

□ 1100

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1230

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR) at 12 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 95, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 151 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 151

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013. The first reading of the concurrent resolution shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution are waived. General debate shall not exceed three hours, with two hours of general debate confined to the congressional budget equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget, and one hour of general debate on the subject of economic goals and policies equally divided and controlled by Representative Saxton of New Jersey and Representative Stark of California or their designees. After general debate the concurrent resolution shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The amendment in the nature of a substitute specified in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The concurrent resolution, as amended, shall be considered as read. No further amendment shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to amendment. All points of order against the amendments printed in the report are waived except that the adoption of a further amendment in the nature of a substitute shall constitute the conclusion of consideration of the concurrent resolution for amendment. After the

conclusion of consideration of the concurrent resolution for further amendment, and a final period of general debate, which shall not exceed 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget, the Committee shall rise and report the concurrent resolution, as amended, to the House with such further amendment as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution and amendments thereto to final adoption without intervening motion except amendments offered by the chairman of the Committee on the Budget pursuant to section 305(a)(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to achieve mathematical consistency. The concurrent resolution shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question of its adoption.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 151 is a structured rule providing 3 hours of general debate with 2 hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on the Budget, and 1 hour on economic goals and policies equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK).

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution. It further provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute specified in Part A of the Committee on Rules report accompanying the resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole.

The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in Part B of the Committee on Rules report which may be offered only in the order printed in the report. Said amendments may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by an opponent and a proponent, and shall not be subject to amendment.

The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report, except that the adoption of a further amendment in the nature of a substitute shall constitute the conclusion of consideration of the concurrent resolution for amendment.

Resolution 151 also provides, upon the conclusion of consideration of the concurrent resolution for amendment, for a final period of general debate not to exceed 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget.

Finally, the rule permits the chairman of the Committee on the Budget to offer amendments in the House to achieve mathematical consistency and provides that the concurrent resolution shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question of its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, as the House takes up the proposed Federal budget for fiscal year 2004, it does so with two overriding objectives in mind: to successfully complete the war we have just begun in Iraq, and to revitalize our Nation's economy today while building a firm foundation for long-term economic growth.

The budget resolution passed by the Committee on the Budget reflects these realities and does so in a time of extraordinary fiscal strain. The members of the Committee on the Budget are to be commended for completing their work in a timely manner.

This budget resolution, of course, is only the first step in the long process by which Congress sets the Nation's spending and revenue policies. Much hard work remains to be done by the various committees of jurisdiction, and the Committee on the Budget has, in large measure, left those committees the flexibility to make decisions on specific programs and priorities.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it, the challenges before us in this area are great, and we are not alone. State and local governments all across the country are struggling to tighten their belts, and we must do the same thing here in Washington, D.C. Hard choices are inevitable, and no Member is likely to get everything he or she would like to see in this budget resolution, but we must act, and we must act now. All of us learned a painful lesson this last year about the consequences of allowing the budget process to break down.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 95 provides for a Federal budget of \$2.22 trillion, an increase of 2.9 percent or \$62 billion over the current fiscal year. It puts the Nation back on a path to a balanced budget, which would be achieved by the year 2012, 9 years from now, with the projected budget surplus of \$21 billion that year.

Although there will be ample time during general debate to highlight key provisions of the resolution, I am particularly pleased to advise my colleagues that the proposed manager's amendment to the resolution reinstates the reserve fund for Medicare, which puts, in essence, a fence around the \$400 billion to fund Medicare modernization and prescription drug coverage for older Americans.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me remind Members that the budget resolution is only a blueprint in the broadest sense. The details will take shape in coming months, but the sooner we can complete this blueprint and move on to the hard work of enacting its various components, the better off we will be. Neither the war in Iraq nor the urgent work of economic recovery can afford to be hindered simply because the

budget resolution is not perfect in the eyes of every Member of Congress.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying concurrent resolution on the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there is something in politics called having a tin ear. That means being totally oblivious to everything around you.

Right now we have troops in the field, a war has begun, and we should be doing everything we can to speak with one voice and achieve national unity. Yet the Republican leadership insists at this moment in bringing to the floor one of the most partisan, divisive issues of the entire year. I question their judgment and their timing. I would hope that we would move fairly quickly today to a resolution supporting our troops in the field. Unfortunately, our Republican friends prefer to have on the floor a matter of high partisanship which will divide this Congress.

Like all of my colleagues, Republicans as well as Democrats, and like the American people themselves, I fully support our troops. I hope and pray that they will accomplish their mission as quickly and safely as possible.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I have argued that we should not be considering this bill today. Republicans have offered a budget that is as partisan as it is divisive, as dishonest as it is dangerous to the country, and, at a time like this, when the United States Congress should be demonstrating its unity to the world, I fear that bringing it to the floor guarantees a divisive debate.

But that is what Republican leaders have done today. And unfortunately, there is no minimizing the differences between the Democratic and Republican budgets. The Democratic budget alternatives offered by the Committee on the Budget ranking member, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), is a responsible plan to strengthen national security and restore economic growth and fiscal responsibility. It tightens Federal spending and balances the budget using honest accounting, but it still meets priorities like defense, education, and health care, and it does more for homeland security than the Republican budget does.

There are two other budget alternatives offered by groups of Democrats: the Blue Dogs on one hand, and the Congressional Black Caucus and Progressive Caucus on the other. They are worthwhile, and I am glad that they are in order under this rule.

