

is an alternative that will actually increase our deficit more than if we simply did nothing.

But it is not that the budget resolutions should not be taken seriously. The environment is one key area. We Democrats will be providing an alternative that actually lowers the deficit while protecting the environment, funding Superfund cleanup, which creates jobs, funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund without drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.

There was a time when fiscal restraint and protecting the environment were bipartisan objectives. I hope I am in this Chamber long enough where that comes back to be the priority again.

IN HONOR OF PFC BRANDON SMITH

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of America's bravest, Specialist Brandon Smith, who grew up in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Brandon was killed in action in Al Qaim, Iraq, late last week. His Humvee ran over a land mine as he rushed to assist his fellow soldiers who were under enemy fire.

When Brandon joined the Marines, he told his friends that he had found his life's calling. However, for Brandon to fulfill his lifelong dream, it was no simple task. Every morning he had to run laps around Asbell Park, lift weights and literally lose 80 pounds to be in shape for Marine boot camp.

Brandon selflessly put himself in harm's way, serving his country so that future generations can live in a world free of terror. His father, Gordon Smith, put it best when he said Brandon "was taking a stand and making a difference."

Mr. Speaker, Specialist Brandon Smith made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. He is a true American hero. I ask my colleagues to keep Brandon's family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.

SUPPORTING ISRAEL

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong and unwavering support of Israel, this Nation's strongest ally and the only democracy in the Middle East. The first duty of any Nation is to protect its citizens. Israel is in a fight for its very survival. It longs for peace. It has no partner for peace.

Out of desperation, Israel has been forced to identify those who are planning and coordinating terrorist attacks against its citizens, against innocent women and children. And because

Arafat will not end the terrorism, will not rein in the terrorists, Israel has been forced to act.

Over the past three decades, Sheik Yassin has led the terrorist group Hamas as it launched one bloody attack after another. Hundreds of Israelis are dead, over three dozen Americans are dead, and over 2,000 innocent people have sustained wounds that they will never recover from. These facts are not in dispute.

It is time for the double standard to end. Israel's action against Yassin is no different from America's hunt to destroy Osama bin Laden. We are halfway around the world searching for the man who masterminded the 9/11 attack on our Nation. The world will rejoice when Osama bin Laden is gone. Israel suffers the same on almost a daily basis.

Let us not confuse the perpetrators of terrorism with the victims. Israel's actions are appropriate, justifiable and their duty, safeguarding innocent lives, has been done.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today's report on the Social Security trust fund says that in 2018, current taxes will no longer pay for benefits. That means digging into our Federal Treasury. This is just another wakeup call. We ought to use it to provide momentum to reform and improve Social Security. The best way to do that is to increase the rate of return by creating personal accounts for young people.

Let us be clear. Social Security will be there for current and near retirees. It is the younger generations who need the most help when it comes to saving for retirement. Personal accounts definitely represent the best option.

An election year is the perfect time to showcase the differences between parties and ideas. Democrats want to demagogue and tax and spend their way to a Social Security solution. Republicans want to increase the rate of return through personal responsibility and conservative values. The choice is clear.

It is my hope we can move forward next year on real reform when politics will not stifle the debate.

TYCO SHAREHOLDER VOTE

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

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, while the House today takes up a budget resolution to fund important programs for education, national defense, health care, homeland security, environment and veterans, let me point out that there is another vote

taking place today. That is the vote of the shareholders of the Tyco corporation. They are going to continue to shirk their responsibilities, apparently.

In 1997, New Hampshire-based Tyco, International renounced its corporate citizenship and changed its mailing address to Bermuda to avoid paying \$400 million in U.S. taxes. Today, shareholders will be asked to vote on a resolution that will change that. My hunch—it is going to fail.

This is unfortunate for all Americans because they are being asked to make sacrifices during a wartime economy. We have 134,000 troops in Afghanistan and Iraq while Tyco, International and the Bermuda-based companies, all for the price of a \$27,000 post office box they do not want to contribute, and the other side does not want to do anything about it.

I am the sponsor of the Corporate Patriot Enforcement Act which would deny tax benefits to former American companies that reincorporate offshore simply to avoid paying the same taxes the rest of us do. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, we could save \$4 billion just asking these folks to pay their fair share.

RICHARD CLARKE'S ALLEGATIONS ARE FALSE AND MISLEADING

(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, it is clear why misleading allegations have been made by Richard Clarke, a former adviser of Presidents Clinton and Bush. His motivations have become evident over the last few days to the American people as his comments have been timed to the release for sales of his book. And we learned he was passed over for promotion and that he is a close friend of Rand Beers, an adviser to the current Democratic nominee for President.

Mr. Clarke's strange accusations about Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and President Bush's handling of the war on terrorism are false as the facts refute the rhetoric. President George W. Bush and his team, with our troops, have shown bold leadership to successfully fight the war on terrorism, have encouraged Libya to disarm, inspired Pakistan to deploy 70,000 troops to fight al Qaeda terrorists, and have led to the liberation of millions from terrorist-sponsoring regimes. President Bush has taken the battle to the terrorists so that we can reduce further attacks on American families.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

MICROSOFT AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to express concern about the European Union's first step in a decision against Microsoft, one of the most creative engines of economic growth in American history. The reason we all ought to be concerned about this European Union decision is it essentially breaches and disturbs, if not destroys, a carefully wrought-out resolution of antitrust issues in the American judicial system.

