

Mr. Speaker, any time that we begin to take freedom for granted, I would like my colleagues here in this House to think of Fuming Fong and what he went through and how beautiful this country of America is.

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I once again want to talk a little about the Washington Waste Watchers and the work that a number of us are trying to do to root out waste in Washington. The examples are just one after another; but one that hit me, I think like a ton of bricks, was the \$814,000 in salary and bonuses for a Head Start executive director in Kansas.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, when we bring these up, our good friends on the Democratic side of the aisle have only one solution. What is their solution? Do they join us when the chairman of the Committee on the Budget proposes to cut 1 percent in waste, fraud, and abuse? No, they propose increased taxes on the American people.

When we see a \$470,000 grant to study individuals, now, listen to this, drinking alcohol while watching pornography, do we get the Members of the other side of the aisle coming forward to say we want to help cut waste, fraud, and abuse? No, they propose to increase taxes on the American people. When we see, for example, the Impact Aid funds intending to go to schools in South Dakota that were instead used, some of them, to purchase real estate, to purchase a Lincoln Navigator and a Cadillac Escalade, do we get our friends on the Democratic side of the aisle to say we want to support you in cutting this waste? No, they propose increasing taxes, 25 times just this year alone.

NO MONEY FOR EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the whining from the other side of the aisle is extraordinary. They can see all this waste, fraud, and abuse; but they control the White House, the Senate, and the House and yet they do not do anything about it. Puzzling.

Here is something else they do nothing about which is very puzzling. There are 4 million American workers who have exhausted their unemployment benefits and cannot find work. The President and the Republican majority say that we cannot afford to extend unemployment benefits to these people, despite the fact there is \$20 billion sitting in the Unemployment Trust Fund of taxes paid by Americans.

No waste, fraud, and abuse here; there are just people who cannot find work and want it. Now, the Republicans say we cannot afford it, but they are borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars to pay Iraqis for no-show jobs. The anti-waste, -fraud, and -abuse crowd is happy to pay Iraqis for no-show jobs, but they will not give unemployed Americans benefits out of a trust fund. These are people who want to work and cannot find work because of the miserable economic record of this administration.

IRMO HIGH SCHOOL'S BLUE RIBBON AWARD FOR 2003

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the students and faculty of Irmo High School in Irmo, South, Carolina. Irmo High just received recognition from the U.S. Department of Education as a blue ribbon school, their third such award.

As Secretary of Education Rod Paige has said, schools chosen for the blue ribbon will be ones that are meeting our mission to ensure that every child learns and no child is left behind. Blue ribbon recipients will be national models of excellence that others can learn from.

I want to personally thank the hard work of the faculty who have visited Washington, including Principal Gerald Witt, teachers Phil Tanner, Jan McCarthy, and JROTC director Colonel Pete Sercher. Also, School District Five school board members have supported the progress made at Irmo High School, especially Jan Hammond, Paula Hite, and Carol Sloop. Yet above all, the ones who really deserve recognition are the students who have achieved remarkably.

Irmo High School is truly an example of educational success, and I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring the school today, a day highlighted by the visit of California Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops.

THE ECONOMY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, when I travel home to Los Angeles County, the people ask me, where are the jobs? Where are the extended unemployment insurance benefits?

When we look at this chart, we can see that since January of 2001 we have not made any progress. In fact, in the San Gabriel Valley the unemployment rate is still above 10 percent, and it is double digit in areas that are unincorporated in East Los Angeles where we have high minority populations. These

are working people that are looking for relief. They are waiting for unemployment insurance. And they are also asking why is the Republican Party not doing more to strengthen our economy.

The Democrats want to provide pay increases for our Reservists and our military families. I am ashamed to say these are the same families we represent that are in waiting lines to get food, these Reservist families in my district; and I think that is abominable.

We need to provide a tax incentive to encourage companies to keep jobs at home, not abroad, like Halliburton and Bechtel. We need to raise the minimum wage. We need to pass a highway infrastructure bill that will keep good-paying jobs, not minimum-wage jobs, but jobs that pay above minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to consider proposing those incentives that we are talking about today to restore the economy for Americans.

NO FINANCIAL AID FOR SEX OFFENDERS ACT

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the No Financial Aid for Sex Offenders Act for 2003. It is a national embarrassment that we are handing out taxpayer dollars for pedophiles and rapists to take college courses while hardworking young people from poor and middle class families are left to flip hamburgers and mow lawns to pay for college.

In 1972, Congress created the Pell grant program to help children from low- and moderate-income families go to college. In 1994, Congress prohibited State and Federal prisoners from getting these Pell grants. This past year, 54 violent sexual predators in Florida obtained over \$200,000 in Pell grants at taxpayer expense. They got a free ride by exploiting a loophole, that is, they were involuntarily confined in something called a civil commitment center as opposed to being called a prison.

This legislation closes that loophole and ensures that this money will be used as intended, by needy law-abiding college students. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation, H.R. 3385.

