

no child behind; but, similarly, let us leave no veteran behind waiting for a medical appointment.

SOCIAL SECURITY LOCKBOX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, over the last 5 years in the House, initiated by the Republican majority, something which I supported, we took a series of votes on something called the Social Security lockbox. Originally, some of my colleagues on the Democratic side opposed this. They said it was a mere gimmick on the part of the Republican majority and an attempt to restrain the social spending of the Clinton administration, and the Republican majority had no intention of safeguarding those funds.

I did not believe that, and I voted for it. I said, it makes sense to me, with the retirement of the baby boom near upon us, we should safeguard those funds and be certain they are used only to pay the benefits for which they are intended by law.

Eight, ten times in the House of Representatives we voted for the lockbox, Social Security lockbox. Unfortunately, that was all superseded by a vote last March when tax cuts were voted on in the House, predicated on shaky economic assumptions that we would have huge and growing surpluses as far as the eye could see. So let us give the money back to the people. Of course, mostly to Americans who earn over \$383,000 a year and have estates worth more than \$5 million, but let us give it back. Over my objections and the objections of others, this rosy scenario was adopted. The Republican leadership said, do not worry, the Social Security lockbox will still be there.

Here we are a year later. The lockbox is crushed, robbed, torn open, and the President has proposed in his budget to spend \$1.5 trillion of the Social Security trust funds, those which were formerly intended to be placed in the lockbox, to fund tax cuts for the wealthy and other operations of the government over the next 10 years.

There is no more talk about a lockbox on the other side of the aisle with a Republican President who wants to give big tax cuts and gifts to the largest corporations and his friends. No, now they have got a new gimmick. What is it? Certificates. At taxpayer expense, we will send out to every person receiving Social Security, and, by the way, we no longer send them checks in the mail anymore because that is too expensive, but now for this special, one-time only offer, we will send out certificates to everybody currently receiving Social Security and their survivors and others receiving Social Security benefits, saying the

Social Security benefits which are being e-mailed to Americans' bank accounts, do not worry, they will keep coming. We will ensure that. These are the same people that gave us the lockbox. Now we are going to have certificates.

Mr. Speaker, how about this certificate? This is a real certificate, and this is what the majority in the House, the Republicans, have to get serious about honoring. This is an irrefutable obligation of the United States of America. Look to this line. "This bond is incontestable in the hands of the Federal Old Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund. Bond is supported by the full faith and credit of the United States."

The United States has pledged the payment of the bond with respect to principal and interest. But in their rush to privatize Social Security and in their rush to give tax cuts to the most wealthy, they are questioning whether or not that will be honored. In fact, Secretary O'Neill, the Secretary of the Treasury, appointed by George Bush, the President, said that this is worthless. He said, starting in 2016, when we will have to draw on the interest on these bonds, that is worthless. That means he is questioning every investor in America and around the world who thinks that U.S. Treasury Bonds are the safest haven.

I believe they are. I do not believe Secretary O'Neill when he says it is worthless. I believe he and the President and the Republican leadership here are trying to rush Congress into a hasty privatization plan which will actually accelerate the problems of Social Security in another thrust to help a few people to the disadvantage of the many.

Social Security, if we honor these bonds, with the full faith and credit of the United States Government as it says right there, Social Security is totally 100 percent capable of paying 100 percent of the benefits through the year 2038. Starting in 2038, with conservative assumptions, not the rosy scenario that the Republican majority pushed through last year for the big tax cuts, but with conservative economic assumptions, it will have about a 25 to 27 percent problem. That is 73 percent of benefits could be paid forever after 2038.

So we have to address that problem, that 25 to 27 percent problem starting in 36 years. But we do not address it by further reducing the trust fund, giving them to the wealthy in tax cuts, or privatizing the system in a way that reduces trust fund income for Social Security, because then we have created an even bigger problem.