The Republican budget stands in stark contrast, Mr. Speaker. The Republican budget is intellectually dishonest, morally indefensible, and just plain bad for our economy and our Na-

tion. It explodes the deficit and raises the death tax on all Americans. It shortchanges homeland security to pay for tax breaks for millionaires, and it proves once again just how out of touch House Republicans truly are.

At a time which this Nation must come together, Republicans offer a budget that will pull us apart. Simply put, the Republican budget separates Americans into two categories: winners and losers. The winners are the wealthiest few who get hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks; the losers are everyone else, the people who have to sacrifice to pay for those tax breaks for the wealthiest few.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, never have so many been asked to sacrifice for so few.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget skimps on homeland security. It slashes priorities like education and health care. It shortchanges veterans and farmers, and it still explodes the deficits. That is because the Republican budget is a shameless work of fiction. It calls for draconian cuts, cuts in priorities like veterans' benefits, student loans, and law enforcement, and still gives massive tax breaks to the wealthiest. But it requires the tax breaks to be enacted by April 11 and gives Republicans until July 11 to make the spending cuts.

Mr. Speaker, when you get your dessert before you eat your spinach, you never eat your spinach. Any American parent can tell us that, and so can anyone else who has watched the Republican budget charade drive up the deficit over the past few years. As the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the foremost proponent of fiscal responsibility in this House, told us yesterday in the Committee on Rules, the tax cuts will be enacted, and the spending cuts will be abandoned, and the deficit will continue to explode.

Why are Republicans foisting this dangerous budget on America and on our economy? Mr. Speaker, for one simple reason: because they stubbornly insist on giving massive tax breaks to the wealthiest few.

They say that to govern is to choose. Well, take a look at the consequences of the choices Republicans have made in this budget. American troops are at war, but Republicans chose to shortchange the veterans who defended this Nation in past years and to give tax breaks to millionaires. That is why the Veterans of Foreign Wars opposes the Republican budget. Republicans chose to slash education, and to give tax breaks to millionaires. They chose to cut health care for children and seniors on Medicaid, and to give tax breaks to millionaires.

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They chose to cut assistance to farmers and to give tax breaks to millionaires. That is why the conservative Farm Bureau opposes the Republican budget. Republicans are even shortchanging homeland security; and once

again, they are making sure millionaires get all the tax breaks they want.

Mr. Speaker, despite all these cruel cuts, cuts that touch almost all Americans and their families, this Republican budget still explodes the deficit. All the budget gimmicks and phony accounting in the world, what President Bush once called fuzzy math, cannot hide that truth.

All in all, the Republicans are proposing an economic horror show at a time when Americans are still suffering from the latest Republican recession. Since President Bush took office, 2.5 million Americans have lost their jobs in the private sector, the surplus has gone, and last year's deficit was \$317 billion.

But Republicans refuse to face that fact, so they propose a budget that would actually harm the economy by driving the Nation deeper into debt, raising the debt tax on all Americans and their children, and increasing families' mortgage payments and credit card bills.

Moreover, this Republican budget does not account for how we are going to pay for a war with Iraq that has begun. So yesterday in the Committee on Rules the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the top Democrat on the Committee on Armed Services, offered an amendment to set aside \$20 billion in a contingency fund to begin paying for the war. But Republican leaders refused to allow the House to vote on it.

Mr. Speaker, from veterans and farmers to students and seniors, this budget asks almost everyone in America to sacrifice. Everyone, that is, but the millionaires who get the big tax breaks. That is not just wrong; it is fiscally irresponsible. It is bad for the economy, and it is bad for America.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning, we are one country and we are one Congress, especially when our troops are risking their lives abroad to protect us here at home. I am very disappointed that the Republican budget fails to demonstrate that.

I urge my colleagues to reject the Republican budget and vote for the Democratic alternative offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), and join Democrats in restoring fiscal responsibility and protecting the economy against more of the same failed Republican economic policies.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), a member of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule. I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting House Resolution 151, which provides for the consideration of the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution.

H. Res. 151 is a conventional rule for consideration of the annual budget resolution, and it provides for the consideration of four amendments in the nature of a substitute, including the so-called Blue Dog budget, the Progressive and Black Caucus budget, the Republican Study Committee's budget, and the minority leader's budget.

I want to commend my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), for crafting a budget that understands that we have an obligation to, first and foremost, fund our Armed Forces and protect the people of the United States; second, strengthen the American economy; and, third, maintain our commitment to priorities such as education, health care, welfare reform, while ensuring long-term fiscal responsibility.

To protect the United States, our budget must fund both homeland security and national defense priorities. Since World War II, the United States has been the world leader in freedom and democracy. As this leader, we have the responsibility of defending these principles throughout the world.

Our commitment, however, is sustained through the perseverance and strength of our Nation's military. Without the efforts of these heroes, our Nation could not possibly be the bastion of freedom and democracy it is today. We cannot possibly expect these individuals and our Nation to continue to bear this responsibility without providing the absolute best possible equipment for the task at hand. This budget provides that funding. It allocates funding for the Department of Defense to continue the mission to eliminate terrorism across the world, increases military personnel pay for our Armed Forces, and targets funding to ensure the deployment of our national ballistic missile defense.

