

much more administratively cumbersome and wasteful than is traditional Medicare. The private insurance industry tried to bill the government \$250,000 for a meeting with foods, gifts and alcohol; \$190,000 for a sales award meeting in Puerto Rico; \$157,000 for a company's 150th anniversary party; \$100,000 for sporting events and theater tickets; \$69,000 for holiday parties; \$37,000 for wine and gift tickets; \$1 million in lobbying, they have got their monies worth there, that is for sure; \$25,000 for a stadium luxury box. That was in 2000.

In 2001, the Inspector General again looked at \$97 million and asked for billed charges from private insurance interests to the government: \$284,000 in entertainment costs like stadium skyboxes, sporting events; \$90,000 for golf club memberships; \$30,000 for a Christmas party; \$3,400 for cost of alcohol at various functions.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that traditional Medicare works. It works because it gives full choice of physician, choice of provider, choice of hospital; not choice, as private insurance does, not the choice among insurance agents and insurance HMO brochures.

Traditional fee-for-service Medicare works because it is reliable. It will always be there. You will not find yourself unceremoniously dropped like 2.4 million seniors have been for Medicare HMOs. Ultimately, traditional Medicare is more efficient than these private insurance plans with huge salaries, huge bonuses, huge stock benefits and wasteful extraneous spending as I just outlined. I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on the motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 1308, TAX RELIEF, SIMPLIFICATION, AND EQUITY ACT OF 2003

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. WOOLSEY moves that the managers on the part of the House in the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1308 be instructed as follows:

1. The House conferees shall be instructed to include in the conference report the provision of the Senate amendment (not included in the House amendment) that provides immediate payments to taxpayers receiving an additional credit by reason of the bill in the same manner as other taxpayers were entitled to immediate payments under the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003.

2. The House conferees shall be instructed to include in the conference report the provision of the Senate amendment (not included in the House amendment) that provides families of military personnel serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other combat zones a child credit based on the earnings of the individuals serving in the combat zone.

3. The House conferees shall be instructed to include in the conference report all of the other provisions of the Senate amendment and shall not report back a conference report that includes additional tax benefits not offset by other provisions.

4. To the maximum extent possible within the scope of conference, the House conferees shall be instructed to include in the conference report other tax benefits for military personnel and the families of the astronauts who died in the Columbia disaster.

5. The House conferees shall, as soon as practicable after the adoption of this motion, meet in open session with the Senate conferees and the House conferees shall file a conference report consistent with the preceding provisions of this instruction, not later than the second legislative day after adoption of this motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

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

I rise in support of the motion to instruct conferees on the child tax credit bill. It is time that this Congress proves to working families that we care about them and that we care about their children. We can do that by providing immediate payment to those families left out of the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act.

Mr. Speaker, you may wonder who exactly was left out of that bill. How about military families with personnel serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other combat zones. What about more than half the children of janitors and maids, cooks and other kitchen workers; farmers and farm workers; child care workers; nurses and secretaries; sales workers; bus, truck and cab drivers. These are the very workers that need our support.

Now, let us look at those who this bill benefited the most. The millionaires, the tax cut legislation enacted in May created an average child tax credit increase of \$615 this year for those who are lucky enough to meet the income requirements. However, tax filers with incomes of more than \$1 million will receive an average tax cut of \$93,500 this year. That is \$93,500 as compared to \$615, or as compared to 12 million children who have been left behind because the Republican leadership failed to include them in the child tax

credit, and they have yet to receive the \$615 benefit.

Mr. Speaker, the families I am talking about are those with dedicated workers that have put in full-time hours at minimum pay, pay taxes and earn less than \$26,000 a year.

□ 1530

It is unfortunate that Republicans believe these forgotten children and their families do not contribute enough to deserve a break. Actions like these leave me no doubt that the priorities are dead wrong on the other side of the aisle. We must correct this injustice.

While the House passed a child tax credit bill, we missed the chance to pass a clean bill that would immediately grant our Nation's hardworking families with an increased child tax credit. The Republican initiative was a squandered opportunity to invest in our children and their families.

This supposed party of compassionate conservatism has exploited the child tax credit issue to pass even more tax cuts for their wealthy friends. Instead of bringing up the other body's child tax credit bill, which would cost \$3.5 billion with offsets to fully pay for it, they passed a bill that costs \$80 billion with no offsets, at a time when America's Federal deficit will exceed \$400 billion.

