

the whole society because everybody pays the payroll tax. Everybody pays Social Security. Everybody pays Medicare, and if we gave that back to people on the first \$20,000 of their income, the people on the bottom would get about \$1,500 in refund. They could spend it to buy an extra shirt, to take their family to dinner, to do many of the things that would keep the small businesses open that are now closing because nobody can come and buy dinner for their family. They have to stay at home and live within a tight budget. But the leadership of this House for some reason did not want us to deal with that. They would not let us deal with unemployment. None of the people at the bottom got anything. That is a sad day for this House.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

TAX CUTS AND VETERANS BENEFITS

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, we have just voted on a large tax cut bill in this House, but I think it is important for the American people to understand how our fiscal irresponsibility is affecting other aspects of our society. I think it is important for the American people to know that the budget the President sent to this House originally and which was passed by this Chamber cut mandatory and discretionary spending for veterans programs by \$28.3 billion. It is hard to believe that at a time when our President was asking America's young men and women to go to Iraq and to fight and in many cases give their lives that he sent a budget to this House that cut veterans benefits by \$28.3 billion.

Let me tell my colleagues what else was in that budget that the President sent over that hurts our Nation's veterans. He was asking that the co-payment for a prescription drug that a veteran would need to pay would go from \$7 a prescription up to \$15 a prescription. Just about a year and a half ago, we increased that co-payment, or the House did against my objection and the objection of my Democratic colleagues, they increased that co-payment for a

prescription drug from \$2 up to \$7 and now the President is asking that that co-payment be increased from \$7 to \$15 a prescription? And do my colleagues not understand that many veterans get 10 or more prescriptions a month? That is 10 times 15. That is a lot of money for veterans who may be living on very limited fixed incomes. It is shameful. It is shameful what the President has asked in his budget that he sent to the House.

But it gets even worse. The President has suggested that there be an annual enrollment fee imposed upon veterans of \$250 annually. Think about that. These are young Americans who have gone and served our country, many of them during wartime. They have served honorably; they have come back to this country. They are participating in the VA healthcare system, and the President says they should be charged an annual enrollment fee of \$250 at the very time that we are giving huge, huge tax cuts to the richest people in this country, many of them who have never served in the military. It is just outrageous. But it gets worse because in the President's budget he suggested that the cost for clinic visit be increased.

At the time when we are giving large tax cuts to the wealthiest in our country, many of whom have never served in our military, we are putting additional financial burdens on the backs of our Nation's veterans. And then about 1 year ago, this administration's Department of Veterans Affairs put out a gag order, and basically the gag order said this: too many veterans are coming in for services. We do not have enough money to provide those services; so none of our health care providers around the country can any longer make public service announcements encouraging veterans to use the benefits that they are entitled to receive. No longer can our health care professionals participate in health fairs which could identify diseases in their early stages so that they could be prevented. No longer are our health care professionals around the country allowed to put out newsletters describing the services that veterans are legally entitled to and encouraging them to take advantage of those services.

Mr. Speaker, we are limiting what we are willing to do for our veterans so that we can give huge tax breaks to the richest people in this country. And the question is this: The President and leadership of this House must make a choice. Are we going to defend and protect and provide for our veterans, or are we going to continue to cut their benefits, to cut services to veterans in order to give money to the richest people in this country? That is a choice that is facing those of us who serve in this House.

MOTHER'S DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate all the mothers in America. During the last few weeks, we have watched as our Armed Forces fought and won a war in Iraq. This weekend many of those troops will celebrate Mother's Day at home with their families, and in fact, some of those returning troops are mothers themselves.

Earlier this year while those mothers and daughters and fathers and sons bravely fought for the freedom of the people of Iraq and for the security of America, the House passed a bill to relieve some of the tax burden on our troops. Today we gave all American mothers tax relief. This is more than a bouquet of flowers. It is more than a sentimental greeting card. Tax relief for working mothers and their children may correspond with Mother's Day, but it produces dividends well beyond this Sunday.

This plan gives the economy an immediate shot in the arm by accelerating tax relief for the marriage penalty, increasing the child tax credit, and providing working mothers with more of their hard-earned dollars through an accelerated tax relief program. And just think, these mothers can use their recouped income for their needs, for the needs of their children, for the needs of their family.

Furthermore, with sizable long-term tax relief on capital, businesses will receive the investment incentives that will help create more jobs. Just think, because of the legislation this House passed today, more mothers who are without a job will find one. More mothers who own small businesses will be able to expand that business instead of closing their doors. More mothers will provide their children with a better life. On this Mother's Day, this House can tell mothers of America that we have not given them flowers, we have given them the flower shop.

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

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

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to claim the Democratic 5 minutes after the Republican.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I have to object because he has had three in a row, and it is going back and forth, and if it stays in regular order, then it is alternating.

THE BENEFITS OF PASSING H.R. 2,
JOBS AND GROWTH TAX ACT OF
2003

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, while many economic indicators show that the American economy is back on the road to recovery, working families in central and western Pennsylvania continue to struggle to pay their bills. Unemployment rates for some portions of my district have risen as high as 14 percent, and jobs are difficult to find, even for the most well-trained workers.

