

House of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to applaud the process that is beginning in the Middle East this very morning. I remind my colleagues of the long journey that we have taken toward peace. I am reminded of the continuous and ongoing negotiations of the administration of President William Jefferson Clinton, who believed in the concept of peace in the Middle East. I recall the near-midnight negotiations prior to the inauguration of this President that President Clinton engaged in. The single word I remind my colleagues of is "engagement."

I am reminded of my floor speech in February, 2001, saying to the new administration that you cannot cease to engage in the peace process of the Middle East. Unfortunately, our voices were not listened to, and so for at least a 9-to-10-month period the suicide bombings continued, the lack of engagement promoted nonpeace in the Middle East.

Today, I am gratified that there is now a recognition that the only way we can bring the parties to the table is to remain engaged. I encourage and, of course, ask that this administration not make this a 48-hour tailspin of meetings and greetings, but that we seriously continue to engage with our friends in the Middle East, the Palestinians and the Israelis, and work with them hand in hand on the question of peace. I would ask that we continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say one word about the three-vote removal of the First Amendment yesterday by the FCC. Unfortunately, three Republican commissioners decided that the First Amendment did not need to be promoted in this Nation by allowing the media to be able to conglomerate print, TV, and radio in one hand. I had a town hall meeting by radio, by KPFT, where 5,000 people listened to one of the commissioners who had sense and indicated that America does itself a disservice when America extinguishes the voices of opposition.

In small or rural markets where one conglomerate owns every voice, we will not hear a different perspective. Shame on the FCC. I call on this Congress to do something that makes sense and speak on behalf of the American people and reignite the First Amendment.

Let me conclude by making an announcement to just be able to reaffirm that all of the promises made by the \$350 billion tax cut is nothing but garbage. There is no truth in it whatsoever; and I am proud to stand here and say I voted against it. The New York Daily News says the poorest suffer the unkindest. They were told they were going to get a child tax credit, and if you are the working poor, working every day, providing for your family, guess what, you do not get a \$400 check

in the mail, you get zero because, unfortunately, all of the folk rushing to give all of the money to the richest of this Nation forgot about giving a tax cut to those who deserve it the most.

And let me cite the New York Times on Sunday, June 1, that says "Second study finds gaps in tax cuts." The gaps are that working Americans do not really get the tax cut that they need, that 95 percent of this money goes to those making \$374,000. Former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill said this is an economy geared towards the richest. It says, "Clearly, low-income taxpayers will not receive any benefits from this law." It goes on to cite the egregiousness of the \$350 billion tax cut where working poor, making \$10,000 a year, do not get a child tax credit.

Do Members know how many children they represent in America? Twelve million children are not impacted by this tax cut. Now we have the other body trying to fix it by proposing a Senate bill, if you will, that fixes it; but let me tell you how long it takes for a bill to get through this Congress: a long time. They are even debating the fact whether or not an opponent of the bill will require 60 votes.

I can assure Members that all of the voices that were raised telling Members this was a bogus tax cut, those suggesting it would create jobs, what a joke. It takes a million dollars to create two jobs under the Bush plan. If the Democratic plan had passed, we would have had investment in health care and investment in homeland security. We would have had investment in transportation. What would that have done to the increasing job loss? It would have created more jobs.

Mr. Speaker, a bogus tax plan has been passed. Americans need to wake up and deal with the idea of fighting for what is right. We will continue to fight for it and find a way to provide jobs and opportunities for Americans.

ESTABLISHING FAIRNESS IN TAX CODE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend President Bush for his leadership, to thank this Congress for passing a tax plan that is predicted by outside and independent economists to generate about 1.3 million new jobs over the next 18 months, legislation that says if you pay Federal income taxes, you will receive Federal income tax relief.

For the people of Illinois that I represent, it is estimated that the average Illinois family will see an extra thousand dollars in higher take-home pay. If they are Federal income taxpayers, they will receive Federal income tax relief.

