

Shakowsky	Stearns	Velázquez
Schrock	Stenholm	Visclosky
Scott (GA)	Strickland	Vitter
Scott (VA)	Stupak	Walden (OR)
Sensenbrenner	Sullivan	Walsh
Serrano	Sweeney	Wamp
Sessions	Tancredo	Watson
Shadegg	Tanner	Watt
Shaw	Tauscher	Waxman
Shays	Taylor (MS)	Weiner
Sherman	Taylor (NC)	Weldon (FL)
Sherwood	Terry	Weldon (PA)
Shimkus	Thomas	Weller
Simmons	Thompson (CA)	Whitfield
Simpson	Thompson (MS)	Wicker
Skelton	Thornberry	Wilson (NM)
Slaughter	Tiberi	Wilson (SC)
Smith (MI)	Tierney	Wolf
Smith (TX)	Towns	Woolsey
Smith (WA)	Turner (OH)	Wu
Snyder	Turner (TX)	Wynn
Solis	Udall (CO)	Young (AK)
Souder	Udall (NM)	Young (FL)
Spratt	Van Hollen	
Stark		

NOT VOTING—25

Blunt	Greenwood	Shuster
Bonner	Hastings (FL)	Smith (NJ)
Burton (IN)	Hoefel	Tauzin
Cardin	Kilpatrick	Tiahrt
Davis (IL)	Kleczka	Toomey
DeMint	Mollohan	Waters
Fattah	Rohrabacher	Wexler
Gephardt	Rothman	
Gordon	Schiff	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1225

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 135, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 135 on adoption of a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1904, the Wilkie D. Ferguson United States Courthouse Designation Act, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1350

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) at 1 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

PERMANENTLY EXTENDING INCREASED STANDARD DEDUCTION, AND 15-PERCENT INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RATE BRACKET EXPANSION, FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 607, I call up the bill (H.R. 4181) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the increased standard deduction, and the 15-percent individual income tax rate bracket expansion, for married taxpayers filing joint returns, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 607, the bill is considered read for amendment. The text of H.R. 4181 is as follows:

H.R. 4181

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF INCREASED STANDARD DEDUCTION FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 63(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to basic standard deduction) is amended to read as follows:

"(2) BASIC STANDARD DEDUCTION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the basic standard deduction is—

"(A) 200 percent of the dollar amount in effect under subparagraph (C) for the taxable year in the case of—

"(i) a joint return, or

"(ii) a surviving spouse (as defined in section 2(a)),

"(B) \$4,400 in the case of a head of household (as defined in section 2(b)), or

"(C) \$3,000 in any other case."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 63(c)(4) of such Code is amended by striking "(2)(D)" each place it occurs and inserting "(2)(C)".

(2) Section 63(c) of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (7).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF 15-PERCENT INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RATE BRACKET EXPANSION FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (8) of section 1(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to phaseout of marriage penalty in 15-percent bracket) is amended to read as follows:

"(8) ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN 15-PERCENT BRACKET.—With respect to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004, in prescribing the tables under paragraph (1)—

"(A) the maximum taxable income in the 15 percent rate bracket in the table contained in subsection (a) (and the minimum taxable income in the next higher taxable income bracket in such table) shall be 200 percent of the maximum taxable income in the 15-percent rate bracket in the table contained in subsection (c) (after any other adjustment under this subsection), and

"(B) the comparable taxable income amounts in the table contained in subsection (d) shall be 1/2 of the amounts determined under subparagraph (A)."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for subsection (f) of section 1 of such Code is amended by striking "PHASEOUT" and inserting "ELIMINATION".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 3. REPEAL OF SUNSET.

Title IX of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 shall not apply to the amendments made by sections 301 and 302 of such Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment printed in part A of House Report 108-470 is adopted.

The text of H.R. 4181, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 4181

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF INCREASED STANDARD DEDUCTION FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS.

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"(A) 200 percent of the dollar amount in effect under subparagraph (C) for the taxable year in the case of—

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"(ii) a surviving spouse (as defined in section 2(a)),

"(B) \$4,400 in the case of a head of household (as defined in section 2(b)), or

"(C) \$3,000 in any other case."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 63(c)(4) of such Code is amended by striking "(2)(D)" each place it occurs and inserting "(2)(C)".

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"(B) the comparable taxable income amounts in the table contained in subsection (d) shall be 1/2 of the amounts determined under subparagraph (A)."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for subsection (f) of section 1 of such Code is amended by striking "PHASEOUT" and inserting "ELIMINATION".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 3. REPEAL OF SUNSET.

Title IX of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 shall not apply to the amendments made by title III of such Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate on the bill, as amended,

it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part B of the report, if offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), or his designee, which shall be considered read, and shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 30 minutes of debate on the bill.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

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

Mr. Speaker, today we have before us an issue that we have debated in the past, an issue which has earned bipartisan support. I want to thank you for the opportunity to bring H.R. 4181 to the House floor today. This legislation makes the marriage tax relief provisions of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act permanent. Currently there are 36 million American working families that benefit from the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. However, without H.R. 4181, this relief will be reduced next year and expire in 2010. Frankly what that means in simple terms, if this legislation fails to become law, 36 million married working couples will suffer higher taxes and see much of their marriage tax penalty return in the coming calendar year.

To make sure this does not happen, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GERLACH) and I introduced H.R. 4181 last week. Overall, our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty have taken more than 6 years. We have made great strides but we are not done yet. We are determined to bring this effort across the finish line and today's legislation achieves that goal.

The Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act, which President Bush signed into law on June 6, 2001, eliminates the marriage tax penalty in three steps. First, we double the standard deduction to twice that of singles. This helps families who do not itemize their income taxes. Additionally, it eliminates the marriage tax penalty for homeowners and others who itemize their taxes by widening the 15 percent tax bracket. Finally, it phases out the marriage penalty suffered by low-income couples when they utilize the earned income tax credit as a married couple.

Much of the relief which became law in 2001 was accelerated last year when President Bush signed a second piece of legislation called the Jobs and Growth Tax Act into law. The accelerated relief included in what some call the Bush tax cut expires at the end of this year. Unless this marriage tax relief is extended, 27 million married couples will face an average tax increase of \$300 and over 30 million American working couples will face an average tax increase of more than \$700 starting in 2011. The Joint Committee on Taxation, a bipartisan agency of this Con-

gress, estimates that these same couples will pay nearly \$105 billion in higher taxes over the next decade in marriage tax penalty unless we pass H.R. 4181, making marriage tax penalty relief permanent today.

Over the last several years, I have introduced my colleagues to some young couples from the district that I represent. One couple, Shad and Michelle Hallihan, was the first couple I shared. They are from Manhattan, Illinois, a married working couple, two schoolteachers. I explained how they suffered from the unfair marriage tax penalty. They benefited from the legislation that was signed into law by President Bush in 2001; they benefited even more in 2003; and we will protect them from the marriage tax penalty in this legislation we hope to send to the President this year.

Two years ago I introduced to my colleagues another couple from my district, Jose and Magdelene Castillo, of Joliet, Illinois. In 2002, they earned combined salaries of \$82,000 a year. Jose made \$57,000 in 2002 and Magdelene earned \$25,000. They suffered the marriage tax penalty. They have two children, Eduardo and Carolina. As a result of the tax law changes that we passed and President Bush signed into law, their marriage tax penalty was reduced by \$1,125 a year. This represented a 12 percent overall reduction in taxes for the Castillo family.

Imagine what this means for families like the Castillos, the Hallihans and other middle-income working Americans. With that \$1,125, the Castillos could start saving for their children's college education. They could go back to school at Joliet Junior College and pay for a semester or two of college education. They could save for their retirement. They could put a small down payment on a car or a new home. The bottom line is \$1,125 is real money for families like the Castillos.

Overall in the State of Illinois, which I have the privilege of representing, 1,544,000 couples today benefit from the marriage tax relief passed by this Congress and signed into law by President Bush. What Congress must do now is to make sure that American families can be confident that this much-deserved tax relief will not be taken away. They want to be sure that we are committed to fairness in the Tax Code by ensuring the marriage tax penalty is gone and will stay away. We must make marriage tax relief permanent for the 36 million American couples that benefit from the tax law changes that we passed into law last year and were signed into law by President Bush.

As unfair as the marriage tax penalty is, it seems even more unfair to consider telling couples like Shad and Michelle Hallihan of Manhattan, Illinois, or Jose and Magdelene Castillo of Joliet, Illinois, that in just a few short years the marriage tax penalty may return because Congress failed to extend and make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. Let us re-

member, this bill makes permanent the marriage tax penalty relief included in the Bush tax cut. We make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty for those who use the earned income tax credit. We double the standard deduction for those who do not itemize to help provide those with marriage tax relief. And for many middle-class families who itemize, we eliminate the marriage tax penalty by permanently widening the 15 percent tax bracket so you can earn as a married couple twice that of a single person and stay in the 15 percent bracket.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4181 is a good bill. It encourages the values we hold most dear, marriage, family and hard work. My hope is this legislation will earn bipartisan support today. I think we can all agree that it is wrong to punish society's most basic institution, the center of every American family, and that is marriage. I encourage my colleagues to vote for H.R. 4181, making marriage tax relief a permanent part of our Tax Code, because it is the right thing to do, it is the fair thing to do for American families.

