

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I want to know which Richard Clarke we are supposed to believe. On his watch for 8 years our country suffered four terrorist attacks: in 1993 the New York World Trade Center, the Khobar Towers in 1996, in 1998 two African U.S. embassies, and in 2000 they attacked the USS *Cole*. Then in 2001, the 9/11 attacks occurred. The Clinton administration did nothing. It merely attacked some empty tents and a Sudan aspirin factory with a few cruise missiles. Richard Clarke himself admitted to PBS in 2002 that they should have taken out terrorist camps in Afghanistan in the 90s; but, according to him, there were "other considerations" that prevented this action.

Now Clarke attacks the Bush administration. Now he is suggesting that going into Iraq has diverted us from the more important goal of defeating al Qaeda, that we cannot do both. He is wrong. When we were attacked on 9/11, President Bush did not waste any time. He used the full power of our Nation to take out the Taliban and hunt down terrorists. Clarke even praised the President for his leadership.

Richard Clarke is guilty of the worst kind of spin, changing his story to avoid blame and make a profit on his new book.

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF MEDICARE MODERNIZATION ACT

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to talk on the Medicare Modernization Act. Tax-free health savings accounts that are accumulative allows the individual to pick up basic health care costs and shop around for quality and service, one of the great benefits of the Medicare Modernization Act. The other thing is then moving individuals into catastrophic health insurance plans which will be, obviously, in essence a lot lower than health care costs today. What people fear is the ability to lose their life savings on catastrophic illnesses. By having the catastrophic health insurance account, that will not occur and it will be at a cost that people can assume. But the only way we are going to bring down health care costs in America is to make sure that the consumer is involved in choosing their services based upon quality and service. No middlemen, the consumer. That is the benefit of the health savings account. The Medicare Modernization Act was real reform, and I am proud to have supported it.

MEDICARE

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I was at home this weekend in the good Seventh District of Tennessee reading the Nashville Tennessean and there on the front page of the business section was a story with the headline, "Some Seniors Begin to See Benefit From Medicare."

Mr. Speaker, if you had been listening to the Democrats for the past 6 months, you would be stunned that the seniors were going to see benefits from Medicare. But here it is in black and white. This is what the story says:

"Seniors who do belong to a Medicare HMO have been showered with new benefits thanks to the Medicare Modernization Act Congress passed last year."

And this is all before the prescription drug card and the eventual prescription drug benefit even take place. Clearly, the Medicare reform President Bush and this Congress passed is helping seniors and that is exactly what it is supposed to do.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, when we were off a couple of months ago debating the Medicare bill, we were told it was going to cost \$400 billion. We found out all along everybody knew it would cost \$550 billion, and nobody was told the absolute truth. Most importantly, you were not told. Not a single new benefit has gone to a senior citizen and the taxpayers are stuck with another \$150 billion hit. Now everybody wants to talk about the benefit that is going to come with a discount card giving a 25 percent discount. The costs of prescription drugs at the pharmacy are rising on average 19 percent a year for the last 7 years. So what you are going to see is what we all know happens at Neiman Marcus right before a sale, prices get jacked up as high as they can and then they offer a sale to give you a discount from the inflated prices. That is what is happening to prescription drugs right now at the pharmacy.

Seniors on average pay 40 to 50 percent more for their prescription drugs than people in Canada and Europe for the same drugs that have been developed here in the United States. What we need is a reimportation bill to bring the prices down, make them competitive, and get world-class drugs at world market prices rather than the 50 percent inflated prices that we pay here in America.

UNBORN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ACT HEADING TO PRESIDENT'S DESK

(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, when a woman is attacked

and her child is killed, there is presently no penalty for the death of the child. Until now. Just last week, the Senate passed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, also known as Laci and Conner's Law. It is on its way to the President's desk. Laci and Conner's Law declares that in an assault on a pregnant woman when a child is injured or killed, there are two victims. It makes the killing of an unborn child a prosecutable offense while specifically exempting abortions that are currently protected under *Roe v. Wade*.

The overwhelming majority, 80 percent of Americans, support the idea this law represents. They believe there are two victims, and they are right. Criminals are getting away with killing children, in many cases just days before delivery. This new law will put America back on record as valuing the lives of its children.

I want to again thank President Bush for his unwavering leadership on protecting and educating all of America's children.

PRICE OF GAS HITS ALL-TIME HIGH

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

Mr. MARKEY. Ladies and gentlemen, America now has the highest gasoline prices in history. OPEC is meeting once again to cut the amount of oil it is providing to the United States even as we have 130,000 young men and women over in the Middle East. That is a disgrace.

President Bush must insist that OPEC increase its production of oil. We should not suffer. The Christians had a better chance against the lions than the American consumer has against the OPEC cartel. We need a President who is not going to allow OPEC to tip us upside down and shake money out of the pockets of the American consumer. President Bush must insist that OPEC give to the United States what it deserves, an economy which is not harmed by OPEC with these rising oil prices which make it impossible for consumers to pay their bills or businesses to invest in any other service or product with the exception of their oil bill.

Tomorrow is the day, Mr. President. Let us have some relief for the American consumer and for the American businessman so our economy can grow.

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IN SUPPORT OF AMENDMENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION BILL

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I come to speak about a very disturbing trend that we have here in Congress that both parties are guilty of perpetuating.

