; the Office of Management and Budget, the administration's fiscal reporting group, offer some other numbers. Remember, I come from the State of Illinois, but make no mistake, I live almost 400 miles south of Chicago. So it is really a different world which I represent, largely rural, small farming area, coal mines, small businesses, people that are just dedicated to generational hand-me-down crafts and work ethic that is invaluable and immeasurable. But when I served 14 years in the Illinois House, I saw the same thing happen there, the frustration of here is the Economic Fiscal Commission reporting how much money they predicted would come in or projected revenues or what is on hand, and then the Bureau of the Budget, the Governor's reporting office. Well, guess what? The Bureau of the Budget reported a year or so ago, almost 2½, 3 years ago when the Governor took office in Illinois that we had over \$1 billion in surpluses. Guess what they all can agree on now? Mr. Speaker, a \$1.5 billion hole in the Illinois budget, and they are like a lot of States scrambling to try to come to the rescue to know what to do. And then the decisions that they were elected to make become even tougher decisions.

What can we do? Well, I think we need to avoid what is always obvious. How would we in the world agree to the rosier projections of 5 to 10 years on the very best of what can happen, rather than preparing for what could be the worst? That is, to me, beyond reason and comprehension. So budget enforcement. Unless we renew budget discipline, Congress will continue to find ways to break its own rules and pass more legislation that puts still more red ink on the national ledger. Enforceable budget restraints will shine a light on deceptive practices and construct a fiscal guardrail, keeping our spending within the Nation's fiscal means, which is what we ask of the American people and families to do every year, every day, and what they do is stay within their means. Those that are not staying within their means have the credit card debt stacked up; they have marriages falling apart because of financial problems that they brought on themselves. What I have found in life is that most of the problems that come their way are not from some uncontrollable force; they are self-induced. We bring them on ourselves. That is what we have done here. Maybe it has taken decades and generations before us,

other people that have served, and other administrations, but we collectively, all of us, have to take responsibility. So now collectively, let us admit we have problems. We had September 11, we had recession, and we had tax cuts that gave 55 percent of the surpluses or more back, and now we have a problem. Where is the new plan? Where are the people that want to be responsible enough to step forward and say, let us sit down together as reasonable people on both sides of the aisle or Independent, whatever one claims to be, and work out of this mess. Not hope for the best and keep our blinders on, but what shall we do?

Well, we need a balanced budget constitutional amendment, which I have signed on as a cosponsor and feel should require the President and Congress to submit and to enact a budget that is balanced, without using the Social Security surplus. This amendment could be waived, of course, in special times of war or military conflict or threats of national security. But for the first time, all of the other balanced budget constitutional amendments have been presented without addressing whether or not we would use Social Security. This one we intend to bring forth to say we should not use the Social Security Trust Fund. We should balance the budget, and if we borrow from our children and our grandchildren, then we get ourselves in a deeper mess.

So I hope that the Balanced Budget Amendment, constitutional amendment, excluding the Social Security Trust Fund, would be one way that we can show, one way that we can have a plan as to how we intend to get our fiscal house in order.

I could say much more, there are so many other parts of the ABCs, but in order to give time for other Members before we close out our time, I will yield back.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remaining 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be a member of the fiscally responsible Blue Dog Coalition and to be fighting with the gentleman, along with my other Blue Dog colleagues, for simple common sense in budgeting. A lot of people think there is a lot of complications and complexities with respect to how we budget in Washington, but the way we do it should be no different than any household in America budgets, how any small business budgets. We have to make sure that we have the revenues. We have to make sure that the books are balanced. We have to make sure that the checkbook is reconciled at the end of the month. If we do not have revenues, somehow we increase them. I voted for every single tax cut we could because the American people need that kind of tax relief. Some say we have to cut expenses. What is there to cut? Are we going to cut prescription drugs? Are we going to cut Social Security? Are we

going to cut defense budgets? Nobody supports that. Others say we should borrow the money.

But there is another thing that we can do. We do not want to borrow the money. We do not want to ask our children to shoulder the burden for the fiscally irresponsible decisions that we make in Washington. There is another alternative. Once again it was brought to our attention in today's New York Times in a story by Paul Krugman called The Great Evasion. We are losing about \$70 billion a year in revenues by irresponsible and unpatriotic American corporations who rush off to Bermuda, open up mail drops in Bermuda, say that they are now doing business as foreign corporations and do not have to pay their fair share of taxes. They wrap themselves in the American flag to sell their products and then renounce their American citizenship to do business abroad and do not pay their fair share of taxes.

Now, there are colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have had enough of this kind of irresponsible behavior. Rather than increasing taxes, which so few of us want to do, and rather than gutting important programs, which so few of us want to do, it is time for the administration to step up to the plate and say, enough is enough.

□ 2030

We are not going to allow American corporations to run to these Bermudan tax havens, flee their fair share of taxes. No American family is permitted to do that. No American family was able to register themselves in Bermuda to escape their fair share of taxes. We should not allow American corporations to do that as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, before I get into the main topic of this evening's discussion, that being immigration and immigration reform issues, I am compelled to respond to some of the comments made by our colleagues on the other side with regard to the budget dilemma that we all face here this evening. It is the dilemma faced every year, I suppose, and has for many many decades; and that is that we will always be spending more money in this body than we take in, or at least that was the case for all of the time, for the at least 40 years prior to the time that the Republicans took control of this body.

The Democrats, of course, ran an imbalanced budget for many, many, many years. And I am in complete sympathy with those Members of the Democratic Party who say that that is an improper way to run government; that, in fact,