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

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this bill was summed up perfectly by my friend the gentleman from Illinois when he said that this bill was introduced last week. So the bill was introduced last week and now it is on the floor this week, a complicated tax bill? I think the oldest committee in the Congress, the Committee on Ways and Means, would have had an opportunity to digest the details of this legislation, but this must be some new mechanism that we have developed here whereby on a very important tax matter the legislation is introduced last week and it is on the floor today for discussion without incidentally having gone through the committee, which for people like myself happen to believe that this is the basis of the Congress, sending legislation through the committee so it might be vetted properly and there might be an opportunity for people to examine the details of the legislation before it is brought to the floor.

Let me speak specifically to the tax cut mania that we are hearing in this institution. What is striking about this proposal, Mr. Speaker, is that, I want to remind people, we have 130,000 troops in Iraq who are serving with honor and distinction every single day. We have 12,000 more troops in Afghanistan who likewise are serving this country admirably day in and day out. So here is the strategy in the modern Congress.

□ 1400

We are simultaneously fighting two wars with three tax cuts.

One of the things that I am most proud of during my time on the Committee on Ways and Means is that we

were able to put together the details that balanced the budget of the United States for the first time, I believe, in about 3½ decades, and then we projected surpluses where we may well have had the opportunity to repair Social Security, to repair Medicare, to spend some money on education and to have done the things that we all desire in terms of improving our environment. But the strategy afoot today in the modern Congress is you introduce the bill last week, and then you bring it to the floor for a debate without even going through the committee process. So two wars, three tax cuts, \$500 billion in deficit, and there is no vetting of this process in front of our committees?

Let me speak specifically, if I can, to the proposal of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER). Let me tell the gentleman, I know people like the Hallihans. Here is the problem with this proposal: What we give to them with this hand, the alternative minimum tax takes away with the other hand. For a family who already has discovered a couple of weeks ago how ferocious the alternative minimum tax can be, they are going to discover that with the headlines of marriage penalty relief that there is a take-back provision.

So we are going to give them the benefit today of what we deem to be or call marriage penalty relief, and, guess what, Mr. Speaker? The Hallihans are about to discover that if they are a married couple with two children who make \$72,000 a year, they are not going to get any relief in this proposal because of the alternative minimum tax.

Now, I along with others have been talking about the problem of the alternative minimum tax for the last few years around here. I said recently seldom have I ever been part of any issue in the 16 years in which I have had the honor to serve here where people said to me, keep up the good work, we appreciate what you are doing on both sides of the aisle, and then we do not do anything about it.

So let me go back to the Hallihans for a second, because I expect that they are going to know about alternative minimum tax very quickly. If they have two children and they take the standard deduction with income of \$72,000 a year, let me repeat, they are not going to get any tax relief with this proposal. Part of the problem is AMT, and part of the problem happens to be the President's tax cut proposals.

I am going to go back to what I said at the beginning. How can we be fighting two wars with three tax cuts? That is what we ought to be discussing and deliberating here. We passed \$87 billion for the war in Iraq, that on top of \$60 billion, and everybody in this institution knows that after the election we are going to need more money for the Iraq war and the Afghanistan war.

Where are we going to go to get it? I do not know any businessman or businesswoman in America that could hope

to run their company the way that we are undertaking tax cut legislation in the modern Congress.

Then on top of that, we stand at the microphones and tell people, you are going to get relief under this proposal, and more relief under this provision. Then they get their tax bill; and they discover not only is there not any more relief, but, because of alternative minimum tax, they are going to pay more.

There are two issues that we should all be able to agree on in this Congress: tax simplification, there ought to be an appetite here for getting it done; and the second part of this issue, we should be fixing permanently the alternative minimum tax. That is what we should be doing.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would note that this House will be considering in the next few weeks legislation for broad AMT relief. In fact, 11 million taxpaying families will benefit from the AMT relief that we will pass later on in the next few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GERLACH), a distinguished leader in the effort to permanently eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 4181, a straightforward piece of legislation that will provide permanent marriage penalty tax relief.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and his staff for the tireless work that they have done regarding marriage penalty relief over the past years. The dedication of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) to providing married couples with tax equality is admirable.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to the gentleman from California (Chairman THOMAS) and the Committee on Ways and Means staff and members for their expertise and knowledge in developing and moving forward with this legislation. Their actions over the past years to eliminate the marriage penalty and to increase the child care tax credit has greatly benefited American families and our economy.

Prior to 2001, the Tax Code penalized many married couples by forcing them to pay higher taxes after they married. Two unmarried people living in the same home frequently paid far less in taxes than a married couple with the same income. The 2001 Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act set out to rectify this situation. These penalties would be phased out beginning in 2005. By 2010, the standard deduction and the 15 percent tax bracket for joint filers would be increased to double those for single filers. However, the bill included a sunset provision that eliminated all of these benefits after 2010.

Last year, this Congress took even greater steps to provide tax relief for 35

million hard-working married couples by accelerating this relief. Married couples in 2003 and 2004 received twice the standard deduction for single filers, and the 15 percent tax bracket was doubled to twice that for single filers.

Unfortunately, the accelerated relief provided last year will expire after the 2004 tax year, and all penalty relief is due to expire after 2010 as a result of the 2001 act's sunset provision.

Let me illustrate the effect of our tax policy. In 2001, Mr. and Mrs. Smith each earn \$27,000 for a total household income of \$54,000. If they filed individually, they would each have a standard deduction of \$4,550, or a total of \$9,100, and both would fall into the 15 percent tax bracket under the marginal rates at that time. However, if they filed jointly in 2001, they would only receive a standard deduction of \$7,600, because the standard deduction for married couples in 2001 was just 167 percent of the individual standard deduction.

Further, the joint income of \$54,000 would put them in the 27.5 percent marginal tax bracket. So if they both filed as individuals, their total tax would be \$6,734. If they filed jointly, their tax would be \$7,110, a marriage penalty of \$376.

Under the 2003 act's tax cuts, Mr. and Mrs. Smith could file a joint return in 2003 and 2004 tax years and receive the standard deduction for a married couple of \$9,500. This is equal to twice the standard deduction for individuals. They would also fall into the 15 percent rate bracket. As joint filers, they are treated no differently from an unmarried couple.

What will happen to Mr. and Mrs. Smith in tax year 2005? If the standard deduction for the individual remains the same and the Smiths filed separately, they would each have a deduction of \$4,750. Their total deduction would be \$9,500. That would put them in the 15 percent rate bracket. As a married couple in that tax year, their deduction would be 174 percent of the individual standard deduction. This works out to \$8,265. If the 15 percent rate bracket income limit for single filers remained the same, they would return to the 27.5 bracket.

Over the next few years, Mr. and Mrs. Smith would make out better as the phase-in of the marriage penalty relief continued. In 2010 they would return to what they remember as the "good old days" of 2003 and 2004 when they were treated the same as unmarried couples. Unfortunately, in the following tax year, the rug would be pulled out from under them, and the Tax Code would treat the Smiths in the same inequitable and unfair manner as it did before 2003.

H.R. 4181 will ensure that the marriage penalty relief is not reduced next year and that the relief stays in the law permanently. As a result of this legislation, couples will no longer have to worry about incurring a tax penalty just by getting married.

If we fail to act, more than 35 million married couples will see an average tax

increase of \$300 in the 2005 tax year. In 2011, 35 million married couples would see a tax increase of more than \$700. In many of our districts, that is the equivalent of a month's rent.

As we all work to help our economy to continue to recover, the greatest error we could make would be to allow an increase on taxes on our families. At a time in our allocating of Federal funds to promote marriage for public assistance beneficiaries, how can we even consider allowing the return to a Tax Code that penalizes married couples?

In conclusion, this is the right bill, this is the right time, and I request all of our Members to support the legislation on final passage.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER), who was elected on the same day as I was. I would point out he is a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, which generally is in a position to take up these sorts of issues.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

I too am concerned about the total lack of process around here and what we are supposed to be doing. My concerns really do not go to the substance of the bill or the policies, but the total lack of process and the fact that we do not even have a budget by which we can gauge what our priorities ought to be.

I am going to talk about something here as a business person, that I am looking forward to this tax cut a week over the next several weeks, because I think it is going to give us a wonderful opportunity to explain to the American people what is going on in this town.

