

this less than 5 years before the first of the baby boom generation begins to retire?

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, that nightmare is a reality; and this reality has been created by the President and the House Republican leadership.

In the face of the worst fiscal reversal in this Nation's history, almost \$10 trillion since President Bush took office, the Republican response has been to propose more and more of the same failed policies. Finding themselves in a hole, their motto is, just keep digging. There is no clearer example of this than the phony pay-as-you-go proposal in the Republican budget that requires offsets for entitlement spending but not for tax cuts.

Yesterday, Democrats and moderate Republicans came together and voted to instruct the House-Senate budget conferees to institute a real pay-as-you-go proposal, akin to the one that brought us out of deficits and into surpluses in the 1990s. But, as has become standard operating procedure around the House lately, when the vote did not turn out the way the Republican leadership liked, they kept that vote open and began the arm-twisting; and after 28 minutes they had twisted enough arms to bring the vote to a tie and to defeat this effort at sound budget policy.

So now we are left with a budget in conference that would provide the worst of both worlds. It sends us over the cliff fiscally while at the same time radically reducing funding for education, the environment, transportation, health care and law enforcement.

Let me focus, Madam Speaker, for a moment on what may come as a surprise to many Americans who have listened to the Republican leadership and the President spend a lot of time talking about homeland security and the importance of our first responders. This budget shows that talking is about all they are willing to do for our first responders, our police, our fire departments, our medical personnel.

The Republican budget makes significant cuts in Homeland Security and Department of Justice funding for first responders that results in an overall reduction in funding for our police of 33 percent, with a 50 percent reduction in funding for police in smaller cities and rural areas. They also cut funding for firefighters by one-third at a time when the Federal Emergency Management Agency is reporting that over two-thirds of fire departments in this country operate with staffing levels that do not meet the minimum safe staffing levels required by OSHA and the National Fire Protection Association.

The Speaker yesterday concluded the debate on the budget resolution by saying the reason it was important to cut taxes for millionaires was because millionaires are the small business owners who are creating all the jobs in this country. Our friend, the gentleman

from Ohio, just repeated that argument on this floor tonight.

Some of those millionaires are small business owners, but again the Republican budget shows the true motivation of our friends on the other side of the aisle. The Bush administration and the Republican leadership have fought to zero out funding, in fact, for the Small Business Administration's flagship 7(a) loan program that provides close to 30 percent of the long-term loans for small businesses; and they zero out countless other small business programs like Microloans and others geared toward minority businesses. If, as the Speaker implied, the reason for tax cuts for millionaires was really to help small businesses, why did it take an extended press and letter-writing campaign orchestrated by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Small Business, to get the Republican leadership to finally back off of some of these cuts in Small Business Administration funding?

The answer, I am afraid, is obvious. The tax cuts were not meant to help small businesses or to spur the economy. They were meant to provide a windfall for the most fortunate among us.

Governing is about getting our priorities straight and taking the public trust seriously. Through the Spratt alternative budget resolution, fiscally responsible Democrats have made our priorities clear: fund the programs America needs like education, health care, housing, homeland security and safety net programs, balance our budget by freezing scheduled tax reductions for those making over \$500,000 a year, and target tax cuts in ways that benefit ordinary Americans and stimulate our economy.

There is still time, Madam Speaker, for our colleagues to wake up and reject the Republican nightmare budget and to pass a budget that points to a brighter future. House-Senate conferees could start by adopting real pay-as-you-go rules. I urge them to gauge the House's true sentiment and do just that.

#### IN HONOR OF SOCIAL WORK MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in observance of Social Work Month. Since 1984, March has officially been designated as a month to acknowledge and recognize that social workers make meaningful and humanitarian differences and contributions to people in communities all over the world.

According to government health statistics, 60 percent of the Nation's mental health services are delivered by social workers. Trained social workers

provide more than 40 percent of disaster-related mental health services for the American Red Cross. Roughly 600,000 social workers are dedicated to ensuring that people of all ages, creeds, sexual orientations and nationalities have access to information, resources and services. They often make all the difference in the world to individuals and families who might otherwise fall through the cracks into hopelessness and despair. Social workers measure success by helping all those in need of basic services to achieve their goals on their own terms.

Often working behind the scenes, social workers are trained to address problems that some cannot see or issues that others hope will simply go away, drug addiction, family violence, joblessness, homelessness, mental illness, prejudice and many other conditions which affect millions of people every day, leaving them with little hope and few options.

According to the National Association of Social Workers, social workers help to open the doors of access and opportunity to those in greatest need through training and dedication. Moreover, social workers also actively advocate for changes in policy and legislation that strengthen the social safety nets that make a critical difference to so many.

Social workers have been at the forefront of many social movements. Some of the pioneers who were actively involved in creating social change include Dr. Dorothy Height, Jane Addams and Whitney Young.

Dr. Height was not only a giant in the civil rights movement, she also developed several model programs to combat teenage pregnancy, to address hunger in rural areas, worked as a proponent for AIDS education, implemented a project to expand business ownership by women and to provide funds for vocational training, and much more. She received a Congressional Gold Medal last week in recognition of these works as one of the pre-eminent social and civil rights activists of her time. In addition, she was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian distinction, by President Bill Clinton in 1994. In fact, she has been acknowledged for her leadership by every President since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Jane Addams, another great social worker who built Hull House, which is in Chicago in my district; Whitney Young, former president of the National Urban League, and the list goes on and on and on.