The bottom line is that it will create jobs. If we put extra money in the

pocketbook of workers, we put incentives for workers to invest, and it creates jobs.

One of the issues I have been involved in over the last several years has been an effort to bring fairness to the Tax Code, and that is to address the issue of the marriage tax penalty. A quirk in the Tax Code or a complicated Tax Code which has gotten more complicated over the years where you had a situation where both the husband and wife were in the workforce, and because they both are in the workforce and pay Federal income taxes, when they file, as married, they file jointly, combine their incomes, and that pushes them into a higher tax bracket; whereas if they lived together and filed as two single people, they would have saved money. Is that right, that under our Tax Code 42 million married working couples paid on average \$1,700 in higher taxes just because they are married?

I have an example of a couple in Joliet, Illinois, that I represent, Jose and Magdalena Castillo. They are construction workers in Joliet. Their son is Eduardo and their daughter is Carolina. For them, their marriage tax penalty has been about \$1,400. For them, \$1,400, that is several months' worth of car payments or day-care for their children while they are at work, or home mortgage payments for this family. So eliminating the marriage tax penalty and bringing fairness to the Tax Code will make a big difference in the lives of the Castillos of Joliet, Illinois.

I am proud to say in the first tax cut of 2001, we passed the first effort into law to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. It had twice been vetoed by Bill Clinton, but President Bush signed it into law, an effort to phase out the marriage action penalty. I am pleased to commend the President for signing into law the Jobs and Economic Growth Package that made effective this year the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. So rather than Jose and Magdalena Castillo having to wait over this decade for the marriage tax penalty to be eliminated, we eliminated it this year.

So that means the Castillos will have an extra \$1,400 that they will be able to spend at home to take care of their family's needs, make some improvements around the house, buy some back-to-school clothes, and make a down payment on a new car. That creates jobs.

I am pleased to say the President signed the legislation passed by a majority of the House and the Senate, which will eliminate the marriage tax penalty now.

When we think about it, this unfairness in the Tax Code had existed for years, and those on the other side of the aisle, they resisted efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. They said we could better spend the money here in Washington than Jose and Magdalena Castillo back in Joliet, Illinois. I am pleased to say that a majority of this House believes that Jose and

Magdalena Castillo of Joliet, Illinois, can better spend their hard-earned money back in Joliet, Illinois, than I and my colleagues can for them here in Washington.

I think we need to be celebrating the fact that we eliminated the marriage tax penalty, and we did it in two ways. For those who itemize their taxes, people like Jose and Magdalena Castillo, they are homeowners, so they itemize their taxes, we widen the 15 percent tax bracket so people like Jose and Magdalena Castillo can earn twice as much as a single person and stay in the 15 percent tax bracket, and that wipes out their marriage tax penalty.

And for those who do not own a home or give to their church or institution of faith or charity, so they do not have enough to itemize, they use something called the standard deduction, under our legislation, we double the standard deduction to twice that for singles, and for those who do not itemize, we eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

I thank the Republican majority and President Bush for eliminating the marriage tax penalty and helping bringing fairness to the Tax Code in 2003.

WORKING FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the comments of my Republican colleague who just spoke, and I have to say it is very difficult for me to celebrate the Republican tax bill because the fact of the matter is, so many working people have been left out and are not receiving any benefits from the Republican tax bill. It was interesting to listen to the previous speaker because he talked about if money was going back to working families, they could go out and spend it and that would help the economy. If that is the case, why were so many families left out of the child tax credit or left out of other benefits that were basically going, under this Republican tax bill, to the high-income people?

The spin on the other side of the aisle is amazing, but the editorial comments during the Memorial Day recess have basically shown this is essentially a fraud. The Republican tax bill does not do what it purports to do, and it leaves out so many working people. For those who might doubt what I say, I want to mention some of the editorial comments in the New York Times and Washington Post in the last couple of days.