In terms of homeland security, I am pleased that our budget provides \$890 million in funding for Project Bioshield to secure vaccines against bioterrorism attacks, \$3.35 billion for first responder training and equipment, and billions more to improve security and assess future threats to our Nation's airports, nuclear power plants, water facilities, and telecommunications networks.

Second, it is clear that our economy remains sluggish and that our budget must stimulate growth and get our fellow Americans back to work. To achieve this, our budget includes President Bush's jobs and economic growth plan, including an accelerated reduction in the marriage penalty, an increase in the child tax credit, and an overall acceleration of all tax rate cuts.

I always welcome this debate because it will speak volumes about the differing opinions on the role of the Federal Government in the lives of the American people. We continue to believe that individuals make much better choices with their money than the government can. At this time, not only

am I certain that the American people will make better choices with their money, but that returning it to them will also help promote investment and increase consumer spending, which will in turn enhance our economy.

In its entirety, our budget is a commonsense plan to provide security for the American people by funding domestic and international security, invigorating the American economy, returning funds to the American people, strengthening Social Security, and reaffirming our recent successful welfare reforms.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fair rule. I urge my colleagues to support the rule so we may begin the debate on the multiple budget options before the House today.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY).

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time that budgets should reflect our Nation's priorities. This irresponsible budget fails to do that and certainly fails to reflect the priorities of my district. This budget is opposed by the Farm Bureau and by many veterans groups. Why? Because it cuts money to both farmers and veterans. Why does it make those cuts? In order to give tax cuts to people that make over \$300,000 a year.

I do not have any problem with people making over \$300,000 a year. The problem is, we are running a huge deficit. This is not the time to make those kinds of tax cuts. This budget fails our children. Not only does it pass on an incredible amount of debt to future generations; it fails to invest in our future through education. Why does it do this? To give tax cuts to the wealthiest.

This is a bad rule which fails to make in order simple amendments designed to improve it. During committee, I attempted to get more money in for our veterans. This is not the time to cut their health care; this is not the time to cut their compensation.

I also went to the Committee on Rules and I said, we need to address a couple of issues in this budget. Actually, we need to address a lot of them, but I addressed one: homeland security. This is not the time to be chintzy about homeland security; this is a time to make sure our communities and our States have the money they need to secure our future.

I said, this budget needs to provide for IDEA. This is a promise we made 28 years ago to our schools. This budget does not do that. Why does it not do that? Because it wanted to give money to the wealthiest.

The Republican budget is irresponsible. Please vote for the Democratic budget, and I urge my colleagues to defeat the rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), a member of the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, I am a member of the Budget Committee. It is my first year on this committee and my ninth year on the Appropriations Committee. Certainly I am pleased with the progress that we have made during my 8 years of service in the Congress in terms of what we have been able to do on the budget.

In 1995, a Democrat President came before this Congress and proposed deficits as far as the eye could see: the first decade, deficits of \$200 billion a year; then \$300 billion a year every year after that. We Republicans said that we could do it differently. We said we could make the tough choices, and we enacted a budget resolution in 1995 to say that we would balance the budget in 7 years.

We had a little good luck with the economy, I think in large part because of our tax cuts that we gave to the American people, and we were able to balance the budget in half that time. Now, this day, in 2003, we are facing deficits.

So what happened between those successful days of surpluses and the budget deficit that we are facing right now? The main thing that happened to our budget to put us back into deficits is, frankly, the terrorist attack of 9-11, 2001. That one event, Mr. Speaker, cost us \$80 billion in additional expenditures in one fiscal year alone, and an additional \$200 billion, approximately, in lost revenue. So it is no wonder that that hit to our economy has cost us the surplus, and that we are back into deficits.

Of course, we are experiencing a recession now, and we have to address that, also. It has been another part of this deficit.

But this debate today, as provided for under the rule, Mr. Speaker, will be very instructive. I just want to point out to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that everyone today will want to come down to the floor and decry deficit spending. We will not hear one single Member of this House of Representatives come to the floor today and advocate deficits or say they like deficits.

The big difference in the debate, as provided for under this rule, is how we propose to tackle the problem. Today—this budget debate—is one of the best opportunities to see the differences between the two political parties on this issue. My friend, the gentleman from Georgia who spoke just a few moments ago, is exactly correct on this. It is very instructive because it represents two very different philosophies of spending.

With all due respect, my Democrat friends will present proposals today that say they want to attack the deficit problem by enacting higher taxes and higher spending. I say that with all due respect. It is their political philosophy and it is simply a fact.

On the other hand, the House Republican budget that I support today, presents a plan to balance the Federal

budget in 9 years. How do we do that? We do that the way we always try to do it, by keeping the pressure on to hold down Federal expenditures and the rate of growth of Federal spending, and by boosting the economy by reducing the tax burden on hardworking Americans.

Some people have said that our budget is too austere, that it does not spend enough money. We will have that debate today. But I would like for my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to look at this chart about where spending has been under the 8 years of Republican majorities and where it will go under the budget resolution. This spending trend of non-Social Security mandatory outlays in billions of dollars shows that this very austere budget will still amount to quite an increase in Federal expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, let's not let anyone tell us that we are actually cutting Federal spending in anything we do today. The question is simply, What is the rate of growth and who will grow it at a larger rate? Our budget grows the total Federal budget at a rate of 3.1 percent for next year. I say, Mr. Speaker, that is an adequate figure, considering the fact that we are going to have to spend more money on national defense and that we are in a recession and we need to give the American taxpayer more of their money back in the form of tax cuts to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my chairman, the gentleman from Iowa (Chairman NUSSLE), on this budget. I thank him for working with me as a new member of the Committee, and certainly I intend to support this budget resolution. I ask each of my colleagues to join in a "yes" vote on the rule and also on the Republican budget proposal.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, the preceding speaker asked what were the differences between the surpluses piled up during the second half of the Clinton Presidency and the deficits piled up during the first 2 years of the Bush Presidency.