The other body has handed us a bill that would have increased tax credits for 6.5 million tax-paying families months ago, and I support their effort. That is why I have introduced this motion instructing the conferees to adopt the other body's language, to put money in the pockets of the working families that need it the most. Even the President has come out in strong support of this clean legislation.

Our priority should be putting money in the hands of working Americans. That is the way to create jobs and build a strong economy. If we do not help our children now, how can we expect to strengthen our Nation in the future?

Mr. Speaker, the House's Republican leadership failed our children and working families. I am disappointed that the leadership is refusing to address the real issue here. It is time to restore true compassion for our Nation's working families. Working families need to know that we have not forgotten them.

I urge my colleagues, support this motion so we can pass the child tax credit to those who need it most.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is sort of an interesting omission of the history of this bill and how we got where we got. The gentlewoman from California is absolutely correct. This was a part of an \$80 billion bill, but part of the \$80 billion was made up of the tax break that we gave the low-income people that, in effect, took them off of the tax rolls. So

when they say that people lost their tax credit, they lost their tax credit because they were no longer paying taxes. It is just that simple.

So the question before this House is, Should the House take money from people who pay taxes and give it to people who do not pay taxes and do it under the Tax Code? If we are going to put this in the form of handouts, then it should go to the Committee on Appropriations, and this is where it ought to be; but when we put it in the form of tax credits, we are simply taking money from people who pay taxes and giving it to people who do not pay taxes. But let me go through this motion to instruct point by point because there are some points here that we should cover, particularly as it affects the men and women in the military.

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) in her motion to instruct has said that the conference report should provide the refundable credit to families in the form of immediate payments in the same manner it was provided to taxpayers who qualified under the original bill. Our response is, this provision is no longer valid. The child tax credit payments approved in the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 have already been mailed out to the families who qualified. Moreover, the House bill does not deny immediate payment. It lets the IRS decide the most efficient way to deliver the payments.

The second point provides that the conference should require that combat pay be included in the definition of earned income for purposes of calculating the refundable child credit for military families. The response is, ironically, that the Senate version of the 2001 tax bill specifically excludes combat pay from the calculation of the child credit, unlike what is being asked for by the other side. The Senate is now seeking to reverse its own provision.

The decision to exclude combat pay from the definition of earned income was based on President Clinton's 2001 budget proposal and the Joint Committee on Taxation's simplification study. The motion to instruct contradicts President Clinton's proposal, the JTC simplification recommendation, and the Senate's own action. Nonetheless, a proposal is being considered in the context of the conference; but, again, this is not in the Senate bill.

Number three, the conference report should include tax benefits not found in the Senate bill unless the tax benefits are offset. Our response is that the instruction would effectively cut the child credit from \$1,000 to \$700 in 2005 as provided in the Senate bill. Why would we want to do that? Why would the other side want to do that? In addition, this instruction would prevent us from eliminating the marriage penalty and the child credit. If the instruction were adopted, millions of children would be denied the child credit simply because their parents were married.

The fourth point says that the conference report should include tax relief for military personnel and astronauts who died in the *Columbia* shuttle disaster. The underlying House bill already provides this tax relief; the Senate bill does not. So this has gone over.

The fifth point that is in is simply a rehash of the other four points.

So I cannot see why anyone on either side of the aisle would want to support this motion to instruct. I urge a "no" vote.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, one of my Republican colleagues favored arguments against extending the child tax credit to the families left out is that these families do not pay taxes and they should not receive a credit. They argue that Congress should not grant tax relief to families who are unemployed or who do not pay Federal income taxes. However, the truth is that all of these excluded hardworking families do pay taxes. They pay payroll taxes, State and local sales taxes, property taxes, excise taxes; and we must ensure that they receive their fair share.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California, one, for her leadership as the chairwoman of the Democratic Caucus Task Force on Children and her willingness to take this very important step to instruct the conferees. I thank her very much.

Mr. Speaker, we just have an enormous disagreement, plain and simple; and I am glad that I am standing on this side of the disagreement. One side, our good friends on the other side of the aisle really believe that the only ones who should get tax cuts are the 1 percent richest Americans. They are getting almost 80 percent to 90 percent of the tax cut. So, frankly, they have a one-sided view of the world.