Generally speaking, when you are in business, you have a budget. You try to decide what you are going to spend money for and what you are going to do. We do not have that, so we come with these ad hoc tax bills, and the mantra seems to be that a tax cut generates money; it does not cost money. In fact, the majority party tries to apply PAYGO rules only on the spending side and not to the tax side. It is called a balance sheet. It is not a liability sheet; it is a balance sheet. You have to have both.

What I think they fail to understand is that a tax cut today with borrowed money is a tax increase tomorrow, and it is called interest. We are now paying over \$300 billion a year in interest on the national debt. If that was all that we had to worry about, maybe we could figure out a way to pay that back with inflated dollars or in some way do something to get us out of this hole, if that is all we had to worry about.

I remember when Secretary Snow came before the committee and I asked him about interest. He said, oh, yes, it is an obligation that must be paid. I said, yes, it must be paid off the top. Everyone who has borrowed money knows about interest, and this bill

today on the floor adds another \$100 billion of unpaid-for tax consequences that we will have to begin paying interest on as we borrow it. Again, if that was as far as it went, maybe we could somehow justify that, if we had a budget, which we do not.

But Secretary Snow, getting back to him, when I asked him about interest, he said, yes, it is, but this is nothing to worry about, because the United States economy is so large and this is such a small percentage of GDP that the borrowings we are incurring today, we can handle them.

What he did not say was that back when we did have a percentage of GDP of borrowings this big, it was the American people who were funding the deficit, who were buying the IOUs of the Treasury. That is not true today. I want to tell the American people that this is a national security issue, and I hope I can explain why to them.

Last year we had a budget deficit here in this town of over \$370 billion. Over 70 percent of that debt was purchased by foreign interests. Let me say that again: foreign interests are financing the deficit borrowing that this Congress is doing.

I just want to know, how far are we willing to go to mortgage our financial future to foreign interests? According to the Treasury Department, major foreign holdings of U.S. Treasury securities now total over \$1.6 trillion. Over 34 percent of the money, hard currency, that we owe, is held by foreign interests. China alone holds over \$200 billion. The Japanese hold over \$600 billion. Furthermore, the Central Bank in Beijing has increased their holdings of United States debt by over 100 percent since 2001.

You would be amazed at what is going on here. We are borrowing money to cut taxes, indicating that in tomorrow's day, our citizens will have a tax increase because they must pay interest on what we are unwilling to either cut or unwilling to raise money for our needs, particularly those soldiers, sailors and Marines in Iraq.

□ 1415

We cannot even extend to them \$100,000 worth of life insurance because they say they do not have the money, and here they are going to spend \$100 billion, borrowing 70 percent of it from people around the world. As I say, I do not have any problem with the substance, but this is the wrong way to do it.

Let me just give an example. The Caribbean Banking Centers, we owe them \$74 billion; Taiwan, over \$50 billion; OPEC, who is raising prices, cutting production of oil, while gasoline in this country is \$2 a gallon, OPEC owns over \$43 billion worth of our debt. Korea, \$37 billion; Singapore, \$22 billion; Italy, \$15 billion; Brazil, \$15 billion; Thailand, \$14 billion. We are putting our country in hock all over the world with this deficit spending that is going on, and sooner or later, let me

tell my colleagues this: sooner or later those countries are going to say to the American Treasury we do not want any more debt, we are not going to buy at a relatively low rate of interest your paper any longer.

Do my colleagues know what is going to happen then? Interest rates are going to go up, because we are going to have to hike the interest rates that we are willing to pay for borrowed money so somebody somewhere will buy it. Again, that will directly result in a tax increase on the American people and particularly these young people.

We all are witnessing a generational mugging, because my generation is sending young men and young women to Iraq to fight a war, we are borrowing the money, taking a tax cut, my generation is taking a tax cut to borrow the money from foreign interests and giving them the bill when they get home, some without an arm, some without a leg. What is there to be proud of about what we are doing here? That is exactly what is happening.

Thankfully, the Wall Street Journal finally picked up on this national security argument I have been making for 7 or 8 months, about how crazy it is, foolhardy it is, and how dangerous it is to continue to borrow money from foreign interests. They said, "Some would argue," in this Wall Street Journal article, "that foreign countries would never sell off U.S. debt. However, economic history shows a number of times when countries have subordinated their economic interests to political goals and clout."

Some day, I do not know when, in the future, China, Japan, any of these other countries that I read, the Caribbean Banking Centers, OPEC, you name it, some day they are going to say we do not see the world as the United States does, and we are going to either threaten to dump this debt or we are going to sell off, in which case it will have a direct effect on the markets of this country.

Thankfully, Wall Street is beginning to wake up to this national security issue of being held hostage and in hock financially to foreign interests who may or may not see the world as we do in the future.

I think again that there is no way to overemphasize how dangerous this course of action is. This bill is just one little symptom of a far greater problem that we have in this country and in this Congress, and that is the absolute unwillingness to ask the American people to sacrifice anything in the event of war. We are at war in Afghanistan, at war against terrorists, at war in Iraq, and nobody in this country is asked to do anything except the men and women in uniform, the Reservists and the Guardsmen who are fighting. Nobody else has been asked to do anything except take a tax cut, and when they see the terrorists flare up we are advised by the administration to go shopping.

This is really a sad day. This bill is a symptom of a far greater problem, and

I look forward to laying out how much we owe to foreign interests and what it means to this country if they ever decide to change their mind about whether or not they will buy our paper.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, as I prepare to yield to the gentleman from Illinois I would note that later during this debate we are going to be debating a Democratic alternative which, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, raises taxes on individuals and small business by \$207 billion. Think what that will mean to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE), the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I rise today to voice my support for H.R. 4181, the permanent repeal of the marriage tax penalty.

On June 7, 2001, President Bush signed a repeal of the burdensome marriage penalty tax as part of the 2001 Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act. With this, President Bush lifted the unconscionable burden for millions of Americans taxed more than other citizens simply because they were married.

If H.R. 4181 is not passed this year, married couples will be required to pay 20 percent more in Federal taxes than unmarried Americans earning the same income. And in 2010, they once again will be paying the exorbitant marriage taxes in place before tax relief was enacted in 2001.

One of the many charges the Preamble of the United States Constitution requires of us who serve in government is to promote the general welfare of the people of this Nation. Before President Bush took office the economy was heading into a recession. The Nation was shocked and the recession made worse when the attacks of September 11 took place. The acceleration of the President's tax cuts returned money to the pockets of American citizens, the people best qualified to reinvest and spend their own money on their businesses and consumer goods. The increased spending which has resulted from these tax cuts has led to the steady improvement of the economy, a steady improvement which we as a nation continue to enjoy.

The repeal of the marriage penalty is also an important step in strengthening marriages and families in this country. The idea that couples were and could be again penalized by incurring taxes for getting married is unacceptable. It is wrong that a nation would lay a tax on marriage in any way, shape, or form.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 4181, and I urge my colleagues to support and pass this legislation.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, there are 10 million people, married households who are going to

get no benefits from this proposal; 3 million more are only going to get part of the benefits. That means we are denying 13 million married households a benefit that is being promised to them today because of alternative minimum tax.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I think we ought to look at the record. Under this monolithic Republican government that we have here in Washington, 2.6 million jobs have been lost, long-term unemployment is at a record high, we have gone from a \$5.6 trillion surplus in the Federal budget to a nearly \$3 trillion deficit. This year alone the budget deficit is expected to reach \$500 billion, primarily due to the President's and the congressional Republicans' economic program.

Mr. Speaker, 4 million people lost their health insurance, and 1.3 million people have gone into poverty. Median annual income for middle class families is down by \$1,400.

Yet, instead of extending the temporary unemployment benefit program that expired in December and addressing the litany of problems that I have mentioned, the Republican bill before us today continues the kind of reckless policy that has been pursued by the Bush administration and by the leaders in this House.

The bill will cost approximately \$100 billion over the next 10 years, all of which will need to be borrowed because Republicans provide no offset to pay for these tax cuts. This will further increase the debt tax that Americans must pay to ensure that our country does not go into bankruptcy. And, as is the case with most Republican tax bills, when you look at the fine print, you find even more reasons to worry.

Thirteen million middle income families, 26 percent of married couples earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000, and 60 percent of married couples earning between \$100,000 and \$200,000, receive no benefit or scanty benefits from this bill. Additionally, the Republican tax bill is shortchanging our most needy families.

While this bill makes the new \$3,000 earned income tax credit permanent, it forces low-income families to wait 4 years before receiving the full benefits of the bill. All other marriage penalty relief provisions are accelerated under this bill, except the one benefit that is aimed at those people who need it the most.

When it comes to the wealthiest Americans, the Republican bill makes sure that no multimillionaire is left behind. Families with incomes over \$1 million will be twice as likely as other families to collect the bill's full benefits.

The Democratic substitute, on the other hand, would make the marriage penalty relief permanent without borrowing a single dollar. The Democratic bill pays for its tax relief through a

rate adjustment for married couples earning over \$1 million a year. The Democratic substitute adjusts the alternative minimum tax to ensure that middle class families see all of the benefits we are promising them today. It also accelerates the phase-in of the highest earned income tax credit that is used by lower income families.