True, there was a terrible attack on our country, and we have had to pay quite a bit because of the consequences of that. But I would suggest that the \$1 trillion tax cut forced through by the new administration is the main reason why we face the deficits we have today. The \$1 trillion, which primarily benefited the wealthy, forced through by the new administration, is the primary reason why we have the large deficits we have today, rather than the surpluses enjoyed during the Clinton Presidency.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

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Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened and deeply disappointed that this divisive, partisan budget bill is being brought up on a day when we Americans should be coming together to show support for our soldiers and

troops, servicemen and women in Iraq. Young Americans are fighting for our country even as we speak. They are in harm's way and deserve our full attention and support today.

Instead the Republican House leadership has us debating a partisan bill that cuts taxes for the wealthiest Americans who sit safely here at home and astonishingly pays for those tax cuts by cutting benefits to war-wounded veterans.

To do so at any time would be wrong. To do so during the first 4 hours of our war in Iraq is shameful. Is the altar of dividend tax cuts so sacred to our House Republican leadership that it is even willing to cut veterans' benefits by over \$28 billion on the day our future veterans are risking their lives for our country?

Tax cuts for the wealthy, paid for by benefit cuts to veterans, is this the new Republican model for the long time-honored American tradition of shared sacrifice in time of war?

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will pay attention to the words of the national commander of the Disabled American Veterans, the honored and distinguished Edward R. Heath, Senior. This is what he said just 3 days ago in his letter to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Speaker of the House.

"Has Congress no shame? Is there no honor left in the hallowed halls of our government, that you choose to dishonor the sacrifices of our Nation's heroes and rob our programs, health care and disability compensation to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy?"

Mr. Heath also went on to say that, Mr. Speaker, this budget dishonors the service of millions of service-connected disabled veterans, including combat-disabled veterans, and seriously erodes the Nation's commitment to care for its defenders.

"I urge you," Commander Heath said to the Speaker, "to reconsider the inequitable and ill-advised course proposed in the committee's partisan budget proposal."

I believe, Mr. Speaker, the sentiments expressed by the national commander of the Disabled American Veterans reflects the values of Americans everywhere.

I understand that in this budget last night or so they made a fig leaf change so that now they are only cutting veterans' benefits by \$28 billion rather than \$30 billion. I think Mr. Heath and our veterans all across this land of ours will recognize that as nothing but a political fig leaf, and that fig leaf will not work.

We ought to be supporting our veterans and servicemen and women today, not cutting their benefits in a divisive debate.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to just briefly respond to the gentleman that just spoke.

In the manager's amendment that we will adopt, when we adopt the rule in

discretionary spending for veterans, we provide a 6.1 percent increase, which has doubled, as my friend from Mississippi said, the overall budget. The mandatory spending in the manager's amendment that we will adopt, that calls for a spending increase of 7.5 percent for our veterans. So we respond to the needs of those that have made our country as free as it is.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I suspect that every budget proposal is somewhat partisan, but I hope we would try so that it would not be that.

I congratulate the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT). I think we are moving in the right direction. First let me just briefly, Mr. Speaker, represent what we have done in terms of veterans' benefits.

Spending has grown 51.7 percent since our first budget in the majority for an average growth of 6.1 percent each year. That is almost three times the rate of inflation representing the dedication, hopefully of both parties, to take care of our veterans.

Let me now talk about the important issue of what we have been doing on spending. As my colleagues can see by this chart, discretionary spending increases have averaged 6.3 percent each year since 1996 and 7.7 percent each year in increased spending since 1998. So we should be concerned with the dramatic growth in spending.

What has this done to the total debt of this country? We are looking at the total debt of this country going to \$10 trillion in the next 10 years. The question, Mr. Speaker, is how do we control the debt? Do we increase taxes to control the debt we are leaving to our kids and our grandkids, or do we do it by cutting back on spending?

This budget that the Republicans are suggesting says let us start holding the line and slow down the increase on spending, and if anybody does not believe there is at least 1 percent of fraud and abuse and waste in government spending, then they are mistaken. As a person that has worked in the administration, I will guarantee my colleagues we can save on percent.

Let us move ahead with this Republican budget. The gentleman from South Carolina's (Mr. SPRATT) budget, according to the Committee on the Budget, increases taxes by \$126 to \$128 billion. Even the Blue Dog budget increases taxes by something around \$124 billion between 2006 and 2011. So let us not reduce deficits with tax increases, let us do it with holding a line on spending, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the time.

We had a well-known Missourian named Mark Twain who once said, "The more you explain it to me, the more I don't understand it."

A few moments ago my friend and colleague from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) spoke about this budget taking care of the military. I have the privilege of serving on the Committee on Armed Services, which is a hard-working and, I might say, very bipartisan committee, but also I might point out, Mr. Speaker, we are at war.