On this side of the aisle, we truly believe, and the Senate agreed with us with a 94 to 2 vote, 94 for a child tax credit that includes those individuals who are willing to have their lives taxed. I believe that is the ultimate tax that has been paid, that is, the men and women on the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq. Who is paying a tax like that? So are we suggesting that military families who are making between \$10,000 and \$26,000 a year are not worthy of a very small, minute child tax credit? What an outrage.

I believe there are two bodies. The Constitution set up the House and the Senate; but I do not believe that one has the one-upmanship for doing good work, and if the Senate, or other body, excuse me, because I am going to be admonished about mentioning the other

body, believes that is a viable approach, 94 to 2, how silly it is for us to continue to have this ongoing debate with the same dried-up story, they do not pay taxes. They pay payroll taxes. They pay sales taxes, and I have not looked at every one of their filings or every one of their personal conditions. There may be a myriad of other taxes that they might pay, car tax, property tax. So they do pay taxes.

But the tax credit is on children, the ability to be able to have a credit back to people on the number of children that they have to support, and in doing that, many of our families have used that for the necessities of life. Maybe they have used it for school books. Maybe they have made a rental payment on it. Maybe they have used it to buy extra food.

I do not know how many of my colleagues realize that military personnel are sometimes on what we call WIC and welfare because the moneys they have as their military allotment or salary is not enough for them to be able to support their families, and so it is unbelievable that we would not want to provide the partnership to the already-passed Senate provision that says that they will get a child tax credit in the backdrop of the increasing number of poverty. For the first time in a decade, poverty is up and the median household income is down for 2 consecutive years.

New census data recently released shows that the U.S. poverty rate grew from 11.7 percent to 12.1 percent. Who would not think that would happen in this administration? Jobs have been lost. We have lost over 3 million jobs. We just debated and passed an unwieldy \$87 billion supplemental that no one can get their hands around, and our troops are not getting their paychecks. They do not know when they are going to come home. There is no exit strategy, and we are building schools galore in Iraq.

And I believe in a charitable foreign policy. I just believe we should do it collaborating with others; but we are going to be building schools, hiring police, building roads and bridges, and giving them \$2.1 billion on behalf of the restructure of their oil, but yet we can stand here on the floor of the House and have someone get up and suggest that it is not right, not necessary to provide our young men and women in the military families with a simple child tax credit.

It is unbelievable that we would stand here and argue against the value of providing our children, our Nation's children, with the idea of a child tax credit.

The other thing that I would want to say is it is interesting how we do not want to provide this child tax credit when we ask the administration to put a moratorium on this multibillion dollar tax cut to the richest Americans and then in addition to this tax credit that goes nowhere but to the richest Americans does not create any jobs. In

fact, some of them have rejected it and said we do not need it. Warren Buffett happens to be one of them.

We are still willing to saddle America's children with an enormous debt because in the spring of 2001 we had a \$5.3 trillion projected surplus. Today, we have \$500 billion in a deficit and growing.

So this is a simple request to this House, and I ask my colleagues to vote enthusiastically to render a child tax credit that will be implemented in this process so we can address the needs of our children in America.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, in that this is the 16th time we have been through this exercise, at this time I have no requests for speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time. I do recognize that the gentlewoman from California does have the right to close. So if she would appropriately advise me when she wants to close, I would be glad to do so.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE), a co-chair of the Children and Families Task Force.

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

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the 184,000 families in North Carolina who are unfairly excluded from the child tax credit package. These hardworking families struggle daily to afford food, clothing, school supplies, even sports uniforms for their children. During these tough economic times, it is unfortunate that the families and children who need assistance the most are being left behind.

I urge my colleagues to come together out of compassion and cooperation and commitment for extending relief to the 6.5 million low-income families that are struggling to support their children.

First, we must demonstrate compassion for those who are less fortunate. During tough economic times, we have a lot of families working hard to provide for their children; and we should leave no stone unturned in doing everything we can to help them.

Second, we must also demonstrate a sense of cooperation to ensure that all working families benefit under the child tax credit. Last May, we voted to accelerate the child tax credit and send many families a check for \$400. Now is the time for this body to reach yet another agreement and not deny the same \$400 check to our low-income families.

□ 1545

Where I come from, \$400 goes a long way to help families with school supplies, clothes, rent and other very personal family needs.

Finally, we must uphold our commitment to restructuring economic growth for the entire population, including many of our military families. Last year alone, 1.7 million individuals fell into poverty. We must not delay in helping them any longer. We must

show that we do have the compassion, the cooperation and the commitment that this body can work together and help these families.