Mr. Speaker, that is the real agenda here. They want to go after Social Security. They have already broken open the lockbox; now watch for the crack-jack box top in the mail, the certificate that gives us a hollow promise.

PROTECT U.S. STEEL MANUFACTURERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I am a strong advocate of free trade. As an original co-sponsor of Presidential Trade Promotion Authority, I fought on the floor of this very Chamber to give this President the ability to negotiate down trade barriers because I simply believe, as a Hoosier Member of this institution, that trade means jobs from automotive and manufactured exports to agricultural exports that we grow in such abundance in the heartland of Indiana.

But the reality is that, in the arena of worldwide steel, unfair trade practices and steel dumping have actually destroyed jobs in this country and impaired our national security.

Today we learned that President Bush has decided to impose selective tariffs of up to 30 percent on foreign steel imports using section 201 of the Trade Act. I rise today to commend the President on his decision to protect the American steel industry and, more than that, to lay the foundation to protect America's national security for generations to come.

The reality is America is recovering from a mild recession, and we must ensure that our Nation and our economy continues on a full path of recovery. A thriving steel industry will significantly aid in this task. However, the steel industry has been under increased pressure from unfairly subsidized imports of foreign steel. Foreign companies and governments have undermined our domestic industry through dumping practices and eroded our own ability to manufacture steel in this country.

In response to this problem, the International Trade Commission conducted an investigation and held hearings at which I had the privilege of testifying. The ITC unanimously found that low-priced imports have seriously injured domestic steel production in the United States. Every American should understand the steel industry has been facing years of unfair competition. These unfair trade practices have already caused over 30 bankruptcies in the steel industry and cost thousands of American jobs.

Steel production is the bedrock of a viable manufacturing base, but I also would add today that it is absolutely imperative to our national security. America must not become dependent on foreign steel, as we have become dependent on foreign oil.

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The reality is, as the caskets are slowly lowered off the transport aircraft at Andrews Air Force Base today, the Chinooks, the Black Hawk helicopters, the rifles, the artillery that are being fired at this hour in the

mountains of eastern Afghanistan are made of steel, Mr. Speaker; and the ability of the United States of America to manufacture steel, merchantable steel, is at the very essence of our ability to provide for the common defense.

It also strengthens our economy. In Indiana, 30,000 families make their livelihood in the steel industry. Increased efficiency and technological innovation combined with our hard-working employees have made the steel industry the envy of the world. Yet our policies have been rewarding uncompetitive and destructive behavior. Domestic steel production is vital to the national interest; it is vital to strengthening our economy.

I commend the President of the United States today as we anticipate his decision, selective tariffs, using section 201 of the Trade Act. It is important that we support the steel industry in America long term and preserve our ability to produce the arsenal of democracy which gives the enemies of freedom pause and gives the friends of freedom hope all across the world.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, recently the National Governors Association passed a resolution calling for action to prevent the brand-name drug industry from blocking access to lower-cost generic drugs. It turns out that the drug industry is cheating consumers out of literally billions of dollars in prescription drug savings by illegally and unethically keeping generic competitors off the market.

Shocking, is it not, that the drug industry would exploit loopholes in the law to make sure that American consumers continue to pay higher prices than necessary for lifesaving products? We are talking about the same industry that charges Americans two and three and four times what it charges in other countries. We are talking about an industry that pummels American consumers with ads on TV and in magazines and on radio promoting a handful of drugs that just happen to be some of the most expensive drugs on the market.

As a matter of fact, the drug industry's use of direct-to-consumer advertising to manipulate the public is just as insidious as the tricks the industry uses to keep generic competition off the market. The European Union does not permit direct-to-consumer advertising, neither does Japan nor Canada nor Israel. In fact, only one other country in the world, New Zealand, permits direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs. That is because this advertising skews health care towards the newest, most expensive drugs, regardless of whether these drugs are the

best alternative for patients and regardless of the impact on America's health care bill.