Last night were the opening volleys to bring down Saddam Hussein, and yesterday I appeared before the Committee on Rules to ask for an amendment to recognize the fact that we would soon be at war and would soon have expenses for the aftermath in the country of Iraq.

Sadly, the Committee on Rules did not accept my ability to offer an amendment. I offered an amendment which would establish a \$20 billion reserve fund. This was done back during the initial era of the war on terrorism, and I chose a modest amount, a \$20 billion amount, for this reserve fund because it was estimated that it would cover a 5-month occupation and a 1-month conflict. Hopefully, that will be the case. In all probability, it will be much longer than that.

We have war-related costs, and this budget does not accept the fact or recognize the fact that we need to pay for this war. We are telling the American people, should this budget be passed, that there will be no money, no reserve fund, no dollars, no war-related costs that would help the troops, the ships, the fliers in working toward a victory. It would provide no humanitarian assistance for the inevitable flow of refugees, nothing to establish a transitional government. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, some analysts believe that the American costs could exceed \$100 billion, and yet my amendment was for a mere \$20 billion to recognize reality.

We are in a war. This budget should recognize that. This budget should have allowed an amendment to be offered in that case. The Committee on Rules was wrong not to make my amendment in order. I am saddened by that fact. They failed to include it in this provision, and consequently, Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleagues in this Chamber to vote against the resolution.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), a member of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank first the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for leading the effort, as he has in so many times before, to ensure that the minority party is well represented in this rules process.

Of the four amendments made in order under this rule, three of them are Democrat amendments. In fact, each of the Democrat amendments is an amendment in the nature of a substitute, giving the minority the opportunity to make wholesale changes to the budget.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) and the entire Committee on the Budget for their tireless efforts to make tough decisions and put our budget back on the road to surplus. Under their leadership, the United States will again see surpluses in the Federal budget.

As we begin the disarmament and liberation of Iraq, this budget provides a substantial funding increase for the Armed Forces, funding which will continue to ensure that our brave men and women in uniform remain the best trained and best equipped in the world.

The President and the Committee on the Budget have also correctly identified the need to increase funding for homeland security, including funding for the Nation's first responders. The budget will work to ensure the safety of Americans at home and abroad.

If the budget is accepted today by the House, and I hope it will, we will also send a message to the American people that we are tired of government waste and abuse by requiring Federal dollars be used in the most efficient way to bring safety to the Nation and to perform the government's responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good budget, and it is a fair rule, a very fair rule in fact. I ask my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to correct the RECORD. It was said here that we raise taxes in our budget proposal. The truth of the matter is we open the proposal to reduce taxes to give hard-working Americans a tax rebate of about \$60 billion. This time it will go to the millions who did not get it the last time and who are likely to spend it and give this economy a boost.

We also provide for expensing of purchases made by small businesses in the year of purchase, and we provide a 50 percent bonus to larger firms. Corporations who make investments in plant equipment this year, 50 percent of it can be written off. That is in our bill.

Furthermore, we take, instead of repealing the estate tax in 2011, we provide for the Pomeroy estate tax provision, which gives Americans immediate estate tax relief. That is a \$33 billion reduction, too.

The only thing we do is freeze the top two brackets, the very highest top brackets. We do not raise them. We simply freeze them in place. They can get the cuts they have gotten today, but until we get the budget back in balance, we would suspend those, but the tax effects, at best, are a wash. We are not raising taxes in our budget resolution.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The gentleman from Wash-

ington (Mr. HASTINGS) has 11 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 12½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I would observe it looks like my friend from Texas has more requests for time than I have. So I will reserve my time.

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, in 2001 I was 1 of only 28 Democrats to support the President's tax cuts, 1 of 9 to support his economic stimulus package. I will continue to support tax cuts that truly stimulate our economy and spur investment, but I believe that the Republican budget before us today and the sweeping magnitude and breadth and depth of tax cuts to the most affluent at the cost of the most urgent national needs is irresponsible.

The Republican plan allows U.S. troops to go into a war today and then slashes their veterans' benefits by billions when they return tomorrow because their budget needs those billions from veterans to fund a \$90,000 tax cut per millionaire.

Mr. Speaker, I represent some affluent areas. I represent people who are millionaires. They are good, hard-working people, but I cannot imagine a single one of them coming up to me and saying, give me my \$90,000 tax cut today, and I do not care about those soldiers who are fighting for my freedoms and safety in Iraq.

□ 1315

I do not care if they have to go without their veterans benefits tomorrow; I want mine now.

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what this budget does. This budget could eliminate enrollment for 158,000 veterans, necessitate 400,000 fewer hospital-bed days, reduce the number of nurses by 8,700. For veterans, it means longer waits and higher premiums.

The alternative is the moderate Blue Dog budget. It repeals the marriage penalty. It makes estate tax relief immediate and permanent. It accelerates middle-class and small business tax cuts, but it provides for our local first responders. It offers seniors an initial prescription drug benefit. It stays within the President's own discretionary spending levels. It achieves \$2 trillion less debt than the President's plan over 10 years. What it asks is that those who are at the highest tax bracket simply postpone their tax cuts until the war is paid for, until our veterans benefits are secured, until this budget is back on the path towards balance.