For 4 months now, we have debated the child tax credit. Today is the time for compassion, cooperation and commitment to passing the child tax credit and helping our families, our children, and our future.

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

I would like to reiterate again the families who did not receive child tax credit relief when checks were mailed out this summer:

More than three-quarters, 801,000, of the children of sales workers; more than half, 903,000, of the children of janitors and maids; more than half, 526,000, of the children of cooks and other kitchen workers; more than half, 290,000, of the children of farmers and farm workers; two out of five children, 376,000, of child care workers and their aides; one in four, 711,000, children of nurses and their aides; one in four, 483,000, children of secretaries and related office workers; one in five, 264,000, children of truck, bus and cab drivers; more than 260,000 of active duty armed forces personnel.

Mr. Speaker, how can we forget so many families who are the backbone of our Nation's safety, transportation, health, food supply and other children's care?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a few points that I think are very important. The gentleman from North Carolina gave a very impassioned speech, but what he did leave out is that to go ahead and get this bill conferenced and stick to the House language, most of the people he talked about will be off of the tax rolls, in fact, all of them will be off of the tax rolls if this happens. And that is a good thing, because we have in our bill that we passed, the \$80 billion bill, we took millions and millions of Americans off of the tax rolls. And they are low-income people where we need to do this.

Also, the gentlewoman's motion to instruct would cut the tax credit from \$1,000 to \$700. Why do we want to do that? Why does the other side want to do that? I really do not understand the logic in doing this.

But, in any event, we have been through this many, many times. We are going over worn-out roads, and at this point I would, again, urge a "no" vote on the motion to instruct.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and in closing, I wish to repeat that the working families we are talking about pay taxes. They pay their employment taxes, their payroll taxes, they pay local sales taxes, they pay property taxes and franchise taxes,

sometimes. They are taxpayers. They earn a living, and they are the backbone of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Citizens for Tax Justice, the child tax bill passed on June 12, 2003, by the House Republicans, would give almost two and a half times more to families with children under 17 that have incomes above \$104,000 than it would give to families making less than \$28,000 a year.

This is just bad policy, and this motion to instruct will correct that bad policy. And I ask that my colleagues vote "yes" on this motion to instruct.

Mr. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage regarding the Republican leadership's unjust treatment of the child tax credit.

Week after week, month after month, Republican leaders scheme and delay, unable or unwilling to find an ounce of compassion for families making under \$26,625 dollars a year.

In my district, one out of every 4 families will get no child tax credit or compassion from the Republican leadership.

Military families who live in my district, and whose children serve proudly in our military, will get no child tax credit.

Yet somehow, Republicans found \$90 billion to give to 200,000 millionaire families, while 1.6 million working class Latino families got nothing.

And yet again, Republicans found \$20 billion for reconstruction in Iraq, while working class families got nothing for reconstruction here at home.

As our deficit grows, \$400 billion for Fiscal Year 03 and \$500 billion for Fiscal Year 04, these working families will get something . . . a higher debt burden they can pass onto their children, loss of essential health services, infrastructure funds, environmental protections and social security.

These families deserve more than that, they deserve a child tax credit.

I implore my colleagues of good conscience and compassion across the aisle to join me in supporting the Motion to Instruct Conferees and give our working families, our military families and all American children a Child Tax Credit!

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that we have been discussing this matter for 5 months now. 5 months ago, the extension of the child tax credit was stolen from six-and-a-half million families, 12 million children—a million of whom are in military and veterans families. 5 months have passed since we first discussed how every one of these low-wage-earning families pay more in taxes than Enron, a multibillion-dollar company that paid no taxes in the last 4 or 5 years.

It is simply unconscionable. The other body passed a bill months ago. The president's spokesperson said then that the House should take it up, and the president would sign it. Why then is the Republican leadership so reluctant to lift a finger to help people who work—people who pay taxes, people who have children? Republicans pass tax cut after tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, and then they cut out the families of 12 million children.

As much as the other side of the aisle would like to say that they do not pay taxes, they do pay taxes—they pay property taxes, they pay sales taxes, they pay payroll taxes, and they work and live paycheck to paycheck.

Unlike so many of the millionaires who received a \$93,000 tax cut in the \$350 billion tax bill, these families who earn between \$10,500 and \$26,000 per year and know what it is to work and pay taxes. We should walk in their shoes.

