

of people depending upon Social Security and Medicare. That is why this budget just takes us to the cusp of that point when they retire. These are people born right after World War II in 1945 and 1946. We can do the calculations. They start retiring in 2007 and 2008. We will not have provided for their retirement costs. I say we, to emphasize the fact that, I am a member of that baby boom generation. My parents' generation fought the "isms," Nazism, communism, fascism, and gave us so much better a life than they had inherited from their parents. And what are we going to do? We are going to leave to our children the responsibility to pay for our retirement costs, our health care costs through Medicare, and to pay off a debt of over \$3 trillion. That is what this budget does that our children will have to face tomorrow.

It makes a number of other cuts that do not seem to be particularly justified. We are in a recessionary period, and to cut \$14 million out of housing for the homeless doesn't seem right. To take \$80 million out of the Leave No Child Behind education legislation the President has gone around the country touting and taking credit for, and we agree, it is bipartisan legislation, and now we are going to take \$80 million out of that program? To take \$338 million out of low-income heating assistance, the LIHEAP program? No that's not right.

No, Mr. Speaker, this is not a budget that this Congress can responsibly approve.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the nearly 100,000 Social Security beneficiaries that live in my district, nearly 70 percent of whom are 65 years of age and older and are seniors.

Today, like so many of us, seniors stand in the recent tragic events that have left an imprint on our national landscape forever. They are uneasy about their lives and the security of their future. Now is the time to address their fears, not the time to wage a war on the benefits they rely on to live.

I am disturbed by the number and tone of letters and phone calls I have received from constituents. Many seniors 70, 80, and 90 years old have expressed concern over the solvency of Social Security. They want their leaders in Washington to be responsible in their actions and not take chances with their future and the future of their children.

I am further disturbed when I receive the administration's budget recommendations. The administration proposes a budget that takes needed Social Security surpluses out of the

Social Security trust fund, not just 1 year, but every year for the next 10 years.

This year alone, the budget would train \$262 billion in Social Security funds. Ultimately, the administration's proposed budget takes more than \$1.5 trillion out of the Social Security surplus. The President and the House Republican leadership, just a few months ago, including some Democrats, claimed that we would also support and establish the Social Security and Medicare surpluses that would be saved for Social Security and Medicare. Now the budget saves virtually nothing of Social Security or Medicare.

Recently, the CBO released an analysis of the administration's proposed budget. They concluded that the budget raids Social Security and threatens the solvency of the program for future generations.

□ 1300

Further, they project large deficits for the next several years. They project a \$121 billion deficit next year, and by the end of President Bush's term in 2004, a \$262 billion deficit.

However, the administration has, for the first time since 1988, rejected the more conservative economic predictions of the CBO and, instead, are using the optimistic, unrealistic figures produced by the Bush administration's Office of Management and Budget. When they looked at the cuts, they looked at how our economy was last March and they projected for the next 10 years the same type of economy. As my colleagues well know, you cannot even predict what our weather is going to be next year.

They took that prediction because it was a very positive prediction. But we should not have assumed that those dollars and that the economy would remain the same way. Alarming, the OMB figures for the administration hide the true cost of the administration's sponsored tax cuts. We cannot and must not enact budgets with our heads in the sand. We must look at the dollars that we have now and realistically pay down our debt as we should and make sure we hold that obligation to take care of our seniors.

Our seniors have questions. They want to know how we have squandered the surplus in just 1 year. And, of course, a lot of us, and for good reason, are concerned about our economy. We do talk about the fact that 9/11 had a big impact on our economy. In fact, economists now tell us that half of the problem that we find ourselves in is a result of the tax cut and half is due to 9/11.

Republicans and the administration successfully pushed a tax cut during the first half of this session. This irresponsible tax cut cost \$1.7 trillion. Now they want additional tax cuts. So tomorrow we get to see additional tax cuts, at a time when we have declared war. When we are at war, we have always had a war tax. We have always

been responsible for paying down what we owe.

We need to be responsible as we move forward. Indeed every dollar of the additional tax cut would come directly out of the Social Security trust fund. We are paying for this war on the backs of our senior citizens' pension fund. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves.

What our seniors need is for all of us to work together and give them the sense of security. They do not need fancy gimmicks like certificates and promises of benefits with no legal guarantee. What they need is a responsible budget that takes care of our budget and considers the fact that we are at war and that should be our first priority, taking care of our seniors and our national defense.

These figures increase significantly if you are a woman or a minority. Social Security is the only safety net to keep many of our seniors out of poverty.

Social Security has lifted over 11 million seniors out of poverty and reduced the elderly poverty rate to less than 10%.

Now is not the time for gimmicks and broken promises. We must make the choices that reveal our values as a nation and we must keep our promises.

THE BUDGET

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, when the House and Senate wrote their budget resolutions last year, Members were assured by the President of huge surpluses as far as the eye could see. The projected surpluses held great promise. They were expected to be large enough to address long-term solvency issues of Social Security and Medicare and for important priorities like a prescription drug benefit and education.

Since then, most of the surpluses have evaporated because of last year's unaffordable Bush tax cut and the spending necessitated by the tragic events of September 11. The Republicans in the House want to cut taxes further and spend more, and be congratulated for their fiscal responsibility.

