

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, budget projections can be wrong. They often are. But I am also particularly concerned about the CBO report that forecast a several-trillion dollar deficit over the next 10 years. That is the highest level as a percentage of GDP since World War II.

To be clear, this deficit is driven by spending. We did what we had to do to protect our homeland and give our troops the support they need in the war on terror. But we also spent a lot more in other nondefense areas; and when we add increased government spending to an economic slowdown and the 9-11 attacks, we get deficits. There is no way around it.

Fortunately, the tax relief passed by this Congress and signed by the President has stimulated our economy. Now we have to turn our attention to getting government spending under control. We need to tighten our belts a little around here and do the right thing. We should freeze spending and balance the budget as early as we can. We need to get to work to cut the deficit, cut spending, and balance the budget.

BRING OUR BUDGET IN BALANCE WITH OUR PRIORITIES

(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 today's number reporting a deficit \$500 billion, a historic number, it goes to prove that we cannot fight three wars with three tax cuts, having now produced a record deficit in the economy.

And what we need now is a balanced budget that is in balance with our priorities. Not all government spending is good, and not all tax cuts lead to the same economic benefit. We need a strategy and an agenda that brings our budget into balance with our priorities, where we can make sure that Americans can afford the education and the health care for their children that they need as well as make sure that we have the security and the investments in our defense that we need. And as we lay out our agenda and understand where we are as a country and the priorities, I think that today's deficit proves that while the economy is supposedly growing, the deficit should be going down, not going up. And the reason it is going up is because we neither have a strategy nor the priorities that are correct for this country and for the future of our country. So we must once again dedicate ourselves to the principle of bringing the budget into balance, in balance with our priorities.

TIME TO PUT OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the time has come for Congress to put our fiscal house in order.

This week the Congressional Budget Office released its economic and budget projections showing budget deficits over the next decade including nearly \$500 billion for fiscal year 2004.

The American people know about the deficits. The American people also, however, know that this President inherited a recession, experienced and bravely led us through a national emergency and has led America into the war on terror; and these have all taken their toll. Having mostly, however, cleared these historic challenges, I believe that in the coming budget debate, the Republican majority must again demonstrate its commitment to fiscal discipline and limited government. The time has come for Congress to put our fiscal house in order again. We must resist the siren call to raise taxes, which our Democrat friends will bring to this floor again and again; put our fiscal house in order by holding the line on spending, renewing our commitment to limited government and fiscal discipline, which are true Republican values of the majority.

CONGRATULATING THE CAROLINA PANTHERS

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

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate our Carolina Panthers on going to the Super Bowl. I want to congratulate the owner, Jerry Richardson, and the other owners, Coach Fox, and the members of the team for their outstanding job they have done during the course of this year and cheer them on to victory in the Super Bowl.

It is amazing how something like this can bring a community together even in the face of adverse economy and job loss and deficits. This has been a rallying point for our community, and I applaud the Carolina Panthers and wish them well as they go on to the Super Bowl in Houston this weekend.

JOB GROWTH

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, to counter my friend, not in the area of football but on the issue of jobs, we all know that the economy is growing; but we continue to hear this argument that we are slow in the area of job growth.

We have seen the report yesterday of a dramatic increase in consumer confidence, the highest levels since mid-2002. Obviously, productivity is at unprecedented levels. Investment is higher. Fifty percent of the American people are members of the investment class. And the market is over 10,600.

So the interesting thing for us to note is that as we look at this job creation issue, it is important for us to observe that what we have regularly found is that the Department of Labor's payroll survey is the one that has been reporting not tremendous job growth. We must look at the household survey, which has shown that there have been 1.9 million new jobs created during this administration since November of 2001. It is important that while this rhetoric of jobless recovery is constantly put out there, the household survey takes into consideration something that the payroll survey does not, and that is the self-employed, those who are creating jobs in the private sector on their own. So it is important for us to responsibly look at these numbers, Mr. Speaker.

URGING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 2166, PUBLIC SAFETY EX-OFFENDER SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACT OF 2003

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest last week as the President gave his State of the Union address and was quite pleased at one point when he mentioned the need to establish programs for ex-offenders, for people returning home after having been incarcerated. And I could not agree with him more.

So I urge my colleagues to get on board with me and support H.R. 2166, my Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act, which is designed to build 100,000 units of SRO-type housing for these individuals over a 5-year period.

If we really want to help people returning home from prison, let us start by giving them a place to stay.

RECOGNIZING JAY KISLAK

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Jay Kislak, an outstanding member of the South Florida community.