In 1982, in the Surface Transportation Assistance Act, when it was

passed, there were just 10 earmarks with a total value of \$385 million. In 1987, the bill contained 157 earmarks; and it grew to \$1.4 billion. In 1991, there were 538 earmarks at a cost of \$6 billion; in 1998, 1,800 earmarks at a cost of \$9 billion. This year, there are 2,300 earmarks in the transportation bill that we will be discussing this week.

When that happens, when there are earmarks, it takes away from the high-priority projects that the States have identified and instead puts money toward low-priority projects that are identified by a specific Member of Congress. That is simply wrong to take money from Arizona or California or Texas from that formula to fund an earmark in West Virginia or Alaska or Minnesota or elsewhere. We need to change this process now, and I urge adoption of an amendment which will do that.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON S. CON. RES. 95, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 95) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2005 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2006 through 2009, with the House amendment thereto, insist on the House amendment, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR.
THOMPSON OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. THOMPSON of California moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 95 be instructed to agree to the pay-as-you-go enforcement provisions within the scope of the conference regarding direct spending increases and tax cuts in the House and Senate. In complying with this instruction, such managers shall be instructed to recede to the Senate on the provisions contained in section 408 of the Senate concurrent resolution (relating to the pay-as-you-go point of order regarding all legislation increasing the deficit as a result of direct spending increases and tax cuts).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Last week, the House passed a budget resolution for fiscal year 2005. They did

so on a straight party-line vote. But it was the alternative with the strongest budget enforcement provisions, the Blue Dog budget, that got the bipartisan support. Budget enforcement received bipartisan support in the Senate, also. They passed an amendment extending PAYGO rules to both revenue and spending measures with the support of a bipartisan majority.

Common ground, bipartisan ground, can be found on the issue of budget enforcement; and if we are really going to reduce the deficit, bipartisanship is a must.

Spring is a time of March Madness and the basketball tournament. But when it comes to responsible budgeting, I feel like it is baseball season around here.

On March 17, the House Committee on the Budget voted down a PAYGO amendment on a straight party-line vote. Strike one.

On March 24, the House Committee on Rules ruled out of order a PAYGO amendment on a straight party-line vote. Strike two.

And on March 25, the House approved a budget that had no PAYGO rules by a straight party-line vote. Three strikes, and we were out.

When it comes to budget enforcement, the House of Representatives struck out, but, unfortunately, it is our constituents that are the real losers here today. And our constituents understand that deficits impact them directly. They know that a \$477 billion deficit means that we are borrowing money from the Social Security Trust Fund to pay our bills. They understand that a \$7 trillion national debt means that \$50 billion of their hard-earned tax dollars are being sent to other countries every single year in interest payments on that national debt. Our constituents understand that Washington expects them to balance their budgets and to pay their bills. What they do not understand is why Washington does not require the same of ourselves.

Families across America sit down every week to balance their checkbooks. Our government, unfortunately, has not balanced its budget in 3 years. We have maxed out our national credit cards not once but twice; and instead of paying down the debt, we have increased our spending limit on that national credit card.

Today, we can send a clear message that Congress needs to hold itself to the same standards that it holds American families. Congress needs to pay for what it does. It does not matter if it is an increase in spending or a reduction in revenue. If it is important enough to become law, we should be required to pay for it. That is the motion to instruct that is before us today.

The motion instructs the conferees to agree to the strongest possible enforcement rules for all spending increases and tax cut legislation in the House and Senate, and it instructs conferees to adopt the Senate amendment on PAYGO as applied to all legislation that increases the deficit.

Members of the Blue Dog Coalition have been calling for the reinstatement of PAYGO on both revenue and spending since the Budget Enforcement Act expired in 2002. And it is not a partisan concept. As a matter of fact, in its original form, PAYGO was part of a bipartisan budget agreement between the first President Bush and a Democratic Congress. A Democratic President and Congress extended PAYGO in 1993, and a Democratic President and Republican Congress extended it again in 1997.

Members of both parties have long appreciated the PAYGO rules as an enforcement tool that helps Congress achieve and maintain a balanced budget.

Today, I urge Members of both parties to vote yes on this motion to instruct. Such a vote will tell our constituents that this House of Representatives understands that we are not sent here to play games with the budget, but we are sent here to balance the budget. It will say that we are serious about deficit reductions and that we are willing to reach that goal in a bipartisan fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Members to please vote "yes" on this motion to instruct.

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

First of all, I join the gentleman when it comes to paying for things as we go. Every family, as the gentleman from California said, has to pay for things as they go. When they have a bill come in from the light company or from the gas company or from the city, from the city office, to pay for the water or the garbage collection, they have got to pay as they go. When we go to the grocery store and buy the milk and buy the bread and buy the eggs, we have got to pay as we go.

Spending should be paid as we go. There is no question about that. There is bipartisan agreement, I think, for that. Spending should be paid for. It is an important concept. And the gentleman spoke about the outrages of government on the spending side.

But the argument gets a little bit fuzzy when we start talking about the income side or the revenue side. The gentleman wants budget enforcement. He has got a partner over here in the Committee on the Budget chairman. I certainly want and expect that we will have budget enforcement and an opportunity for Members to vote on budget enforcement this year. In fact, we passed a bill out of the Committee on the Budget together with the budget that was for the purpose of enforcement. When we pass a spending plan, we ought to enforce it so that there are not increases in spending.

Unfortunately, the Spending Control Act that the gentleman supports and that I support and that I think we have bipartisan agreement on supporting has been murky. There has been some murkiness applied to it. Because now, all of a sudden, people want to apply the same controls on spending over on