Mr. Speaker, for our national security today, for our homeland security today, for our veterans' health and economic security tomorrow, let us pass the moderate Blue Dog budget. Let us not balance this budget on the backs of people fighting on desert fronts.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I listen to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and I am amazed at some of the things that they have said today. The gentleman from Mississippi blamed the entire deficit in this budget on September 11. There is no truth in that. The fact of the matter is, if it was not for the tax cut that the Republicans put in place in the last session of Congress, there would not be a deficit.

The deficit is being created primarily because of the constant effort on their part to put in place tax cuts that primarily benefit the very wealthy and special corporate interests. Then I heard the gentleman from Florida say the budget puts us back on the road to surplus. They are creating a deficit, and they are saying they are creating a surplus. There is purposeful activity in creating the deficit by the kinds of tax cuts they put in place and the way they frame this budget.

They are taking a situation where a few years ago we had a surplus that was done on a bipartisan basis under President Clinton with a Republican House and a Democratic Senate; but nonetheless, it was done because we felt we had to balance the budget. Now the opposite is happening. They are creating a huge deficit.

Then another Member on the other side of the aisle said we have to have these tax cuts because we do not want to put all of the burden on the taxpayers. What about our children, grandchildren, and future generations? What about the fact that we are borrowing this money to pay for the deficit from Social Security and Medicare, and that these programs are going to run dry in the future when our children and grandchildren have to deal with the problem? That is the most irresponsible thing I have ever seen.

This is a radical proposal by the Republican leadership here. This is not common sense. This is the most radical budget that I have ever seen in the 15 years that I have been here. They are basically shifting the burden. They are shifting the burden to future generations. It should not be allowed. They should say what they are doing, and they are not.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN).

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule. I have to say, I am appalled that we even have this bill on the floor today. We are now in the first 24 hours of a war against Iraq, and I think that Congress should present a unified front supporting our men and women in harm's way.

But no, the Republicans decide this is a great time to slip through a budget while people are watching the Iraq situation and may not pay attention to the big tax cuts for the very wealthy, may not pay attention to the cuts in education, veterans benefits, and in

other critical domestic programs. Well, if they want to have this bruising and controversial debate, let us have at it.

First of all, this budget is designed to protect a \$396 billion corporate dividend tax cut that benefits the wealthy. Let us look at the State of Maryland. The average 1 percent of earners in Maryland would get a tax break of \$30,000; 24 percent of couples would get zero. And 43 percent of couples and singles would receive less than \$100 from this tax break. So when the other side says it is a big tax break for the American people, no. It is a big tax break for the very wealthy.

In order to give the wealthy this tax break, what we find out is they cut critical programs. They have cut veterans programs by \$15 billion. That is kind of ironic when we are at war. We are sending men and women into war, and they are cutting benefits to the veterans who have already made that sacrifice. What do they cut? They cut compensation for service-oriented disabilities. They cut burial benefits, Montgomery GI bill benefits, and rehabilitation benefits.

The Democratic budget, on the other hand, provides \$16 billion more than the Republicans for our veterans. Do not let them wave the flag unless they are willing to put some money there. Do not just believe me, believe the veterans organizations. The Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the American Legion have all issued statements opposing the Republican budget.

Then they give us a prescription drug plan on the cheap so they can give a big tax cut to the wealthy. They give \$400 billion for prescription drugs. We give \$528 billion. We keep seniors in Medicare; they say they have to go to an HMO.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, we are united in our prayers for the success and safety of our men and women in combat. The powers that be have brought to this floor a highly divisive budget resolution. This budget resolution is designed to enrich the rich at the expense of economic growth for all America. It means larger budget deficits, higher interest rates, larger trade deficits. It will take capital out of the private sector and away from business investments while underinvesting in education and infrastructure.

But I rise to address another point, another flaw in this budget resolution; and I will do so with an analogy to a credit card advertisement that we are all familiar with.

Allowing corporations to get out of paying American taxes just by renting a hotel room in the Bahamas, \$4 billion; ending taxes on all dividends, \$385 billion; ending the estate tax even on the largest estates, \$662 billion; knowing Members can pass the entire cost of all of this to future generations, priceless. RepubliCard, it is everything the super rich want it to be.

Also available, the new Deficit Express Card soon with a \$4.2 trillion credit limit. The Deficit Express Card, do not leave the House without it.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA).

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong opposition to the House Republican budget resolution. I believe our national budget should be a statement of our country's values. It should reflect the priorities of the American people for good jobs, safe communities, quality education, and access to health care.

Unfortunately, the Republican budget fails to fund these national priorities. The Republican budget has only one clear priority, to fund the President's \$1.6 trillion tax cut. The Republicans fund this tax cut at the expense of the social and economic interests of the American people. Republicans are offering us a budget today that cuts funding for every single domestic priority in order to fund a \$1.6 trillion tax cut that will only help a small percentage of Americans. These tax cuts are even more inappropriate when we consider the fact that our country is engaged in a war that will strain our already weakened financial resources.

Democrats, on the other hand, will be offering a variety of alternative budgets today that reflect the priorities of the American people. We will push for tax provisions that will help the backbone of our economy, small businesses and working families, while providing the necessary resources for quality health care and education for all Americans.