The Democrats' bill provides 13 million families with twice as much tax relief, and all married couples earning less than \$1 million each year will receive more benefits under the Democratic proposal.

So the Democratic bill deals in a much fairer way, a much more equitable way, and in a way that is going to provide benefits which will be beneficial to the families who will receive them, because they will receive them now, and beneficial to our economy because we will not have to borrow the money in order to pay for it.

So if you are a multimillionaire, you are probably going to like the bill that has been presented to us by the Republican Party and the White House. If you are a middle class American, you are not going to like it, because whatever scanty benefits you do get under their bill we are going to have to borrow the money to provide those benefits, and you will have to pay back that money with interest in the near future. And to the extent that you are not paying it back, middle class families, your children will have to pay it back. That is the enormous problem with this piece of tax legislation.

We need to return to the sound fiscal policies that we had during the decade of the 1990s when people were working and we had fairness and justice in our tax policies as well.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, there are clear differences being outlined here today. Democrats are proposing a \$270 billion tax increase, the Republicans are proposing a simple extension of existing marriage tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH).

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I am simply going to build on the introduction and comments of my friend, the gentleman from Illinois. We have already heard about what this underlying bill is about. H.R. 4181 is one of the fundamental tax equity issues that will come up in this Congress. We are talking about extending and making permanent the relief that we have extended to working couples and end permanently the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a vote about mortgaging our future, about Iraq, about macroeconomic policy, or even about the budget deficit. This is a narrow, important issue that speaks to fundamental tax equity for working families, and I speak from experience on this.

Twelve years ago when my wife and I were married, she was a teacher, I was a staffer for the State legislature working for someone who is now a colleague

of mine. When we got married, we ended up paying several thousand more dollars in taxes. That was an absolute absurdity. When we ran the figures, we were astounded to find this marriage tax penalty, and I am proud to say since I have come to Congress, I have been fighting consistently on the Committee on Ways and Means to permanently correct this problem.

Now, our friends on the other side want the revenue. They do not want to provide the relief to the families. They want this important fix to our tax system to expire next year and effectively raise taxes on working families, not on multimillionaires. Give me a break. I was not a multimillionaire a few years ago when I was first contending with this.

This is not a reckless policy, as our friend from New York characterized it. This is about fundamental tax fairness. And if our friends on the other side of the aisle are in favor of that, if our friends on the other side of the aisle are against punishing families who happen to choose to get married, then I think they need to join us in supporting this fundamental, straightforward tax reform bill that I think draws a clear contrast between the two parties.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a contrast between the two parties. To suggest that this is not about paying for Iraq and Afghanistan is ridiculous. Of course it is. We are borrowing the money to pay for Iraq and Afghanistan: \$87 billion. Of course this is entirely relevant.

Also, I do not believe that the Committee on Ways and Means brought this issue up. Maybe I was not there that day.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1430

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, we have two alternatives before us; that is not always true on this floor. Often Democrats are not allowed a substitute. This time we have been granted that. We should always have that, by the way. Always, always.

The alternatives are very different. The issue is not whether we want this to expire, I say to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH). We do not. And surely it is not a question of fundamental tax fairness. Indeed, the opposite is true when you look at your proposal.

First of all, it does discriminate between couples of certain income brackets and couples in lower income brackets. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle do that. They differentiate, indeed, they discriminate. Why discriminate against working people who have less income and help working people who have more? What is the reason? What is the reason?

Well, I remember when we argued over the child credit, and my colleagues thought it was defensible to differentiate between those with kids who have certain incomes and those who have kids with less and lower incomes. All right. That is one difference between the two alternatives.

Another relates to the alternative minimum tax. And here, to put it charitably, my colleague is not telling it like it is. Because essentially what my colleague is going to do is to give to millions of couples with one hand, and they are allowing it to be taken back with another. Indeed, the figures I think are pretty clear that about half of what would be given through this will be taken back by the alternative minimum tax. One-half.

Millions of couples who think, because of my colleagues' advertisement, that they are going to get some help on a permanent basis, are going to have that taken back when they face the alternative minimum tax.

My colleagues have not faced up to the impact of the alternative minimum tax, period. Millions and millions and millions of taxpayers are going to fall within it because of my colleagues' inaction. And it is always next year they say that they are going to do something about it.

So that is a second difference between the two bills. We do not discriminate between married couples according to their income and differentiate against those who have lesser income. And we do not give with one hand and take back with another. We address the alternative minimum tax issue.

And, thirdly, and my Democratic colleagues have talked about this, and it relates, really, to the AMT, is my Republican colleagues' fiscal irresponsibility. They do not pay for this at all. They say the more debt, I guess, the better. That is their philosophy. The more the national debt goes up, the better. The deeper the hole, their philosophy is, dig it deeper and my colleagues think over time growth as some magic wand will fill in a deepened hole. That is irresponsible. Indeed, it is worse than that: it is dangerous.

So there are three basic differences between those two alternatives and why I urge serious consideration, indeed, all of my colleagues to vote for the substitute. It does not discriminate according to income. It addresses the alternative minimum tax so we will not take back from millions those that we pretend, or my colleagues pretend, to help; and it is fiscally responsible.

And if my colleagues vote otherwise, essentially what they want is not tax equity; they want what they think is a political issue. They are dead wrong. Americans do not want discrimination against low-income families. They do not want them to say one thing and then another thing be done through operation of the AMT.

And I think they are increasingly sick and tired of the fiscal irrespon-

sibility of the majority in this House, the majority in the other House, and the chief executive of this country.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have a note that this House will be considering broad AMT relief in the next few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), a senior member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for yielding this time to me. I want to compliment him that he has been a complete hero with regard to doing away with the marriage penalty, and he has been fighting for this for many, many years.

The previous speaker, I can understand his sensitivity to alternative minimum tax because it was part of the Democrat Party that really made this worse in 1993 with the tax increase of President Clinton. If my memory is correct, not one Republican supported that particular piece of legislation.

We are in the process, as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) said, of working on a bill that will help clean that up. The alternative minimum tax is a very harmful tax, and it is one that should be put to rest forever.

The marriage penalty, however, which is under discussion today, one would not know it to listen to the other side, but this penalty for many Americans, it is wrong; it is wrong for the government to promote marriage and family and at the same time to financially penalize couples for getting married and having two incomes. Can you imagine that?

Approximately 1.8 million Florida couples, that is 3.6 million people, benefit from the repeal of this unfair tax. In particular, the penalty is especially harmful to younger couples starting out together. These are not millionaires, Mr. Speaker, by any stretch of the imagination. They are struggling young people who are trying to raise a family, pay their mortgage, put groceries on the table, and go on with their lives and at the same time to save for college education, which we are hearing a lot about in a lot of rhetoric in this Presidential campaign.

Without passage of H.R. 4181, these couples would see their taxes go up an average of \$300 a year. That is \$300 that could be used and be saved for college education or put simply for house payments.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation. And I urge all my colleagues, and I am sure many Democrats will join with us, to support this important piece of legislation.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER). Today we will vote on permanently ending what is perhaps one of the most unfair taxes in the U.S. Tax Code: the tax on marriage.

The marriage penalty rose from a 1960s change in tax law to relieve what was perceived as an unfair burden on single taxpayers. At that time, a special deduction was also created to relieve the effects of the marriage penalty. However, during the 1986 Tax Act when Congress reduced all tax rates, a special allowance was repealed for single filers; but the marriage penalty has remained and has existed ever since, with only temporary respite.

Today we must end it, permanently. Paying more in income taxes because one is married makes as much sense as paying more for a loaf of bread simply because they chose to be someone's wife or husband.

The Tax Code should not discriminate between people who are single and people who are married. When couples say "I do," I do not think they were referring to the IRS. Half of all marriages in this Nation end in divorce, and less than half of all children spend their childhood years in a two-parent family. We need to be supportive of families in America, not punish them.

We must ensure the Tax Code treats single and dual earners equally. It is simply wrong for anyone to pay more in taxes simply because they exchange marriage vows.

I urge my colleagues to end this unfair taxation.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4181 because I know how critical this tax relief is to so many American married couples and hard-working families. This Congress must permanently extend the increased standard deduction and the 15 percent individual income tax bracket expansion for married taxpayers.

As a Congressman representing both Charleston and Myrtle Beach, I recognize the great impact these types of tax cuts have upon our economy, especially in keeping the travel and tourist industry alive and well. By continuing to provide this tax relief to married couples filing jointly, more American families will be able to take vacations and spend time together at our golf courses and hotels and museums and beaches and historic places.

With so many perils and stresses facing parents in today's society, it is more important than ever for families to get away and enjoy life and strengthen family bonds. Tourism is the largest industry in my area and serves as the backbone of the local economy. It grows our economy, generates jobs, and provides for capital investments in South Carolina.