In Monday's New York Times there was an opinion by Bob Herbert called "The Reverse Robin Hood," and I will go through certain sections that Mr. Herbert said. He said, "If you wanted a quintessential example of what the Bush administration and its legislative

cronies are about, it was right there on the front page of the Times last Thursday: 'Tax Law Omits \$400 Child Credit for Millions.'

"The fat cats will get their tax cuts. But in the new American plutocracy, there won't even be crumbs left over for the working folks at the bottom of the pyramid to scramble after.

"When House and Senate negotiators met last week to put the finishing touches to President Bush's tax bill, they coldly deleted a provision that would have allowed millions of low-income working families to benefit from the bill's increased child tax credit.

"It was a mean-spirited and wholly unnecessary act, a clear display of the current regime's outright hostility toward America's poor and working classes.

"The negotiators eliminated a provision in the Senate version of the tax bill that would have extended benefits from the child tax credit to families with incomes between \$10,500 and \$26,625. This is not a small group. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the families that would have benefited include about 12 million children, one of every six kids in the U.S. under the age of 17."

Mr. Speaker, how are you going to tell me that somehow this is putting money back in the pockets of working people?

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These are working people. These people are not on welfare. They are out there working. They are getting nothing.

Then it goes on to say in the Herbert article:

And readers of yesterday's Times learned that another group of some 8 million mostly low-income taxpayers, and I say taxpayers, primarily single people without children, will also be left behind, getting no benefit at all from the President's tax cuts.

The comments just continue. This was yesterday's, Monday's, Washington Post. The editorial for the newspaper says, Children Left Behind. It says:

"Even for a debate over taxes, the public discussion taking place right now about child credits in the new tax law is particularly galling. Stiffing these children was not a last-minute oversight or the unfortunate result of an unreasonably tight \$350 billion ceiling. Adjustments had to be made," a spokeswoman for the House Ways and Means Committee said, as if those on her side would have preferred otherwise. In fact, the administration did not include this provision in its original, \$726 billion proposal. The House did not include it in its \$550 billion version. The Senate Finance Committee did not include it.

So when you try to get some suggestions from the Republicans that they are going to come down here and say, oh, this was an oversight or we are going to correct it, the President did not have this child tax credit for these

people in his original proposal, the Senate Republicans did not have it, the House Republicans did not have it. How can they come down here and suggest that somehow it is an oversight? They say they are going to correct it. I hope they do correct it, but that is going to take some time, and I question whether in fact they really will correct it.

The amazing thing to me is that we as Democrats have been saying all along how this Republican tax bill was not going to put money into the pockets of working families. Now all the editorial comments in every major newspaper say that that is true, the Daily News, you name it. Wherever it is around the country, they are all admitting the fact now that it is not true, that money is not going to those working people at the lower end of the spectrum. They are not getting the child tax credit. They are not getting anything. How can the Republicans now suggest that somehow that was an oversight or they are going to correct it in the future? The fundamental basis of their tax policy has been to give large amounts of money back to wealthy people, not to the average American. And the consequence of that is that the average American does not have money in his pocket, and there is no economic stimulus coming from this tax bill because it is not putting money back into the pockets of the average American in the way that they can go out and meaningfully spend it and actually have some stimulation for the economy. It is not happening.

THE NEW ERA OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, next Thursday, June 12, the subcommittee I chair on research will hold a hearing on biotechnology, the potential and the safety. I am a farmer in Michigan, and this is the first year that I have used the so-called roundup ready soybeans to plant on my farm. I have held back, thinking that maybe the nongenetically modified soybean would bring a higher price or have expanded markets, especially in some of those areas of the world that are rejecting it.

However, that has not been the case. Biotechnology is now one of the most promising sectors of the economy. It is revolutionizing medicine with at least 95 biotech drugs already approved in the U.S., and there are another 371 drugs on the table for acceptance that are being developed for medications that could help cure cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and many other conditions. Biotechnology will produce higher-quality foods that can provide both nourishment and immunization to many of the billions of hungry people around the world.