While I do not fully endorse all of the Democratic alternatives, each is far better than the Republican budget resolution. So today Democrats step up to the plate with superior alternatives while Republicans offer a Bush-league budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Republicans have chosen the interest of the elite few over the needs of the many. It is clear where their priorities lie. I urge Members to align their priorities with those of the American people and vote for the Democratic budget resolution.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we are ready to proceed to consideration of this rule. The rule lays out three different Democratic alternatives. Unfortunately, the Committee on Rules chose not to make in order some very important amendments, specifically the amendment offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON). We all support the troops. It is time for us to put our money where our mouth is. Unfortunately, this budget resolution does not provide any money for the ongoing war in Iraq. The Skelton amendment should have been made in order. It is regrettable the other side of the aisle did not give the House the opportunity to do what we all should be doing today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), the chairman of the Committee on Rules.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1330

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule and of the budget which will come forward from the Committee on the Budget. This is a wartime budget. Our Nation has been at war since September 11 of 2001. President Bush has made that very clear. And then, of course, last night that war expanded to our challenge of taking on Saddam Hussein.

This rule is a very fair and balanced rule. I see having just walked into the Chamber my good friend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). His substitute will be made in order. We will have a substitute for the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the Republican Study Committee. We will have the Progressive Caucus substitute that will be made in order. We will, of course, have the gentleman from South Carolina's (Mr. SPRATT) substitute.

I will say to my friends that not since 1987, that is 16 years ago, have we seen the Committee on Rules under either Republicans or Democrats make in order a provision which allowed for anything other than a complete substitute. And so the rule that we are going to be voting on in just a few minutes follows that 16-year tradition again under both Democrats and Republicans.

Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with the concept of the Skelton amendment. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services, is one of the most respected Members of this House, and I believe very strongly in what it is that he wants to do here.

We know that once we get this budget behind us, we are going to be dealing with a supplemental appropriations bill. It is no secret at all. It has been talked about as a measure which will range somewhere between 80- and \$100 billion. We know that it will take a great deal of resources to win this war and obviously to rebuild Iraq. It is our hope that we will be able to see a lot of help in that effort, not just from the U.S. taxpayer.

We know that there are tremendous oil resources in Iraq. We also know that the multinational coalition that is now supportive of the President is even larger than the 28-nation coalition that existed under President Bush No. 41 to liberate the people of Kuwait 12 years ago. And so as we see this coalition build to 35, 40 more nations, it is our hope that those nations will join in the rebuilding effort of Iraq.

That is why I believe that the message behind the gentleman from Missouri's very thoughtful amendment, while not made in order under this measure because we make substitute budgets in order, is a message which is important, it has resonated, and I strongly support the idea behind it. I can assure him that we will address this issue.

As we look, Mr. Speaker, at the budget itself, there are so many things that have been said, I do not have any charts showing credit cards or anything like that, but I will say that this is a budget that is focused on the situation that really created the economic challenge that we face over and above the war on terrorism and now our going to war with Saddam Hussein, and that happens to be the issue of economic growth.

The economic downturn began in the last two quarters of the year 2000. I will say that again, Mr. Speaker. The economic downturn began in the last two quarters of the year 2000, before the last Presidential election. Since that time we have been able to put into place President Bush's tax bill. That reduction in the tax burden dealing with issues like encouraging investment, the marriage tax penalty, those sorts of issues, based on the assessment of virtually every economist, mitigated the downturn that we have seen in the economy, meaning that without President Bush's tax plan, the tax reduction measure, the economic downturn would have been much worse than what we have gone through.

We went through two quarters of negative economic growth, meaning an economic recession last year, in 2001, and since that time we have seen growth that is not nearly what it should be. We enjoyed tremendous economic growth following the implementation of our tax measures in the mid to late 1990s, and I am happy to say that we have an opportunity to lay the groundwork for that to happen again. That is why the provision that is provided for in this budget for \$724 billion of tax reductions is a provision which will encourage economic growth.

Why is it that we are going into deficit spending? Well, yes, we have had to increase the spending on the war. Since September 11 we have had to expend over \$100 billion in the war on terrorism alone. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, we have this challenge because of economic growth which is not strong enough. Anyone who looks at what it will take to get us growing the economy again realizes that you do not increase taxes at a time of an economic slowdown; what you do is you cut taxes.

I hope very much that we will be able to maintain and have intact the President's economic growth package, but I have a proposal which I hope we can include with that, and this budget makes provisions for that, which will make the President's package even better. It is a provision which would cut the top

rate on capital gains from 20 percent down to 10 percent prospectively, meaning for new investment. It would say, Mr. Speaker, to people who are considering investing today, who may be waiting on the sidelines, that they would have an opportunity when the new investment that they would embark upon appreciates of having a rate that is cut from 20 percent down to 10 percent, from 35 percent to 20 percent for corporations. That kind of incentive for new investment is just what we need. That is the kind of tax reduction which will provide an important stimulant to the economy.

As we look at the overall quest to ensure that we have funding for a wide range of priorities, including education, including veterans, I have heard people talk about so many of these cuts that we are facing that are going to hurt working Americans and those who are at the lower end of the economic spectrum, and it is just not true.

We are focusing with a provision that we have in this rule on the issue of Medicare. I feel very strongly about the need to address a concern that I have in my State for the reimbursement to hospitals for the disproportionate share on Medicaid funding for the tremendous burden that they have carried. It is my hope that within the guidelines of this budget that we will be able to address those very important priorities that are out there.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very fair rule. I want to praise my colleague from Washington State (Mr. HASTINGS). He has worked day and night on the Committee on Rules. We worked until late last night fashioning this rule, and just the other night he was not able to be in the Committee on Rules because he was working until 1:30 in the morning on this budget in the Committee on the Budget. He is our representative from the Committee on Rules to the Committee on the Budget. He has done a great job in working on the budget, establishing our priorities, recognizing that this is a wartime budget, and at the same time moving us on the road towards economic growth and fiscal responsibility. He has also done a good job in fashioning, putting together and supporting and managing this rule.