ARMED FORCES TAX FAIRNESS BILL

(Mr. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous, it is unbelievable, but it is true. The House Republican leadership has kept at the Speaker's desk, since March of this year, the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Bill. Several months ago, they said we could afford to give a \$230,000 tax break to American citizens living safely here at home making \$1

million in dividend income; yet the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) say we cannot afford to provide modest tax help to brave service men and women, many of whom are serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Yesterday, the leadership said we had time to rename three post offices around the country; yet we have not had the time to consider the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act. Why? Because it is paid for by closing the Benedict Arnold loophole that lets American citizens renounce their citizenship to keep from paying taxes.

It is shameful the Republican leadership seems to be more interested in protecting Benedict Arnolds than in helping our service men and women.

ENERGY PLAN VITAL FOR AMERICA'S HOMELAND DEFENSE

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, with national security foremost on the minds of the American people, there is one thing we can do to simultaneously protect our shores and boost the economy: quickly approve a comprehensive energy plan.

With the President's support, the House passed a responsible energy plan last Congress that will free us from the undue burden of dependence on foreign oil and, of course, bring new jobs to parts of the country that sorely need them.

Ignoring this impending energy crisis will do nothing to solve it. ANWR exploration could free us from trading with leaders like Saddam Hussein, who used oil money to develop weapons of mass destruction. Increased domestic production is an indispensable component of any energy plan.

Mr. Speaker, during World War II, our great nations bonded together and made personal sacrifices to make this world a safer place to live.

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Now, again, we are at war, a Nation at war, and just like in the past, we need to come together. We can take one giant step forward by implementing the House's energy plan.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a petition to force a vote on legislation to extend unemployment benefits as a triage effort to tide people over until we address the underlying problem behind high unemployment rates: the U.S. economy's job losses.

This country has lost 3.2 million private sector jobs in the last 3 years. It

is not that Americans are not looking for work, it is that the jobs are just not there.

In addition to providing a safety net to individuals, we need to focus on creating an environment allowing the private sector to grow and create these desperately needed jobs. Not only do unemployment benefits provide a level of security to families, unemployment benefits also help stimulate our local economies. When people do not have spending power, businesses hurt.

Last week 11,000 Oregonians exhausted their benefits, and that number is going to continue to grow unless this Congress acts. This deprives our State's local economy of \$3 million every week in stimulus. Unemployment benefits are intended as a safety net to bridge people from one job to the next. I urge my colleagues to join me in signing this discharge petition.

MEDIA NOT GIVING BALANCED ACCOUNTING

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, if Americans do not get the facts from the media objectively reported, they do not have a basis on which to make good decisions. For example, a few days ago The Washington Post ran a six-column page 2 story about the redistricting process that the Texas legislature completed earlier this month. The writer quoted eight Democratic Members of Congress but not one Republican official. This was obviously a one-sided report that did not give their readers a balanced accounting.

A recent Gallup Poll showed that 45 percent of Americans believe the news media in this country are too liberal, while only 14 percent say the news media are too conservative. Ultimately, it is a matter of trust, whether the media trusts the American people with the unvarnished facts. They should. Let the people make up their own minds, not be told what to think.

SUCH A DEAL

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, in the last 3 years, 3 million Americans have lost their jobs; 42 million Americans are without health insurance of which 22 million Americans work full time; a trillion dollars worth of corporate assets have been foreclosed on; and 3 million more Americans have walked out of the middle class to poverty.

In that same period of time, we have added \$3 trillion to the Nation's debt.

Mr. Speaker, \$3 trillion added to the Nation's debt; 3 million Americans have lost their jobs. As my great aunt would say, "Such a deal."

We need to do better for the American people. Just last week we passed

an economic program for Iraq's future. I voted for it. It included investments in jobs, health care, education, housing, and infrastructure. The promise we make to Iraq and the values we hold for Iraq must be the promise we hold for the American people. We must now invest in our economic growth so we can stimulate our job market with the same kind of attitude and investment that we have had in the stock market. We have a health care crisis and a job crisis in this country. We must invest in America's economic future with the same commitment we have done for Iraq.

CALIFORNIA FIRES DEVASTATE LANDSCAPE

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, Governor-elect Schwarzenegger just addressed the Republican Conference, and he is meeting with leaders on both sides of the aisle. What he is asking for is help for the State of California. When I left San Diego, it literally looked like an atomic bomb went off. Going from Los Angeles to San Diego, it looks like a moonscape. Governor-elect Schwarzenegger is meeting with the leadership from the Democratic side and our side, and he said that we need to work together on this.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if most people understand the devastation. I have seen what B-52 raids do to a city. It fails in comparison to what is happening in San Diego. We ask Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to work with us in California's desperate time.

RELIEF FOR UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

(Mr. MICHAUD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I just signed a discharge petition to extend unemployment benefits for dislocated workers across our Nation, and I am here to urge my colleagues to do the same. Let me just share some of the numbers from the State of Maine. For the past 3 years, Maine has lost 22 percent of its manufacturing jobs, 15,500 jobs in total, the highest in the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, where is relief for these workers and their families? Too many Mainers are approaching today, tomorrow and the coming days without a job, without health care coverage, without adequate food and medicine, and without the ability to make ends meet. We cannot turn our backs on these workers and their families. We must extend unemployment insurance for the people who have exhausted their benefits. Our most important job is to help those who cannot find a job.