

under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I, once again, want to speak a little bit on the cause the Washington Waste Watchers is trying to get done and that is to highlight and try to get rid of some of the everlasting waste in the Federal Government, waste of the taxpayer's money that the Federal Government seems so apt at doing so well.

Mr. Speaker, for example, the postal service managers received over \$500 million in incentive awards for allegedly improving financial performance when, in fact, all indicators showed at the same time that the financial performance had actually declined. And, yet, we still gave that \$500 million because of the performance which, again, the same performance had declined.

The examples are just never-ending. For example, the EPA had no knowledge whatsoever of the work that a certain EPA applicant was going to perform, but still awarded that same applicant with a \$700,000 grant even though it did not know what it was for, Mr. Speaker.

HUD paid the full amount of \$227,000, Mr. Speaker, for a project even though that same project that it was paying for, the full project, one-third of the project had only been completed. And, yet, the entire sum went out.

Again, no accountability whatsoever. And nothing seems to happen.

The public housing authority in Bridgeport, Connecticut, received an extra \$750,000 in operating subsidies during the year 2000, while incurring \$300,000, Mr. Speaker, in unnecessary utility expenses for units that had been vacant for years. Again, these are not new issues.

And, yet, the Democrats, Mr. Speaker, still insist on trying to raise the taxes of the hard-working American people to do more of this.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has grown at an uncontrollable size. And the Democrats insist on raising the taxes on the hard-working Americans to do more of this, of throwing good money after bad and bad money after good and good money after bad. Because it is not once, it is over and over and over. And their solution, Mr. Speaker, is it is not a prob-

lem, there is more money where that comes from.

The American people will take more money out of their hard-earned dollars, take it out of their pockets, send it to D.C. so D.C. can continue to do what it has done year after year after year.

I am encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by the President's new initiative to try to curtail this. But let me tell my colleagues what I am a little bit discouraged about, Mr. Speaker. The Federal Government loses almost \$20 billion before it can even waste it. When the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, had an amendment in the committee after we see the amount of money that is wasted, he said let's cut 1 percent, just 1 percent on waste, fraud and abuse. Mr. Speaker, how many votes were there from our distinguished friends of the Democratic party for the motion of the chairman of the Committee on the Budget to cut just 1 percent of waste, fraud and abuse? Zero. Not one. Because, again, they believe in raising taxes.

Take the money from the hard-working American people. They all keep sending it up here so they can come up and the money can come up here and the Federal Government can continue to waste it.

Mr. Speaker, again I will continue to highlight this waste. I am going to continue to thank the President for the initiatives that he has taken to change this, and we are going to continue to highlight it. And we have already filed some legislation, and we are going to file more legislation in order to try to change this culture of spending and of misspending to the culture of fiscal responsibility.

In the meantime, I would ask my friends in the other party to change their attitude from just asking for more money, for asking for more taxes and increases in taxes, and help us change this attitude that the President is trying to change, and we are going to continue to try to change.

PURCHASING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FROM CANADA AND EUROPE

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, people from around the world come to America for their medical care. Yet Americans are forced to travel around the world for their prescription drugs and medications. Today, in the Washington Post, there was a poll conducted by the Washington Post and ABC News showing more than two-thirds of Americans think it should be legal to purchase medications from Canada and Europe and other industrialized nations.

I think this is significant given on the eve that the conference on prescription drugs is meeting to know where the American people are on the

major issue of allowing them to purchase medications from either Europe or Canada, allowing competition to pervade in the prescription drug area, allowing choice to consumers. Two-thirds of the Americans think it is the right thing to do.

In the meantime, millions of Americans are forced to either cut their medications in half, skip a month, forgo their prescription drugs entirely, or cut their pills, as I said, in half. Yet of those who choose not to do that, many are forced to go to Canada to buy their medications.

And what do our drug companies provide these seniors who are in dire need of life saving medications? Today, Eli Lilly announced joining other major companies like Glaxo, AstraZeneca, and Pfizer, they are going to begin to limit their sales to Canada, cut off their supplies to Canada. Rather than allowing competition and choice to exist in the system, these prescription drug companies are going to deny access to the Canadians where Americans get competitive prices.

You take the cancer drug Tamoxifen, \$360 in the United States; Canada, \$33. Life-saving medication for women with breast cancer. You go down the list, line by line. Last week, USA Today ran an article going line by line over major medications, and they were all somewhere between 40 to 50 percent cheaper in Canada than they are in the United States.

And the irony of all of that is many of those medications were developed with U.S. taxpayer dollars. So what have we provided? Not only do we fund the research and development of these new life-saving medications, we are provided the unique opportunity of paying the most expensive prices in the world for medications that were originally developed with U.S. tax dollars.

Many in the industry not only now are limiting sales, they argue about the safety of these medications purchased from Canada. Yet today, we import \$15 billion worth of medications from around the world. Nobody argues about their safety. And the most telling example about the issue of Canada is that in October 2000 when the United States Government needed a vaccine for anthrax, where did they turn because there was a shortage here in the United States?

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They turned to Canada. If it was so unsafe for our consumers to go to Canada to buy medications, where did the United States Government go in dire need? They went to Canada because the system in Canada is comparable to our system.

A recent Wall Street Journal/Harris Interactive poll shows 77 percent of Americans believe it is unreasonable for pharmaceutical companies to take actions like Eli Lilly did today.

The facts are that the claims made by the FDA and the pharmaceutical companies about the dangers of these

drugs simply do not hold. They did not hold when the United States Government needed them, and they do not hold today when our seniors and others are forced to go to Canada to get life-saving medications.

This system is not some great beyond that we do not know. Today in Europe the system of parallel trading exists, free trade where people in Germany or France or England or Ireland buy medications wherever they need them in Europe. That system exists, and it is the most competitive market in the pharmaceutical industry.