The industry claims it is doing consumers a favor, that direct-to-consumer advertising is a breakthrough in consumer education. In 2000, the drug industry advertised 1 percent of its 10,000 available prescription drugs. Ninety-five percent of all direct-to-consumer advertising was spent on just 50 of these 10,000 drugs. The drug industry claims its advertising is highly educational. Direct-to-consumer advertising is highly profitable, hardly highly educational.

Those 50 drugs I mentioned, the ones that were most heavily advertised in 2000, were responsible for half of the \$21 billion increase in prescription drug spending. And about those 50 drugs, they are not for 50 different conditions. Most of those drugs are simply copycat drugs.

We see ads for Vioxx and Celebrex, \$239 million worth, which are alternative treatments for the same condition, arthritis. We see ads for Claritin and Zyrtec and Allegra to the tune of \$227 million, all for the treatment of allergies. Billions of dollars are spent on ads for fewer than 30 health problems. American consumers pay for those ads when we shell out two and three and four times more than consumers in any other country in the world. We pay for those ads when the 50 most heavily advertised drugs account for half of the dramatic annual increase in spending.

Prescription drug inflation is fueling double-digit increases in health care premiums, it is pushing State budgets into the red, and it is forcing seniors into poverty. And behind it all are romantic images of allergy-free people digging in their gardens and playing with their puppies.

The drug industry has a chokehold on the United States. They charge Americans more than any other consumer; they manipulate American consumers with questionable TV and print ads; and they block access to affordable medicines, even though 70 million Americans, many of them seniors, do not have the benefit of insurance and are paying hundreds of dollars out of pocket.

So where is the Bush administration? Why is George Bush not outraged about this? Where is his administration? The administration does not like to be perceived as catering to large corporations at the expense of American consumers. The administration bristles at the notion that it turned to Enron and big oil when it formulated its energy policy. They do not like it when you point out that they turned to the chemical companies when writing their environmental policy, that they turned to the insurance companies when they wrote the Patients' Bill of Rights. And I am sure the administration would vehemently deny that their silence on prescription drug prices stems from their close ties to the drug industry. Well, the proof is in the pudding. This is a

litmus test in the next year what this body does about prescription drug prices, both for the President and for every Member of Congress. We report to the American public, not to the drug industry. If the President and the Congress do not break loose from the drug industry's chokehold and reign in that industry's unbridled greed, then American voters should send us all packing.

It is as simple as that.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, we are going to increase the debt limit of the United States in the next several days. Already, the debt limit of the United States, set at \$5.95 trillion, is being apparently violated by having a debt greater than the debt limit set by the United States. I think we need a thorough discussion in this Chamber and in the Senate and certainly in the White House of how do we want to treat debt in the United States; how deep do we want to go in debt; how much, if you will, mortgage do we want to leave to our children and our grandchildren.

It seems that it is reasonable to live within our means, not to say that our spending today is so important that it justifies leaving a larger debt or a larger mortgage to our kids and our grandkids. If we want to spend money, then it is reasonable to say to the American people and be up-front with them that we are going to increase taxes and use those revenues for existing spending rather than, I suggest, hoodwinking the American people by increasing our borrowing. The borrowing is not as obvious as tax increases. Therefore, over the last 30 years, we have said we are going to borrow more and more as government gets larger and larger and, sadly, a lot of that borrowing has come from the trust funds.

Since 1983 when we last changed the Social Security system, and we changed it by increasing taxes and reducing benefits, we have had more revenue coming in from the Social Security tax, the so-called FICA tax, than was needed to pay out Social Security benefits. Just a footnote here to mention that Social Security is a system that is, and always has been, designed to tax current workers and use that money to pay current retirees. As the number of workers per retiree has diminished since we started the program in 1934, we have developed an obvious insolvency in the Social Security system.

I have heard some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle criticize some things the Republicans are doing. It is easy to demagogue this kind of program that so many seniors find so valuable. We now have over 50