Last year alone, my district hosted more than 18 million visitors, nearly a 7 percent increase over the previous year. These visitors and the businesses that caters to them, spent \$5.1 billion in 2003 compared with \$4.7 in 2002.

Jobs, those directly and indirectly linked to the tourism industry, grew by 8.9 percent to \$93,702, while wages increased by 9.4 percent to an aggregate of \$1.28 billion. I believe that all of this would not be possible without limiting the marriage penalty and putting in place the President's tax cuts that have done so much to spur the economy.

The institution of marriage is under attack from so many angles including the courts and some segments of the media and popular culture. Our tax system should not serve to weaken the bonds of marriage; instead, it should serve to strengthen this great institution by ending the marriage penalty forever. How can we tell American families that they will have to pay nearly \$90 billion in new taxes over the next 10 years? Not on our watch.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4181, which will end the marriage penalty once and for all. It is time to put this debate to rest, and it is time to abolish this Nation's anti-family tax policies.

When we pass this legislation, this House is making a statement that we as lawmakers will not stand for a Tax Code that punishes married couples. To place an additional tax burden on married couples simply because they are married is crazy. The Federal Government cannot be passing tax laws which are designed to drive people apart rather than bringing families together. It is counterintuitive.

Unfortunately, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say, well, who cares. After all, they say, the government needs more money, and we should be the ones to decide who to redistribute the wealth to based on our concept of what is good.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Federal Government should have tax policy that has three fundamental caveats: it needs to be pro-growth; it needs to be pro-opportunity; and, most importantly, it needs to be pro-family.

Social engineering has been practiced by the other party, and it has had very negative results on our society.

Mr. Speaker, this House must pass H.R. 4181 to ensure that the marriage penalty relief is made permanent. The majority in this House has been an advocate for families by passing needed tax relief for hard-working families, expanding the child tax credit. Passage of this bill shows that this House is committed to this Nation's families. A fall-back to the old fashioned and anti-family tax policies that this Nation faced prior to President Bush taking office is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to support our Nation's families and to support H.R. 4181. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill, and I will be very proud to go back home and tell my

constituents that this House is working for them and for their families. Vote "yes" on H.R. 4181.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT).

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of H.R. 4181. There is no doubt that our society is overtaxed when we are talking about people simply because they decide to get married. The Federal Government has no business punishing people for making a choice. And that is essentially what this tax is, a punishment for choosing to get married.

□ 1445

Prior to 2001 the standard deduction married couples could take was less than that allowed for two single taxpayers. There is something wrong with that picture. Are we saying single people deserve more of their money back than married people? We need to do all we can to make the Tax Code fairer. Passing H.R. 4181 to extend full marriage penalty relief through 2010 and beyond so that marriage tax equity becomes a permanent law is a great first step.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about people's money, not ours. Let us get it back in their pockets so they can save for a down payment on a house, buy a car, buy clothes for the kids or spend it in whichever way they see fit.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 4181, to help ease the tax burden placed on hard working American families.

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

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) earlier spoke of the need for tax relief, and other speakers on the other side have offered different proposals suggesting that we should proceed down this road of tax cuts regardless of whether or not we are going to need this money for Iraq and for Afghanistan.

Now, let me go back to the point that I raised earlier in this debate, and I hope people are listening. Without batting an eye in this institution, we borrowed \$87.5 billion for the war in Iraq. Now, the only reason we did not hear the real cost of the war in Iraq is because people would have reacted very differently. Everybody in this institution today, the people that are watching, the people that are here as guests, they know you are going to need more money for Iraq and Afghanistan. Tens of billions of dollars more will be needed for Iraq and Afghanistan.

For years Democrats were accused of being the party of fiscal irresponsibility even though we set the Nation on the right course in the mid-nineties with record surpluses, record economic growth, unparalleled prosperity, and we demonstrated you could balance the

budget and still fix Social Security and Medicare.

Today we are, and I want people to listen to this carefully, we are borrowing the money for this tax proposal before us today, borrowing the money and sending the bill to our children. We are fighting two wars. For the first time in our history we are having tax cuts at the same time that we are fighting two wars. We watch the red ink everywhere, \$500 billion this year in deficit, and the answer here is let us add more to it.

The President comes forward with a proposal to finance the war in Iraq, which I voted for because I thought those soldiers needed the best equipment and best supplies we could provide them with, but we borrowed the money to do it. And the answer today is, let us borrow money for tax cuts to pay for these proposals. And then people like myself who have been talking about alternative minimum tax for years here were told, well, do not worry because we are just going to do this in a couple of weeks. We are going to fix the alternative minimum tax in a couple of weeks.

The alternative minimum tax problem is going to cost \$500 billion to \$600 billion to fix. We will not fix it in 2 or 3 weeks here. Everybody knows it. We will have the tax cut of the week in an effort to massage the numbers.

Let me give you another specific quick example of what we seek. The AMT problem reaches in to more families based upon the more kids you have. So the families who take the standard deduction and have four kids with incomes of \$64,000, they are not getting any benefit from this proposal today because what they are offering them on one hand, they are taking away on the other. So they suggest we will give you marriage penalty relief, and then the IRS is going to say, aha, take those deductions for those children, take the HOPE credit, and let us tell you what is going to come of it.

What is going to come of it is you are bumped into alternative minimum tax and you will be hit with a bigger bill than you originally would have had.

Now, let me offer some of my political DNA on this issue as a Democrat. I have proposed getting rid, outright, of alternative minimum tax. Just repealing it. That would force this institution and the other body to speak specifically to the issue of the tax cuts that we have seen here, reckless disregard for the future of this Nation's financial security. We are going to need that money for the international commitment that we have made in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the war on terror.

We will need to fix Social Security. We will need to fix Medicare for generations to come. That is not irresponsible to have used those surpluses during the Clinton-Rubin years to pay for the basic requests of the American people.

This is not an issue that is 20 years off. The baby boomers begin to retire

in 2011. We are going to need the resources for that. And to the question that was referenced earlier, the suggestion that we are proposing a \$206 billion tax increase, we are going to need \$300 billion for the war in Iraq.

I will remind this body, General Shinseki said, You need tens of thousands of more troops. He got fired for his wisdom. Lawrence Lindsey, by the way, the architect of the President's economic policies, said 200- to \$300 million. He got fired because he had the audacity to suggest the truth to our respective bodies.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as we bring this debate to a close on this legislation, I really believe we need to bring it back into focus. We have had a lot of peripheral issues that have been thrown out there, and this is really what this legislation does. It is a simple extension of existing law, existing law that eliminates the marriage tax penalty for 36 million married working couples.

The example of a couple in the district that I represent who are those who face higher taxes if we fail to pass this legislation law is a couple by the name of Jose and Magdalena Castillo of Joliet, Illinois. They have a little boy and a little girl, Eduardo and Carolina. They are a hard working couple, and like 36 million married working couples, they could pay higher taxes unless this legislation becomes law.

In 2001 and 2003 we worked with President Bush and we succeeded in essentially wiping out the marriage tax penalty for 36 million low income and middle class married working couples. For the Castillo family of Joliet, Illinois, it meant \$1,125. Think about that. In Joliet, Illinois, that is a couple semesters worth of tuition at the community college. It pays several months of daycare. It is a down payment on a home. It is money they can put in their retirement account or their education savings account to help their children.

The Castillos, like millions of married working couples, could face higher taxes. Now, it is estimated that if we fail to pass this legislation into law that next year millions of couples will receive a tax increase of about \$300 million as a portion of that marriage tax penalty if reimposed. And then in 2010 if we fail to make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty, they could see about a \$1,000 increase in their taxes. And over that 10-year time, 36 million married working couples could receive about \$100 billion in higher taxes, just because they are married, and that is what this is all about.

We hear a lot of rhetoric but this is pretty simple legislation. We are doing a simple extension of existing law that is due to sunset this year, and if we fail to extend it 36 million married working couples will suffer higher taxes just because they are married.

So I urge my colleagues to join with us. Let us work in a bipartisan fashion. Our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty enjoyed bipartisan support. Let us focus on what this issue is, and that is bringing fairness to the Tax Code. So I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to think of the Castillo family when they vote to make permanent today the elimination of the marriage tax penalty.

I urge a no vote on the substitute which contains a \$207 billion tax increase on individuals and small business. I urge a no vote to reject that and I ask for an aye vote to make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. Who benefits? Thirty-six million hard working married couples where both the husband and wife are in the workforce. And it is just a common sense question. Why should they have to pay higher taxes just because they are married? We have made a commitment to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. Let us make it permanently eliminated so it never comes back.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill. No one in this body believes that the "marriage penalty" is fair. No one believes that if you are married, you should have to pay more taxes than if you were single or filing separately.