And let me remind the majority who this injustice has affected disproportionately. Two-thirds of the parents who will not be receiving this tax cut are women. 4 million single mothers, a million married couples with stay-at-home moms. Fifty-five percent of all married-couple families. Two hundred thousand military families. All have been left out by this Republican majority. On average, these families would have received \$276 in this year alone had the tax credit been extended to them.

Maybe that does not sound like a lot of money to some, particularly those millionaires who are going to get their \$93,000, but it can be a difference between a child going to school with or without school supplies, it helps the families of the 9 million children in this country without health insurance pay for the health care services that they need.

Assisting these families, these 12 million children, is a moral issue. It is a matter of values. Mr. Speaker, we must call on the president to use his moral authority, do something about those six-and-a-half million working families. They have earned that child tax credit like we will never know. We should pass this motion to instruct.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ADJOURNMENT TO FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2003

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. on Friday, October 24, 2003.

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

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2003 TO TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2003

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Friday, October 24, 2003, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 28, 2003, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and 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 Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

LETTERS FROM CONSTITUENTS

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, back in 1838, the conservative leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives passed a rule prohibiting the discussion of slavery, essentially banning the debate of slavery in this body, which was the largest blot on our national heritage. For 4 years, people were not allowed to debate the issue of slavery on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Former President, then Congressman John Quincy Adams, night after night, day after day, week after week, came to the House floor, and not being able to debate slavery, he read letters from his constituents, most of them women, who could not vote in those days in the middle of the 19th century. So he read letters from his constituents protesting government policy on slavery.

Today, we have seen in this body the continued suppression of debate on whether or not the Bush administration told the truth about Iraq, a continuation of disallowing of amendments that would have provided and supplied for our soldiers better than they have been, and that the military is able to, and so, as a result, Mr. Speaker, today I want to read letters from my constituents about some of those issues.

Sharyn from Fairlawn, Ohio, writes: No to \$87 billion to Iraq. Yes to education that has suffered under President Bush. Yes for the creation of jobs that have suffered under Bush. Yes for giving financial aid to the small business manufacturing industry that has suffered to the point of near extinction. Let us get our country back.

Sharyn of Fairlawn, Ohio, was talking about the fact that we have lost 3½

million jobs since President Bush took office. In my State of Ohio, one out of every seven manufacturing jobs has disappeared, much of it because of bad trade agreements, and much of it because of Bush economic policies. One out of seven jobs has disappeared.

Erica, from Clinton, Ohio, writes: To continue writing blank checks to the team responsible for the deplorable mess in Iraq is throwing good money after bad. With the current team overseeing the reconstruction of Iraq, there will be no end in sight to further demands for additional monies. Keep large corporations from making important decisions in Iraq.

What Erica from Clinton, Ohio, is talking about is the fact that the Halliburton corporation and many other companies have received large, unbid contracts from President Bush and from the Pentagon to rebuild Iraq. It is the same company, Halliburton, which still is paying its former CEO, present Vice President of the United States, RICHARD CHENEY, still paying Vice President CHENEY \$13,000 every month.

So we have Halliburton, which has gotten literally billions of dollars in contracts, many of them unbid gifts from taxpayers, unbid contracts. Hundreds of millions of dollars in unbid contracts, billions of dollars overall. Halliburton has gotten this money and much of it is not accounted for. Yet the Vice President of the United States is still receiving \$13,000 a month from this company, not to mention Bechtel and other corporations, most of which are friends of the President and major contributors of the George Bush reelection campaign.

Celia from Strongsville writes: No more money should be allocated for Iraq until we make Bush's administration accountable for it and tell us what he is doing with it.

Again, she is talking about Halliburton, the \$13,000 a month to Vice President CHENEY, and all the money unaccounted for going to these large corporations which are major contributors to the President.

Celia continues to write: You cannot cut taxes and continue to increase spending without bankrupting the next generation in this country. When Congress appropriated \$87 billion last week, at the President's demand, understand every one of those \$87 billion was borrowed money from the next generation.

Celia then closes by saying: I used to think Republicans were more fiscally responsible than Democrats. I know that is not true any more.

Jack from Strongsville, Ohio, writes: Enough is enough. Let us stop losing American lives and get back to saving our country.

Ed from Strongsville, Ohio, writes: We seem to have no money for anything other than defense initiatives. The Iraq war has totally distracted us from the real issues of terrorism and from our domestic economic agenda.