

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.

As bad as this credit card limit is, as troubling as it ought to be to all of us, \$7.384 trillion, I have got very bad news for the Members. In the budget conference presently underway in the bowels of the Capitol, there will be an additional borrowing authority added to this country. The bill, the budget bill, to come out of conference to be voted on by the House of Representatives, will raise the credit card limit for our Nation. We do not know how much because no one is talking about this in public. No one wants the American people to realize that \$7.384 trillion is not enough, that we are going to raise it even more by \$1 trillion, more by \$2 trillion. One projection that we have seen from the majority would take the credit card limit of this Nation over \$10 trillion.

One of the things I think that is lost in financial debates is these numbers get too big and one really does not know what they mean. They are just enormous. I went recently to an instruction course on how to teach mathematics. And the presenter said 1 trillion, do we know how many seconds are in 1 trillion? If we took 1 trillion seconds, we would go back in time 16,000 years. So obviously 1 trillion is a staggering number, and we are now finding that, under the budget plans of the majority party and the administration that drive this national debt ever higher, \$7.384 trillion is not enough. I think the American people had better say it is enough.

We do not as families, we do not as families plan our financial affairs where mom and dad run up the credit cards, happily thinking the kids will pay them off. I know of families that I represent much like the family that raised me, just an awful lot of sacrifice in the mom and dad to leave things better for the kids, not tipping it on its head where we really do not care what happens afterwards, after we are gone.

If that is how we operate as families, as moms and dads worrying about making things better for our children, why should this Nation representing all the moms and dads in this country be running it a way so significantly different? Why should this Nation run up a debt like there is no tomorrow? Because there is a tomorrow, and it will be our children's tomorrow, and our children's tomorrow will be diminished by the fact that this generation is refusing to pay its way.

I am going to vote against the budget that comes out of conference because I believe it is wrong, absolutely wrong, to raise the borrowing limit for this country, leaving more debt for our children, when there is no plan anywhere in terms of how we ever get out of this mess.

The minority advanced a plan that brought us to a balanced budget in about 8 years. Some might think that is just not fast enough. That was a very difficult task. That is how far in the hole we now are. But the majority budget does not have any plan at all.

And that is why they want to raise the debt, and that is why their budget should be rejected. We owe it to our children to get our Nation's finances back on track.

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

(Mr. PEARCE 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 Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL 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 Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR 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 Florida (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Florida 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 California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BACA 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 Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STRICKLAND 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 Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas 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 Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

IRAQ AND SADDAM HUSSEIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, tonight I would like to spend a few minutes talking about an update on a situation on the various inquiries as to what happened before 9/11. Most importantly, the work that they are doing is taking a look at putting together a series of recommendations that will enable us to improve our intelligence capabilities and improve our response capabilities into the future.

As I was listening to some of the earlier speakers, someone said when that happens and these inquiries present their work and they make their recommendations and then Congress, of course, will have the opportunity to review those recommendations and we may or may not implement them, the comment then was made: and then we know that an event like 9/11 will never happen again.

As much as I would like to endorse that comment, I do not believe it is accurate. On 9/11 we, as a Nation, were surprised; and I believe that in the future, regardless of the recommendations that come forward, regardless of how effectively we implement them, we will be surprised again.

Let me just lead up to 9/11 and outline some of the things. What do we know today? We know this: that in March of 2003, the United States, we led a coalition of over 30 countries in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The action was undertaken as a last resort. Iraq had been in noncompliance or material breach of 16 U.N. Security Council resolutions spanning a period of 12 years to remove the threat posed by Saddam to his people, the Gulf region, and the world.

A couple of things I really want to point out here is that some have said this was an initiative by the Bush administration, and later on I will go through some of the quotes by the previous administrations and also the documentation and the data that shows that throughout the 1990s, the administration, Congress, and others saw Saddam Hussein and Iraq as a threatening menace to his own people, to the region, and to the world. A consistent pattern.

Saddam Hussein's Iraq was a constant and immediate threat to his neighbors in the Gulf region. And what did Saddam do in the Gulf region? Under Saddam, Iraq fought a decade-long war against Iran and launched an unprovoked invasion of Kuwait. After Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War in 1991, Iraq rebuilt its military strength and continued to use the threat of military action in attempts to intimidate neighboring countries.

The pattern is pretty clear. In the region Saddam Hussein treated his neighbors brutally. With his own people we know that Saddam Hussein was a mass murderer. We removed that capability from him. The day we hauled him out