Mr. Speaker, it is a rule which allows, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) correctly said, for three options from Democrats to be considered, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), the Black Caucus/Progressive Caucus substitute, and the so-called Blue Dog package that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has brought forward. I think it is the right thing for us to do, to have a full airing. We are going to do that.

This is one of the most solemn days in our Nation's history as we have begun this war, but at the same time no better signal could be sent to the rest of the world that the United States of America stands strong and ready and determined to continue with

the greatest experiment in individual liberty known to man, that being the United States of America.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the kind words that he gave me.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MODIFICATION TO AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE NO. 4 MADE IN ORDER TO H. CON. RES. 95, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during consideration of H. Con. Res. 95 pursuant to House Resolution 151, the amendment numbered 4 in House Report 108-44 may be considered as modified by the form that I have placed at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). The Clerk will report the modification.

The Clerk read as follows:

Modification to amendment in the nature of a substitute No. 4 printed in part B of House Report 108-44 offered by Mr. Spratt:

Strike section 204 and insert the following:

SEC. 204. CONTINGENCY PROCEDURE FOR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION.

(a) COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.—In the House, if the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure reports a bill or joint resolution, or if an amendment thereto is offered or a conference report thereon is submitted, that provides new budget authority for the budget accounts or portions thereof in the highway and transit categories as defined in sections 250(c)(4)(B) and (C) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 in excess of the following amounts:

- (1) for fiscal year 2004: \$39,233,000,000,
- (2) for fiscal year 2005: \$39,998,000,000,
- (3) for fiscal year 2006: \$40,841,000,000,
- (4) for fiscal year 2007: \$41,684,000,000, or
- (5) for fiscal year 2008: \$42,605,000,000,

the chairman of the Committee on the Budget may adjust the appropriate budget aggregates and increase the allocation of new budget authority to such committee for fiscal year 2004 and for the period of fiscal years 2004 through 2008 to the extent such excess is offset by a reduction in mandatory outlays from the Highway Trust Fund or an increase in receipts appropriated to such fund for the applicable fiscal year caused by such legislation or any previously enacted legislation.

(b) ADJUSTMENT FOR OUTLAYS.—In the House, if a bill or joint resolution is reported, or if an amendment thereto is offered or a conference report thereon is submitted, that changes obligation limitations such that the total limitations are in excess of \$38,594,000,000 for fiscal year 2004, for programs, projects, and activities within the highway and transit categories as defined in sections 250(c)(4)(B) and (C) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 and if legislation has been enacted that satisfies the conditions set forth in subsection (a) for such fiscal year, the chairman of the Committee on the Budget may increase the allocation of outlays for such fis-

cal year for the committee reporting such measure by the amount of outlays that corresponds to such excess obligation limitations, but not to exceed the amount of such excess that was offset pursuant to subsection (a).

Mr. SPRATT (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the modification be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I will not object, I rise only to take a moment to thank my colleague and ranking member from South Carolina for his work in trying to conform this important provision within both of our budgets. We may have some disagreement throughout the day here on a number of provisions, but procedurally we usually have an esprit de corps and unanimity. In this instance I will not object. This is an appropriate thing for the gentleman to do. I made a similar manager's amendment at Rules last night, and this allows us to conform the budget, so I will not object.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members have 7 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks with regard to the budget we are about to consider.

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

There was no objection.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 151 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 95.

□ 1340

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013, with Mr. GILLMOR in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the concurrent resolution is considered as having been read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 3 hours, with 2 hours confined to the congressional budget, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on the Budget, and 1 hour on the subject of economic goals and policies, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK).

The gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) each will control 1 hour of debate on the congressional budget.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE).

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to begin by thanking our staff from the Committee on the Budget. They have worked enormously hard to bring us to this point in time where we are able to come to the floor to talk about the budget. Usually we reserve this to the end of the debate, but I just want to thank them because we are at a very unique time in our history. It requires some difficult choices. It requires us to analyze the situation very carefully. We have good people that work for us in both the majority and minority. I want to thank them for the work that they do. They have been asked to do a job, they do it, they do it well, and we find ourselves on the floor ready to debate the bill on time and ready to debate the budget within the procedure that we laid out at the beginning of the year.

Similarly, we ask young men and women overseas to do a job today. They are doing it in fine fashion. They represent us well. They represent our hopes and our dreams. They represent our freedom. They represent America. We are proud of our troops. We are proud of the job that they do, and we are proud that they do the job without blinking an eye, without any hesitation.

I believe they would ask the same of us here today, that while there are certainly trials and tribulations that confront us around the world today, that we do our work, that we are not distracted by a tyrant in Baghdad, and we are not distracted by terrorism around the world. It would be very easy to be distracted by that. It would be very easy to suggest, let's maybe wait for another day. But I think what America demands is that we continue the work of freedom, we continue the work of democracy. That is what they are fighting for, and that is what we need to do as well.

Mr. Chairman, we are at war. I did not have to practice that part of the speech because we were at war even before last night. We are at war against