But that is not the debate we are having today, regardless of what the majority says. The trust is, we are debating whether Congress should continue to finance tax cuts out of Social Security and Medicare. The budget deficit this year is already more than half a trillion dollars. A 10-year budget outlook once projected to have a surplus of \$5.6 trillion is now a deficit of more than \$4 trillion. The passage of this bill will only make matters worse.

Americans believe in responsibility. Our values tell us that when you pass tax cuts, you have to pay for them. But this Republican marriage penalty bill will cost \$96 billion over the next 10 years—none of it paid for. These are not the Democrats' numbers—they are from the non-partisan Joint Committee on Taxation. And that is only the beginning, with the majority expecting to take up more tax bills in the coming weeks. All equally expensive—none of them paid for, threatening economic growth, ballooning interest rates, and costing us jobs. This is in addition to a Republican budget that rejects pay-as-you-go rules that Alan Greenspan says are essential if we are to continue our tentative economic recovery.

What became of the Republican Party that preached fiscal discipline and responsibility? By contrast, the Democratic plan would provide more than twice as much tax relief without threatening economic growth. It would help middle-class families and ensure that tax relief from marriage penalty is not reduced by the Alternative Minimum Tax, as it is under the Republican bill. And above all, it would be paid for. Reject this bill and support the Democratic substitute.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of repealing the penalty on people who choose to marry. It seems strange that the tax code discriminates against married couples. It's even stranger that there are many in this body who are opposed to fixing this problem.

The President and the Congressional majority have worked hard to enact marriage penalty relief. Because of demands from the other side, this relief will end next year. That means an automatic tax increase in an economy that is coming out of a recession. Mr. Speaker, we must pass this legislation to permanently extend this relief.

As we attempt to eliminate this discrimination in the tax code, I will continue my work to repeal the marriage penalty that affects many couples on Social Security. Yes . . . there is also a "marriage penalty" that occurs when Social Security benefits are taxed. As a result, I have introduced legislation to increase the income threshold for couples to double that of individuals to end this unequal treatment in the tax code that discourages marriage among seniors.

Certainly our seniors should not have to worry about losing Social Security benefits because they are married or want to marry.

Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today we will be voting on important legislation; legislation that will help roughly 21 million young Americans financially. I am speaking about marriage penalty relief. Thanks to the peculiarities of the tax code, when married couples earn roughly the same salaries, they tend to pay more in taxes than they would if both were single filers. Our previous action to extend this tax relief benefit has encouraged marriage and saved the average married couple \$1,400 a year, allowing them to spend on items that support their families.

This discrepancy financially penalizes couples for doing nothing more than choosing to get married, which creates a strong disincentive for people to build families. With a breakdown of the family and high divorce rates, we need to strengthen marriage—not weaken it. As every study shows, children fare best and have the most promising life prospects when they are raised in intact families. Promoting marriage has the potential to significantly decrease poverty and dependence, increase child well-being and adult happiness, and to provide the safest environment for women and children.

Mr. Speaker, letting the tax penalty relief expire would cost families \$1,400 a year. The federal government should not be picking pockets of people just because they are married. If we do not extend the marriage penalty tax relief today, Uncle Sam will not only once again be taking a gift at the wedding reception instead of giving one, but will also be contributing to the breakdown of our basic social institution, marriage.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4181, an Act that will make the marriage penalty tax relief permanent. This unfair provision must be permanently stricken from the tax code so individuals who enter into the sanctity of marriage are no longer penalized when they file their taxes. Marriage is the highest form of commitment between a man and a woman, and we should be encouraging this union—not penalizing it.

Since the 1960's, this archaic standard has been penalizing married couples for simply filing their tax returns as husband and wife. Fortunately, in 2001 we successfully eliminated this unfair provision by passing the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act. Because of this important legislation, over 42 million married couples are now treated equally when they file their taxes. This tax cut has

spurred our economy's recovery and created thousands of jobs. By putting taxpayer money back in the hands of the American people, we reduce their economic burden and empower them to spend their money in a manner they see fit.

We must pass this important legislation and continue to provide this much needed relief to American families. We should never underestimate the good that can be accomplished when families are able to keep more of their money and make spending decisions based on their needs. Congress needs to finish the job we started of promoting economic responsibility and long-term economic growth by making these cuts permanent. Let's do what is right for the American economy and America's families.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 4181, to making permanent the repeal of the Marriage Penalty Tax that has helped 30 million married Americans since 2001.

Married couples rely upon this tax relief for purchasing a new home, saving for their children's college education, and setting up retirement savings plans. Now, nor ever, do I see a reason why nearly 1.1 million married couples in New Jersey should be re-penalized and forced to pay higher taxes simply because they decided to get married and start a family. Allowing this tax benefit to expire would also be counterproductive to the strength our economy continues to show.

Americans scored a major victory in 2001 when Congress and President Bush addressed one of the most unjust provisions of the tax code by reducing the Marriage Penalty Tax. Congress furthered our commitment last year to reducing taxes under the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, where Congress accelerated the seven year phase-in of the marriage penalty relief.

As a result, today, the standard deduction for married couples stands at \$9,500—twice the value that it is for a single individual, and the upper limit on the 15 percent tax bracket for married filers is twice the income limit for single filers. Under current law, each of these tax benefits for married couples will be reduced next year and fully expire in 2010, if we do not act to make the repeal permanent.

If Congress does not act, beginning in 2011, the standard deduction for married couples will be reduced, forcing 30 million more couples to pay more taxes.

The Marriage Penalty tax is inherently unfair. The Federal Government should not force working couples, through an archaic tax code, to pay higher taxes.

The Marriage Penalty Tax weakens the foundation of one of society's most sacred institutions: marriage. We cannot turn back the clock after making such great strides in providing this sensible, meaningful tax relief. And quite frankly Mr. Speaker, families are counting on this relief.

So today, I urge my colleagues to build on our ongoing efforts to provide tax relief for all hard working Americans. Let's pass Marriage Penalty Tax relief for the millions of working couples.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, fixing the "marriage penalty" and increasing the earned income tax credit (EITC) for low-income families are important and long-overdue steps toward tax fairness. I support both measures but wish that Congress had made reducing the tax

burden for dual-income middle-class families and those most in need of tax relief its top priority 3 years ago, instead of focusing tax relief primarily on the wealthiest Americans.

Improving the fairness of our tax code is a laudable goal. The Bush tax policies passed by Congress have added significantly to our national deficit. Congress need not continue to exacerbate the budget while providing reasonable tax relief. As this legislation is written, over \$100 billion will be added to our national deficit. The Democratic Substitute, which I support, instead would pay for marriage penalty relief and an increase in the EITC by reducing tax cuts available to couples earning more than one million dollars a year. The Democratic proposal provides a more responsible manner of providing tax fairness that does not further burden future generations with more debt.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the fiscally irresponsible and inadequate H.R. 4181, "Make Permanent Marriage Penalty Relief," and in support of the Democratic Substitute that helps more families and is fiscally responsible.

The Republicans have brought a bill to the floor that is not paid for. In fact, their plan would add \$105 billion over the next 10 years to the federal budget deficit.

In contrast, the Democratic substitute provides marriage penalty tax relief to more Americans than the Republicans bill, but pays for it in a fair manner by limiting tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

The Democratic substitute provides more marriage penalty relief to 13 million families than the GOP bill by ensuring that tax relief from the marriage penalty is not taken away or reduced by the alternative minimum tax. The Republican bill denies full marriage penalty tax relief to 13 million families next year, including more than 25 percent of the middle-class families making \$75,000 to \$100,000, by failing to fix the inequities caused by the current alternative minimum tax system.

The Democratic substitute also provides immediate marriage tax penalty relief to more Americans by increasing the value of the Earned Income Tax Credit for more lower-income working couples. The Republicans fail to give these families immediate relief in their bill.

Again, the Republican bill demonstrates the misguided priorities of the Republican Party. Rather than ensuring that all hard working families get marriage tax penalty relief, the Republicans have decided to bankrupt this country to ensure that their fat cat rich elite donors continue to get away with paying absurdly low taxes. The ultimate losers are our children who will be left to pay the bill for the large budget deficits that President Bush and our Republican colleagues in Congress are planning to leave them.

I urge my colleagues to support the Democratic substitute bill and vote against the insufficient and unaffordable Republican proposal.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of making permanent the marriage penalty tax relief Congress passed in 2003. I believe that we should eliminate the tax penalty that some married couples incur because, simply, it is the right thing to do.

The marriage penalty stems from provisions in the Tax Code that impact married couples filing joint tax returns differently than if they filed separate tax returns. In 2001, the marriage penalty hit around 47 percent of married tax filers from all income brackets.

Without action, tax relief from the marriage penalty would lapse next year as required under the 2003 tax cut package. While the majority of the 2003 tax proposal that passed the House was fiscally irresponsible and designed to benefit only the wealthiest of Americans, its provision providing couples complete relief from the marriage penalty in 2003 and 2004 had bipartisan agreement. The legislation before us today and the substitute offered by Congressman RANGEL will permanently extend relief from the marriage penalty.