Jay is the chairman of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation, which is engaged in a collection of rare books, manuscripts, maps, and indigenous art of the Americas.

Through his foundation, Jay has worked to ensure that present and future generations will have a deeper understanding of our glorious past.

As a testament to his expansive knowledge and appreciation for art, Jay was appointed by President Bush to be chairman of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee, a group tasked with directing the government's efforts to protect antiquities around the world.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jay Kislak for his profound

contribution to the cultural enrichment of our community and our Nation.

BENEFITS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT PLAN

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, if you go into almost any group of 30 to 40 people and ask how many of you have someone in your family who has to take three or four pills a day, each and every day for the rest of their lives in order to stay active and stay comfortable and stay healthy, probably 70 percent of the hands in the room would go up, because that is the reality in 2004. If we wind back the clock to 1965 and ask that question, not many people would raise their hands, because we did not have the miracle pills then that we do now.

In 1965, when we started Medicare, we could not foresee this pharmaceutical revolution that we have now. That is why this Congress, under the leadership of George Bush, has put in a prescription drug benefit program in our Medicare reform package.

The plan works like this: This April, all seniors will get a 25 percent discount card that can be used in any pharmacy. Just walk in, a 25 percent savings. Then in the year 2006 you will get about a 50 percent cost reduction on your prescription drugs, on average.

Keep in mind, this is a voluntary program. It is not the greatest thing in the world, but it certainly is a huge step forward, and I think seniors will really enjoy this benefit. I am glad the President took this leadership.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 610, NASA FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 502 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 502

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (S. 610) to amend the provisions of title 5, United States Code, to provide for workforce flexibilities and certain Federal personnel provisions relating to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform. After

general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 520 is an open rule that provides for the consideration of S. 610, the NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Science, and 20 minutes equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform. The rule also provides one motion to recommend, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, following the extraordinarily tragic Shuttle *Columbia* disaster, it was imperative that the United States take a deep look at its space program. The Columbia Accident Investigation Board and NASA continue to address needed safety concerns, but I think we must take steps to further innovation and scientific research, find new frontiers and unveil endless possibilities.

I believe NASA has undergone a positive transformation in recent weeks. With the stunning successes of the Mars rovers and President Bush announcing new long-term goals for manned space exploration, our national desire to comprehend the nature of our solar system and our universe has been reinvigorated. The underlying legislation provides NASA additional tools to recruit, train and keep the most talented scientists and engineers.

The legislation authorizes NASA to offer needed incentives to valued current and prospective employees, the same as most major corporations and research institutions would offer to compete. When the United States goes to space, Mr. Speaker, we need the

brightest and the best in the industry to work to make our dreams of exploration a reality. As such, this legislation authorizes recruitment, relocation and retention bonuses as an incentive to NASA employees; term appointments to our most valued scientific minds; and the ability for Administrator O'Keefe to provide pay increases to those in critical positions and with superior qualifications. These are essential additions necessary for NASA to succeed in its newest missions.

Furthermore, the underlying legislation, Mr. Speaker, authorizes \$10 million to begin a Science and Technology Scholarship Program. This funding is an important step for promoting the sciences in our high schools and colleges, while allowing less advantaged students a potential for higher studies.

Our superiority in science and the technologies, without any doubt, has declined since President Kennedy began our Nation on a path to the moon in 1961. It is our responsibility to ensure that when those highly trained NASA scientists retire, some of whom have participated in the entire history of our space program, that they know their replacements will be the best and the brightest from any background that this country has to offer.

I would like to quote Christa McAuliffe, a teacher, astronaut and American hero tragically lost in the explosion of the *Challenger* Space Shuttle. She said, "Space is for everybody. It's not just for a few people in science or math, or for a select group of astronauts. That's our new frontier out there, and it is everybody's business to know about space."

I believe that the underlying legislation, Mr. Speaker, will help NASA to continue our passionate exploration of the unknown. And we bring this legislation forward, Mr. Speaker, under an open rule. Any Member can bring forth to this House for the consideration of all of its membership any idea that Members may have. It is an open and a fair rule.

I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman BOEHLERT) and Senator VOINOVICH for their support on this issue. I urge Members to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentleman from Florida, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003, as well as the rule providing for its consideration. As the majority member of the committee previously mentioned, the underlying legislation will provide NASA with greater personnel management flexibilities to provide bonuses, hiring and other management tools in order to enhance the agency's ability to recruit and retain qualified employees.