In addition, there are several social workers who serve in our body, individuals who were engaged as social workers before being elected to Congress: Representatives SUSAN DAVIS, BARBARA LEE, CIRO RODRIGUEZ and ED TOWNS, as well as Senators BARBARA MIKULSKI and DEBBIE STABENOW. All of these individuals have made tremendous differences.

I simply come, Madam Speaker, to commend those who engage themselves

in the profession of social work, recognize the great achievements and accomplishments that they have made and urge we recognize their importance to our society.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### THE NATIONAL BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, here we go again. Here we are to talk about a subject our majority colleagues and our administration do not want to talk about. They are hoping it will just go away. That subject is our national budget or, more directly, the conspicuous lack thereof.

Madam Speaker, my constituents ask me all the time, what do I think is the most important challenge facing our country? What is the one thing that we have to work on more than anything else? I can reply to them, in all honesty and candor and directness, that it is the very solvency of their Federal Government.

Why should that be? Why is it not the economy? Why is it not education? Why is it not our deteriorating relationship with the rest of the world? Why is it not Social Security?

The reason is simple. Without a strong fiscal underpinning, we cannot do everything or anything else. We can have a great old talk, we can have a great old debate, but unless the fiscal solvency of our country is strong, we are not going anywhere. Put another way, unless we take care of today, our children will not be able to take care of tomorrow.

We think we all know now, do we not, that we are in pretty bad shape? In fact, we are in real bad shape; and we are going downhill fast. The largest deficits we have ever seen, no end in sight, debt going up, interest rates going up, irresponsible budgeting, like going out only 5 years of a budget when we know that the big expenses come in the sixth year.

And we all know that the budget passed by this House just a week ago by a mere three-vote margin is not going to solve that problem. In fact, it is going to worsen it.

How did we get here? How did we ever allow ourselves to come to this place?

Just 3, 4 years ago we were on the right track. We had spending under control. We had revenues coming in. We had budgets that were heading towards balance. We had debt ceilings that were low relative to GDP.

□ 2000

How did we arrive here? Well, the first thing we did is pretty obvious. We consistently reduced revenues while increasing expenses. What do we expect when we do that over a period of years? Second, though, we did not have basic rules to live by. When we are talking about whether to increase this particular program or increase this particular tax or reduce this particular program, we can talk about that program or that tax all we want, but it has got to fit into a big picture. And those are rules to live by; and if we live within those rules within that box, we end up with balanced budgets because we make decisions that are related to each other.

And, third, the rules that we did have, we ignored. We talked at length about the first consequence. We have talked about that for many years now. I think it is finally sinking in. We cannot both slash revenues and increase expenses and expect everything to be okay; and yet that is what the budget we just passed and sent into a conference with the Senate does.

Yesterday, we talked at length about the second part of it, rules that have worked in the past and that we no longer have, PAYGO. PAYGO, a very simple concept that we pay as we go. That as we reduce in one area, we have to increase in another area. We talked about consequences that when we reduce over here, there is a consequence that has to be addressed over here. That is what balance is. This is balance. Those rules set the boundaries for what we could do. PAYGO, that is what this House just rejected yesterday on a vote of 209 to 209. That is what the Senate has done. I support the Senate and praise the Senate for its actions to institute PAYGO, and I beg those conferees going in on behalf of the House to do the right thing.

But today I want to address the third part of it, rules that exist today that are not followed. We have under our system a debt ceiling. It is designed as a check and balance. It is designed to make each one of us stand up and say that no matter how much debt we accumulate because of the decisions, no matter how reckless, no matter how irresponsible, for that matter, we have to vote separately to increase the total debt that we collectively carry through our U.S. Government. And that is what we are doing. We are carrying debt. When we run deficits year after year after year, the money does not just grow out of nowhere. It does not grow on trees. It is not found in a stash somewhere. We borrow it. We issue notes, bonds. We take it out of trust funds. We borrow it. And the total amount is supposed to be limited, and

we have that on the books; but we are ignoring it. In 2001 when this administration started, there was a debt limit substantially lower than where it is.

I want to say one thing in conclusion. A vote for the budget is a vote to increase the debt limit. We have voted to increase the debt limit. We have not taken a separate vote. So when people ask their Member of Congress, did he or she vote for the budget resolution, if the answer is yes, they voted for a substantial increase in the debt limit. Do not hide it. Let us be honest in our budgeting. Let us do this right.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

#### OUR NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on comments recently advanced by my colleague from Hawaii, someone who has so quickly thrown himself, tried to make some sense of them, and I appreciate very much the gentleman's conclusions.

We have got a runaway debt. We have got a very serious financial situation facing this country.

We are all familiar with the concept of credit card limits. Maybe we get pretty little limits. Maybe we get even generous limits. But somewhere there is a limit on how much money we can run up on our credit card.

The Nation, similarly, Congress establishes the limit, the credit card limit, for the Federal Government. We do that by a vote of Congress, how much money we are allowed to borrow as a country. And we have got a limit of \$7.384 trillion, \$7.384 trillion. We are allowed to borrow that much as a Nation.

That might give one pause. One might wonder how in the world are we going to get that debt paid off before we all leave the workforce, retire, and turn the country over to our children. Surely it would not be fair to leave our children with this debt.