While we all recognize the need to protect our country from international terrorists and rogue nations, the administration has requested a military budget of \$396 billion in fiscal year 2003. This 1-year increase of \$45 billion will be the largest increase in military budget authority since 1966 at the height of the Vietnam War. This increase alone, the \$45 billion increase alone, is larger than the annual military budget of every other country in the world. In fact, the nations that President Bush called the "axis of evil," North Korea, Iran and Iraq, our military budget will be 15 times the combined military budget of theirs.

While this budget is being touted for fighting terrorism, the bulk of the funding is committed to buying weapons systems designed or conceived during the Cold War. The missile defense system, a knockoff of President Reagan's failed Star Wars missile defense program, gets \$8 billion in the Republican budget, even though it is not clear that this system will ever work or ever defend the United States from any of the actual threats that we actually face. In fact, it has failed test after test after test.

In addition to massive new spending on dated military technologies, the Republican budget also includes provisions that would cut taxes by \$591 billion over the next 10 years, making last year's tax cut permanent and providing a host of new tax cuts to America's wealthiest companies like Enron, IBM, American Airlines, Ford, GM, and to the wealthiest individuals in this country. The share of these tax cuts going to the top 1 percent of wage earners, top 1 percent richest people, would exceed the share going to the bottom 80 percent. The top 1 percent receives 45 percent of the tax cut's benefits even though they now pay only 21 percent of Federal taxes. The bottom 80 percent gets only 28 percent of the tax cut's benefits with an average cut of only \$430.

Republicans claim the typical family of four will be able to get, quote, at least \$1,600 more of their own money when the plan is fully effective. However, more than 85 percent of taxpayers will get less than that amount. Many will get nothing. One-third of families with children receive no tax cut at all. More than half of all black and Hispanic families will receive nothing under this plan, even though 75 percent of those families have at least one working parent.

Under this plan, a single mother with two children and a \$22,000 annual income gets zero from the tax cut. A retired widow with no children and an income of \$30,000 would get \$300 but a couple making \$550,000 with no children would get a tax break of \$19,000.

Unfortunately, once we are done paying for military spending increases and new tax cuts, there is little left for other pressing concerns. For the last many years, literally millions of retired seniors have not been able to afford the medicines they need. We have all talked about this in our campaigns. Yet the President's budget includes only \$190 billion for Medicare modernization and prescription drugs. It is not anywhere near the amount to fill the prescription drug gap in the Medicare program.

Bipartisan estimates say that to ensure that retirees have access to adequate, just adequate, prescription drug benefit coverage would cost at least \$700 billion over 10 years. The President's budget has only \$190 billion. The Republican budget we will vote on tomorrow has only \$300 billion, because of the tax cuts. It will cost the Nation

much more than that if we remain indifferent to the possible trade-offs that seniors face every day when it comes to their health. Our senior citizens are being forced to ration health care, not based on cost effectiveness, but on how far they can stretch a fixed income to pay for exorbitantly expensive medicines.

The U.S. is the wealthiest nation on earth. We are not a drug industry puppet. We must do better by our seniors. Investing too little in prescription drug benefits is like paying to put half a roof on our house.

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the Republican budget with huge tax cuts is taking us down the same road we traveled last year. We will not be able to do other things that Americans are demanding of us.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Rabbi Joseph F. Mendelsohn, Heska Amuna Synagogue, Knoxville, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

The prayer I am about to offer is not original, rather it is read by Jewish congregations throughout the United States every Saturday morning during Sabbath services.

Our God and God of our ancestors, we ask Your blessings for our country, for its government, for its leaders and advisors, and for all who exercise just and rightful authority. Help them to administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom may forever abide in our midst.

Creator of all flesh, bless all the inhabitants of our country with Your spirit. May citizens of all races and creeds forge a common bond in true harmony to banish all hatred and bigotry and to safeguard the ideals and free institutions which are the pride and glory of our country.

May this land under Your Providence be an influence for good throughout the world, uniting all people in peace and freedom and helping them to fulfill the vision of Your Prophet: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they experience war any more."

And let us say, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DUNCAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING RABBI JOSEPH MENDELSON OF HESKA AMUNA SYNAGOGUE, KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, we are privileged to have as our guest chaplain today Rabbi Joseph Mendelsohn of the Heska Amuna Synagogue in Knoxville, Tennessee, to lead us in our opening prayer. Heska Amuna, loosely translated, means "stronghold of faith," and "strong faith" are words that could certainly be used about the life of Rabbi Mendelsohn.

This is the first time since I have been a Member of the House, and I am in my 14th year now, this is the first time I have had a member of the clergy from my district lead us in prayer, and I am very honored.

Rabbi Mendelsohn was a longtime congregant and leader in conservative Jewish congregations throughout California. He became so dedicated to his faith that he decided to fulfill his dream of becoming a full-time member of the rabbinical clergy.

Known in Knoxville as "Rabbi Joe," he has been well received, not just by his congregation, but also by his fellow clergymen of all faiths in east Tennessee. Apparently he is doing a great