What I am suggesting, what others in bipartisan fashion have passed in July, the legislation known as market access, are suggesting is allow the United States to participate in that market access. Allow the barriers to come down, allow the market to organize and properly manage itself and prices in the United States would come down, rather than allowing a 40 to 50 percent disparity between the prices in Canada and Europe between the United States. That is what would happen if we passed this legislation today.

For too long, if we take a look at it, in Families USA, the 50 most commonly used drugs by our seniors have risen 3½ times the rate of inflation. Between 2000 and 2003, seniors' expenditures on prescription drugs increased by 44 percent.

The costs of medications are too expensive. Eli Lilly and the other pharmaceuticals are limiting the sales to Canada in an attempt to cut off the seniors. And what does the United States Congress do and what does the United States Senate do? When they passed a prescription drug, when it came to the issue of price and affordability, the Congress did nothing. And so people are forced to take action in their own hands and go to Canada.

We should not turn our grandmothers and our grandfathers into drug runners, filling up prescription bags for people that live in the housing centers with them. We can deal with the issue of cost. Allow the free market system to work and allow choice to exist and prices would come down here in the United States.

For too long the American people have been forced to subsidize the starving French and Germans. We should give them competitive prices, give them choice, allow the free market to work; and we will finally get the prescription drugs people need and deserve.

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues, and in particular the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART), as a vigilante for the Amer-

ican taxpayer. In the 10 short months that I have been a Member of Congress, I have been appalled by the waste, fraud, and abuse that I have found to exist within the Federal Government.

As a member of the Washington Waste Watchers and of this body, I believe it is my duty to bring to the public's attention instances of fraud, waste, and abuse. It not only steals from taxpayers but also from the beneficiaries who truly need the benefits.

I have been given the honor of serving on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. In this position, I exercise oversight responsibilities over the second largest agency in the Federal Government. The VA is a laudable institution with lofty goals and worthy intentions. However, as evidenced by long wait times suffered by many veterans, not only in my district but in other districts as well, it has not always flourished under the best management practices. Again this year, the GAO placed the VA on its high-risk list for fraud, waste, and abuse. Here are but a few examples of fraud and waste that I will discuss that happened in the VA where we stood to lose over \$130 million to unscrupulous felons.

They have been vulnerable to this because of poor management practices and loose accounting standards. Three VA employees, two in my home State of Florida and one in New York, embezzled nearly \$1.3 million by exploiting internal weaknesses in the VA benefit program. With this money one employee purchased a Mazda Miata, a Mitsubishi 3000 GT, and two engagement rings.

After a review was conducted as a result of this crime, auditors uncovered 136 other cases of potential fraud or mishandling of veterans' benefit checks from offices in St. Pete, Florida, and St. Louis, Missouri, alone.

We need to seek out this fraud, not just believe that the solution is to raise taxes and turn our backs on fraud, waste, and abuse.

The VA has also identified approximately 7,000 possible cases of individuals who may be receiving benefits intended for deceased veterans. The VA estimates that they netted nearly \$21 million over 5 years by identifying these cases. Can you imagine that they are continuing to pay for veterans who have passed away?

For more than 7 years, nearly 400 veterans actually received VA educational benefits even though they did not attend class. The veterans had a great scheme going with the instructor who falsified their attendance. Nineteen defendants have been convicted in this scheme, and the government has recouped over \$4.5 million.

Lastly, the Department's Inspector General estimated that roughly 13,700 veterans have been paid about a million dollars nationwide and that the Department has no systematic method to identify these people who are prisoners. Prisoners should not be paid veterans benefits.

Here are a few recent examples of waste within the VA: the Veterans Administration keeps an excess inventory of medical supplies totalling \$64 million, or 62 percent of its \$132 million inventory. An example is at four pharmaceutical facilities surveyed, the Inspector General found 48 percent of the inventory was actually in excess.

The VA medical supply procurement practices are also questionable because very often they pay more for medical supplies than the market price, and here is an example of that. During a 6-month period, seven out of 10 VA medical centers that purchased standard powder-free surgical gloves failed to use the established FFS contractor and overpaid an open-market vendor by 28 percent. This error in disposable gloves alone cost the taxpayers \$34,000.

As evidenced by these instances of fraud and abuse which are only the tip of the iceberg within the VA and other Federal agencies, it is imperative that the culture in Washington change.

Instead of the knee jerk reaction to raise taxes to fund programs or to create mandatory spending entitlements (the answer favored by Democrats) we must look into the wasteful spending practices the result from unchecked bureaucracy!

It is my deepest hope that by highlighting these abuses and bringing them to the attention of the American taxpayer, the VA will continue to take corrective action under the leadership of Sec. Principi and respect that the money that they are spending is the people's money. Not their own.

Waste, fraud, and abuse throughout the federal government is decades old, and Republicans—led by Budget Chairman NUSSLE and Speaker HASTER—are working to eliminate the culture of waste that has existed in the federal government.

As a Republican, I will work to reduce wasteful spending in the government and protect your tax dollars.

CONSTITUENT LETTERS REGARDING IRAQ WAR

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, about 170 or so years ago, John Quincy Adams came to the House floor night after night reading letters from his constituents because the conservative leaders of the House of Representatives in those days passed a rule prohibiting banning the debate and discussion of slavery in the United States. He read letters mostly from women in his Massachusetts district protesting the cutting off of debate, the fact that conservative leadership in Congress simply did not want this discussed.

Today, 165 years later, I have come to the House night after night reading letters from any constituents, talking about corruption in the Bush administration, talking about the money we are spending on reconstruction in Iraq, talking about the billion dollars a week, a third of it from private contractors, money that goes to the