Whatever one thinks of our judicial system, we ought to know one thing, that it is better that these matters be resolved in the American system than internationally when the international groups now could turn into a feeding frenzy, if you will, of upsetting this apple cart after we have worked for years and millions of dollars of effort to have a very carefully calibrated resolution of these antitrust issues.

We hope that our government expresses and does not acquiesce in this issue since we need to have comity and a consistent application of antitrust rules across borders. We hope that our government will take that position.

MEDICARE

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, like many other Members who voted for the addition of prescription drugs to Medicare and Medicare reform on both sides of the aisle, I have been out in my district talking to people about this first significant change in Medicare in 38 years. What I am finding is a tremendous rejection to the changes we have made:

The prescription drug card that will be available in June where people can call in and find out, based on the medicines they take, which card is best for them; the significant assistance to low-income seniors who not only get that card for free but also get \$600 of credit on that card; and as we move into the full Medicare program in 2006, get their premiums paid if they choose to get their premiums paid. But, of course, as you are dealing with seniors and many of us who are not all that comfortable with change, the most important thing you can say is, You don't have to do anything if you don't want to, but you can look at these new options and see if these options are better for you than what you've got. If they aren't better for you than what you've got or you just don't want to change, you don't have to.

The addition of prescription drugs to Medicare brings Medicare in line with medicine. It is about time, Mr. Speaker. I am glad we did it.

SUPREME COURT TO RULE ON PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE CASE

(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, Thomas Jefferson wrote those transcendent words in the Declaration of Independence, that our founders believed that we were endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. Abraham Lincoln, in establishing the first National Day of Prayer, quoted scripture as he affirmed that which had been truth throughout the ages, that only those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.

Nevertheless, at this hour across the street the Supreme Court of the United States of America is hearing a case about whether the American people may acknowledge that we are one Nation under God in our Pledge of Allegiance. This case today I offer, Mr. Speaker, is less about the facts than it is about who we are as a Nation, a Nation with a Congress that opened this day in prayer, and a court, a Supreme Court, that actually opened their work today with the words "God save the United States and this honorable court," about a government that displays the name of God throughout its buildings and in its best traditions, telling the American people that they cannot do likewise.

Let us hope and pray that those nine jurists on the Supreme Court see the freedom of religion and not the freedom from religion in the first amendment of our Constitution.

MEDICARE TRUSTEES REPORT

(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, the Medicare trustees have reported that the Medicare trust fund is in trouble. Imagine what would happen if the Democrat minority had successfully passed their bill. The reforms that we passed to preserve the life of the Medicare system would have disappeared and the trillion-dollar-plus price tag of the Democratic bill would have ended Medicare as we know it. We would have no choice but to make painful cuts or increase taxes to pay for the Democrats' Medicare bill.

The irony is that now that we are so close to finally implementing the law and finally getting cheaper prescription drug benefits for seniors, the Democrats want to repeal it. What we should do, Mr. Speaker, is not take away the prescription drug coverage for American seniors, but rather we should try to improve upon it, modify it and eventually make it fiscally responsible and highly workable.

MEDICARE REFORM

(Mr. PORTMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, following on the comments of my colleague from Florida, I will say that this Medicare bill that the House

passed last year, which adds a prescription drug benefit, is good medicine. It comes after years and years of this Congress talking about adding a prescription drug benefit for our seniors. Lots of rhetoric, no action. Finally, late last year, this House got together on a bipartisan basis and passed a benefit that truly helps seniors.

It is a good bill because it adds prescription drugs, but it is even better than that because it adds another great, exciting new tool for our seniors, but also for all Americans, to be able to save tax free for their health care: health savings accounts. You make a contribution tax free, it builds up tax free, and when you pay for your health care needs, it is tax free.

This will help in a few different ways. One, it will encourage preventive health care, people taking care of themselves, reducing costs in Medicare as a result. Second, it will add more competition to the health care system. It is your own dollar now that you are spending. That also will reduce costs in Medicare. Finally, it will help with the uninsured.

Many small businesses who do not now provide coverage for the uninsured will now be able to provide that coverage and individuals will be able to make contributions to an account like this to be able to cover their own health care needs.

Mr. Speaker, it is a good part of a good bill.

MEDICARE

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

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the importance of the new Medicare-endorsed prescription drug discount card. Starting in May, seniors across America will have the choice to enroll in a drug discount card plan. At this time, over 100 companies have applied to offer a prescription drug discount card. In June, older Americans can begin using those cards to save anywhere from 10 to 25 percent on their prescription drugs. Low-income seniors who choose to enroll in a drug discount plan will receive \$600 of Federal assistance in 2004 and 2005 to further defray the costs of their medications.

The discount cards enable seniors to save money on their prescription drugs now while work is being done to implement the new Medicare Part D benefit. For those older Americans with no prescription drug coverage, waiting is not an option.

It is vital that we communicate to seniors their options regarding prescription drug assistance. I encourage all of my colleagues to reach out to seniors in their districts to explain the choices and benefits that older Americans now have.

I encourage seniors to visit Medicare on the Web at www.medicare.gov or to