Every week I am back in Wisconsin talking to my constituents about the challenges they are facing in today's economy. With rising costs for college tuition, health care, and other necessities, we need to act today to ensure that working families are not going to be faced with a marriage penalty tax in 2005.

I also believe, however, that we must work to make sure these tax cuts are paid for so that we do not increase the budget deficit. It is unfair to Americans today, and especially the next generation, to delude ourselves by thinking the record budget deficits facing our Nation, estimated by the White House at over \$500 billion this year alone, will simply go away.

As a member of the House Budget Committee, I supported a budget resolution that allows for extending marriage penalty tax relief while still reducing the deficit. This approach requires tough choices, prioritization, and a bipartisan commitment to helping working families. With the House-Senate conference committee still negotiating the budget resolution for fiscal year 2005, I remain hopeful that we will be able to provide married couples continued tax relief today without raising the debt burden on our children's generation.

The substitute offered today by Representative RANGEL is a more responsible bill that will permanently repeal the marriage penalty tax for millions of Americans while not increasing the budget deficit. By providing a responsible offset to pay for this tax cut, we can benefit all married tax filers without burdening our children with added debt that they will have to pay off.

In addition, the Rangel substitute will benefit 13 million more Americans by accounting for the alternative minimum tax. The AMT will deny many married couples the tax relief intended under this bill because they fall under a complex set of AMT tax provisions.

Mr. Speaker, extending relief from the marriage penalty now will help millions of working families that otherwise would face a tax increase in 2005. I believe we can and must provide this relief in a fiscally responsible manner that will not burden future generations of Americans. Our work is far from over in helping working families face the challenges of today's economy, and we must come together in a bipartisan manner to craft a fiscally responsible budget resolution.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). All time has expired.

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE OFFERED BY MR. RANGEL

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF INCREASED STANDARD DEDUCTION FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 63(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to basic standard deduction) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) BASIC STANDARD DEDUCTION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the basic standard deduction is—

“(A) 200 percent of the dollar amount in effect under subparagraph (C) for the taxable year in the case of—

“(i) a joint return, or

“(ii) a surviving spouse (as defined in section 2(a)),

“(B) \$4,400 in the case of a head of household (as defined in section 2(b)), or

“(C) \$3,000 in any other case.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 63(c)(4) of such Code is amended by striking “(2)(D)” each place it occurs and inserting “(2)(C)”.

(2) Section 63(c) of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (7).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF INCREASED EARNED INCOME CREDIT FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) of section 32(b)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

“(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return filed by an eligible individual and such individual's spouse, the phaseout amount determined under subparagraph (A) shall be increased by \$3,000.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF 15-PERCENT INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RATE BRACKET EXPANSION FOR MARRIED TAXPAYERS FILING JOINT RETURNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (8) of section 1(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to phaseout of marriage penalty in 15-percent bracket) is amended to read as follows:

“(8) ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE PENALTY IN 15-PERCENT BRACKET.—With respect to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004, in prescribing the tables under paragraph (1)—

“(A) the maximum taxable income in the 15 percent rate bracket in the table contained in subsection (a) (and the minimum taxable income in the next higher taxable income bracket in such table) shall be 200 percent of the maximum taxable income in the 15-percent rate bracket in the table contained in subsection (c) (after any other adjustment under this subsection), and

“(B) the comparable taxable income amounts in the table contained in subsection (d) shall be ½ of the amounts determined under subparagraph (A).”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for subsection (f) of section 1 of such Code is amended by striking “PHASEOUT” and inserting “ELIMINATION”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 4. BENEFITS EXTENSION NOT TO INCREASE FEDERAL BUDGET DEFICIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(j) ADDITIONAL TAX ON HIGH INCOME TAXPAYERS.—The amount determined under sub-

section (a), (b), (c), or (d), as the case may be, shall be increased by 3.6 percent of so much of adjusted gross income as exceeds \$1,000,000 in the case of individuals to whom subsection (a) applies (\$500,000 in any other case).”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004.

SEC. 5. REPEAL OF SUNSET APPLICABLE TO BENEFITS EXTENDED BY THIS ACT.

Title IX of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 shall not apply to the amendments made by sections 301, 302, and 303 of such Act.

SEC. 6. BENEFITS OF ACT NOT DENIED BY REASON OF ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX.

(a) MINIMUM TAX.—The amount of the minimum tax imposed by section 55 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be determined as if sections 1, 3, and 5 of this Act had not been enacted.

(b) CREDITS.—In applying section 26(a)(1) of such Code, the amount referred to in subparagraph (B) thereof shall be reduced (but not below zero) by the amount of the reduction in the taxpayer's regular tax liability by reason of sections 1, 3, and 5 of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 607, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and a Member opposed each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

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

Mr. Speaker, first let me thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for his persistence in trying to bring tax relief to working people and married people who need it. Again, I would like to thank him for the courtesy which he extended to me at the Committee on Rules which allowed this substitute to be in order.

I would like to say at the outset that I do hope that Members of this Congress would feel the ever growing jurisdiction of the Committee on Rules as we find very important and complex bills, especially tax bills, bypassing the Committee on Ways and Means and coming to this floor.

If the Committee on Ways and Means had allowed the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) to have brought this amendment which he has championed over the years to the Committee on Ways and Means, perhaps he would see that Republicans do not have the only way in which to perfect a bill. Perhaps he would have seen that we would have followed his lead in providing for the standard deductions in and making certain that we would not have this so-called marriage penalties. But we would have perfected it so that the earned income tax credit, which is so important for low income people, would have gone into effect immediately so that they would have been able to enjoy the same benefits that their fellow taxpayers, albeit in the upper income tax brackets, would have enjoyed.

Since last seeing this bill, I will have to admit that they have improved it so that in 4 or 5 years these low income people would receive some benefits, but

if we had had a chance to work together in committee with amendments and, more importantly, with discussions, we would have been able to fix this so that the low income people and the middle income people would enjoy the benefits of the earned income tax credit.

Another thing which is far more serious is that they give with one hand under the Weller bill, but by doing this and providing the benefits, they kick the taxpayer up into another income category where the monster of the alternative minimum tax grabs them and takes back that money.

It would seem to me that if the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and I were working together, what he would want to do, at least for this bill, recognizing the close to \$1 trillion it would cost to eliminate the alternative minimum tax altogether, that we would have said, as we say in the substitute, that for purposes of this bill none of the benefits received under this bill will be denied because of the alternative minimum tax bill that would take it away.

Lastly, let me say this: Is this the time for us to be talking about going further in debt?

□ 1500

The billions of dollars that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) says Democrats would ask us to pay is not billions of dollars in increase. It would just make certain that the benefits during time of war of those people who God has blessed with receiving incomes of over \$1 million will say, hold it, it is a time of war, it is a time of sacrifice; if anybody deserves a tax cut, let it be the people that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) has championed, let it be the married people who struggle every day, let it be not only the middle income people but the lower income people and not the people that receive over a million bucks.

So what I am suggesting is this. Let us take the theme that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) has championed, albeit his couple have changed dramatically since he first brought this up, but that just shows that we have to respond more speedily to decent legislation, and let us take the substitute that has been perfected and say this. If the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and the majority wants to make certain that we expand the 15 percent tax bracket and we increase the standard deduction, count us in. If the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) really wants the earned income tax credit to lock into place for all people when this becomes effective and not wait 4 years, we support the substitute and we support the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

If the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) wants to make certain that once the benefits are received by these married people, the monster of the AMT that we refuse to touch, not because we believe it is good legislation

but because we just do not want to go into debt another trillion dollars, let us say when we get the courage to deal with the deficit we will do it, but for purposes of this bill and the people who look like or suffer the pain of the portrait of the people we see on the floor every year, we will make certain that the benefits will not be harmed by the AMT.

I think this is the time for us and the generations to follow to be careful how further we go into deficit. We do not know how much the war is going to cost, but we do know how much this bill would cost, and this bill does not increase taxes. It rearranges the benefits so that the people making less than \$1 million would say, thank you, Mr. WELLER; thank you, Mr. RANGEL; thank you for bringing Democrats and Republicans together to do the right thing. We tried to do this in the substitute. We hope we can get my colleagues' support.

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to claim the time in opposition, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by, of course, thanking my good friend the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for these thoughtful and friendly comments, and as we begin this debate on the substitute he is offering, and of course, my criticism that I will have of course is being made in friendly terms, as he knows.

Let me just explain why I urge my colleagues in the House to, in a bipartisan way, oppose the Rangel substitute to H.R. 4181.

As my good friend from New York noted, it includes a \$207 billion tax increase on individuals, on families and particularly on small business. To summarize the Rangel substitute, it reverses the tax relief that benefits many families that was included in the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003. It creates a new tax on families and small business, and it even makes the existing alternative minimum tax, something that we all despise, even more complicated.