For my constituents, the time to act on these alarming trends is now. I applaud the leadership of the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the Committee on Ways and Means on crafting H.R. 2 to help spur our Nation's economy, and we in the House were right to pass this vital legislation. The provisions of H.R. 2 will put billions back into our country and create thousands of new jobs for Pennsylvania workers. This legislation will ensure our economy continues to grow and creates jobs in the years ahead. H.R. 2 is an important step in answering the economic questions facing millions of American taxpayers.

□ 1500

The benefits of H.R. 2 are staggering. Twenty-seven million taxpayers will benefit from the increased child tax credit in 2003 alone; nearly 10 million taxpayers will not pay the AMT; 10 million seniors will become more financially secure in retirement by keeping more of their dividend income.

In fact, half of the immediate tax relief provisions of H.R. 2 are directed towards the child tax credit, eliminating the marriage penalty tax, accelerating rate reductions for middle-class families and ensuring these families do not face the alternative minimum tax; real money for families.

As a former small business owner, I understand the importance of H.R. 2 to small businesses throughout America. H.R. 2 will benefit family businesses by increasing the immediate deduction for small business from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and modifying the definition of small business to allow more businesses to grow and prosper.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleagues in the House for supporting H.R. 2, and I urge the other body to move swiftly on this important legislation for our Nation and for working families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BENEFITS OF TAX CUT BILL

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this bill is a job killer. It ensures the continuation of the Bush recession.

Now, some will benefit from this. In fact, those who earn over \$1 million a year will average more than \$93,000. That is almost enough to be a Bush Pioneer, if you give \$100,000 to the Bush campaign.

What has happened here in this debate is that the minor economic benefits of this proposal have been talked about extensively, but the offsetting and much larger economic detriments have not been discussed as extensively. Because my colleagues on the Democratic side are so incensed at how unfair this bill is, we have not had enough time to talk about what a job killer it is.

What does this bill do? Yes, it does put some wealthy individuals in a position where they can buy the new \$350,000 Mercedes. It is an expensive car. It is a new car. It is the latest toy. And that is where a big chunk, along with similar consumption items, foreign consumption items, where a significant part of this tax bill's result is going.

It is true that some of it will be invested by the wealthy. Some of it will stimulate domestic demand. So there is some positives of the \$550 billion. It is hard to find \$550 billion that does not have some positives.

But what about the negative? 100 percent of the cost of this bill, and as the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) explained, that is over \$1 trillion, gets sucked out of our capital markets. What does this mean? It means that the over 2.5 million Americans who have already lost their job in the Bush recession will not find new jobs, because when small businesses in my district go to borrow money, the banker will say no, money is not available. We lent it instead to the U.S. Treasury, who has an excellent record of paying it back.

How are small businesses supposed to get the capital they need to expand? They are not going to be able to get it from our capital markets, because \$1 trillion is going to be sucked out to pay for this deficit.

It is not typical for me to come to this floor and criticize one of my California colleagues and how they run their office, but I say to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), you must give your staff a raise, because they have come up with a more regressive tax proposal than the Bush administration. They have done more for the Pioneers.

Look at this. This is amazingly regressive, with virtually nothing going to half of Americans, and \$93,000 going to the very wealthy. How do they achieve that? Let us look at the next chart. They come up with an interesting approach.

The tax provisions that help middle-class families cease to have any effect in 2007, whereas the provisions that are responsible for the millionaires getting \$93,000 each each year continue for quite some time. In fact, this bill does not have a single provision that helps middle-class families that continues in effect past 2007.

So, let us summarize this bill:

Benefits in 2008 for future years that help middle-class families, zero.

Benefits to 50 percent of all Americans from the dividend provisions in this bill, 1 percent.

Benefits to the top 1 percent coming from the dividend provisions and capital gains provisions of this bill, over 50 percent.

Having a staff that can put together a bill that is more regressive than the White House was able to put together, priceless.

Yes, RepubliCard. Some things, campaign contributions just cannot buy. For everything else, there is RepubliCard. RepubliCard. The country club will accept nothing less.

Also, finally, do not forget to apply for the Deficit Express Card, now with a \$12 trillion credit limit, because we will indeed have a \$12 trillion national debt with the budget adopted by the majority party. Deficit Express Card, don't leave the House without it.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT
ON ECONOMIC HISTORY

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

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, if Patrick Henry could come back today, he would be appalled at what taxation with representation gives us today.

There was not time to speak during the debate, so I would like to set the record straight, and these are facts, undisputable facts.

First of all, I would like to address the issue that George W. Bush lost jobs and the surplus. Fact: In history, in the year 2000, we were starting into a recession. Alan Greenspan. We had tax relief 2 years ago. Alan Greenspan and the majority of economists say that that tax relief shallowed that recession.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we had 9/11. I cannot tell you the effects of this. To New York it was \$283 billion, including the \$83 billion in lost revenue, and it did hurt this country.

I would like to respond to the ranking minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI). She stated that only Democrats voted for the 1993 tax increase. Let me tell you why Republicans did not vote for the 1993 tax bill. I would say in fairness, not all the Democrats were here during that 1993 period and they should not be held accountable, but the Democrat leadership should.

First of all, they gave us the largest tax increase in history in 1993, and this