The Rangel proposal, the Rangel alternative, creates a new tax on families and small business. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the substitute authored by my friend from New York raises taxes by \$207 billion by creating a new tax on a group that is defined as the rich, but if we look at the fine print of that definition, the vast majority of the so-called rich are people on Main Street, entrepreneurs and small business people, the people who employ a lot of workers in Morris, Illinois, where I live.

As I noted, it increases taxes on entrepreneurs and reverses the President's tax relief by raising the rate, and it makes the AMT even more complex. Although we share a bipartisan goal of fixing the AMT impacting the 2003 tax cut, we provided for AMT relief, and I expect in the next few weeks

the House is going to vote on an extension of that which provides broad AMT relief for millions of families who would otherwise suffer the AMT.

I would note under the Rangel substitute the Tax Code is made even more complicated by requiring families, believe this or not, to do three sets of tax calculations. People have got to figure out their taxes three times to determine whether or not they avoid the AMT under my good friend's proposal.

Republicans are working to address the AMT and I would note the AMT, the alternative minimum tax, was made much worse in 1993 with what has been called the Clinton tax increase. No Republican supported what was then the biggest tax hike in the history of our Nation but most Democrats did, but the AMT was made much more complicated and actually of greater burden, targeted at middle class families. We are working to solve that burden, and this House will be voting on AMT relief sometime in the near future. We are working closely with the Bush administration towards that goal, and we believe that proposal will protect 11 million families who otherwise would pay the alternative minimum tax.

So I ask bipartisan opposition to my good friend's proposal, which again is a \$207 billion tax increase on individuals and small business.

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

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

I hope that the constant question that would remain on the floor is that the substitute does not increase the deficit by one penny and that the Republican bill increases the deficit by \$104 billion. That is the difference.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means, for the purposes of control.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the difficulty with this debate is that there is a big monster in the closet that people do not want to discuss, and that is the growing national deficit, which is going to make it impossible for us to ever do the type of investments in our education, in our housing, health care for seniors and others that we need to do. It certainly will stop us from doing things the right way in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, around the world where the United States must stand up to defend the rights of others and protect Americans, and certainly we are not doing the right thing for at least some 13 million Americans under this particular bill when it comes to the so-called marriage penalty relief because they will

get a benefit, because what is not being said, because of that big monster in the closet is that a lot of these folks, 10 million directly, outright, will lose any type of relief from this legislation because they will fall into another tax category.

So my colleagues take care of what is called the marriage penalty, but they dump them into what is called the alternative minimum tax, such that if a family makes about 72,000 in a year and has two kids and, in filling out the tax form does the standard deductions, that family thinks all of the sudden it may get some relief out of the marriage penalty legislation, like what we have today, will finally get nothing, and that is the reality for 10 million families in America.

For another 3 million families, they will get less than what this bill promises, and the big monster in that closet is going to come out because if we have a \$521 billion deficit for this current year and over a \$7 trillion national debt collectively, which amounts to more than 24,000 for each man, woman and child in this country that each and every one of us owes and sooner or later will pay, either through higher taxes or reduced services in education, health care, housing, national defense, then we are going to see the real consequences come.

So this debate should be about doing marriage penalty relief responsibly at a time of deficits. This should be about doing marriage penalty relief responsibly at a time when we are asking men and women to sacrifice their lives every single day in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, and this should be a debate about doing this responsibly and in a bipartisan fashion so that we could craft legislation that would take care of the 13 million American families that are going to be deceived and believe that they are going to get something from this and get either nothing or very little whatsoever, at a cost of over \$100 billion.

So, Mr. Speaker, there could be bipartisanship here. We should move forward in taking care of marriage penalty for any family under the Tax Code, and for that reason I would hope that Members would consider voting for this substitute because it goes in that direction.

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to debate the Democrat proposal to raise taxes by \$207 billion, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, today this body has one very important decision to make. Do we really want to raise taxes on married couples by bringing back the unfair marriage penalty to our Tax Code? Do we really want to tax the institution that represents the greatest social welfare program in the history of our

Nation; in other words, the American family? Do we really want to start rolling back the tax relief that was responsible for making the U.S. the fastest growing economy in the world last year, the tax relief that has helped bring about the highest rate of home ownership in the history of our Nation, the tax relief that has helped create over three-quarters of a million new jobs and the tax relief that has actually brought in more tax revenue to our U.S. Treasury? That is right, tax relief by promoting economic growth has brought more tax revenue into the U.S. Treasury.

Mr. Speaker, the answer should be a resounding no. If we choose to revive the marriage penalty, 30 million married couples will face an average tax increase of \$369 next year. The same number of couples will see a tax increase of more than \$700, starting in 2011. I mean, that is a rental payment or two for an apartment, a home computer for a son or a daughter. It is weeks of child care. At a time when tax relief is fueling our economic recovery, now is not the time to raise taxes on families or reinstitute unjust penalties on married couples who are working hard to realize the American dream.

I urge all of my colleagues to defeat the marriage penalty, defeat this substitute and support H.R. 4181.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

The previous speaker was very animated on the fact that we ought not to bring back the marriage penalty. Is it not wonderful that 435 people agree on that? That is not a dispute in this debate. All of us want to give relief. All of us want to make it permanent. Some of us believe, however, there is a free lunch and we want to pass it along to our children and grandchildren. To that extent, it will be a free lunch for us but not for them.

Mr. Speaker, the marriage penalty bill that the House Republicans put on the floor today is divorced from the fiscal reality that confronts this Nation. Just think, in 3½ years the Republican Party has turned a projected budget surplus of \$5.6 trillion over 10 years, according to President Bush that is what we had when he spoke to the joint session of Congress, and they have turned it into a deficit of \$4 trillion in less than 4 years. This year alone the Federal Government is expected to run a record deficit of half a trillion dollars. That figure does not even include the \$50- to \$75 billion that virtually everyone agrees will be needed for our war efforts.

So what do our Republican friends propose here today? A tax bill that will cost an estimated \$105 billion over the next decade. Now it is \$200 billion, and then guess what, they take \$100 billion back. That is called a shell game where

I come from. Not one nickel of that 105 net is paid for, not one nickel. That is right, with a fiscal crisis looming House Republicans would drive us deeper into debt because, as the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) said in March, "We don't believe that you should have to pay for tax cuts."

They are for free, supply-side, free lunch. Somebody will pay, and it will be our children and grandchildren. My Republican friends do not but our children and grandchildren will surely do so.

Make no mistake, Democrats strongly support marriage penalty relief because married couples should not have to pay more in taxes than they would if unmarried.

□ 1515

That is fair. We are for that principle. Everybody is for that principle on this floor.

As a result, Members have a choice today. They can vote for the fiscally irresponsible Republican bill, or they can vote for the superior Democratic substitute, every penny of which is paid for and will give marriage relief to all Americans. The Democratic substitute is fiscally responsible, and it ensures the benefits of the bill are not nullified by the alternative minimum tax, that shell game of which I talked.

I know the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is not playing a shell game, but we have this AMT. It is a fancy phrase, but it simply means if an individual is below a certain degree of obligation, they make a certain income, we are going to take more. So what they say is, we are going to give you \$200; but, guess what, we are taking \$100 back. We do not do that.

That is why they talk about 205. But it is paid for, and as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) must admit, it does not add a single nickel to the deficit or the debt. Perhaps when he rises to speak, he will deny that. I hope not, because it is the fact.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for the Democratic substitute, vote for marriage penalty relief, and vote for fiscal responsibility. The failure to pay for tax cuts not only threatens our economic future but also is an immoral abdication of our responsibility to our children and future generations.

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

We are learning a new definition today, "pay for," which means "tax increase." Again, the Democrat substitute proposes a \$207 billion tax increase on individuals and small businesses, those who create jobs all across America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me this time, and I think there are things both sides of the aisle can agree to. Certainly this side agrees to fiscal

responsibility. I hope we can move ahead and have a balanced budget. But there are two ways to get to the balanced budget. We can increase taxes and continue on this splurge of increased spending from the Federal Government and the growth of Federal Government and making promises when we do not know where the money is coming from. We can either raise taxes to accomplish that, or we can slow down on this splurge of spending increases that this Chamber and the Senate and the White House for the last 20 years have proceeded on.

We are now facing that decision. Do we try to reduce spending to accommodate a balanced budget so that we do not pass on to future generations, or do we increase taxes? And let me just suggest to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), with his hand on the microphone, that our taxes on business today are 18 percent higher than our competitors in other nations. So to simply say we want to accommodate government's increased spending by taxing our citizens and our businesses more, like the Democrats did in their alternative budget proposals with increased taxes and increased spending, like the Democrats are doing in this substitute, adding another 200 to add to taxes that will go essentially to married families, we cannot continue to put our businesses at a competitive disadvantage by simply saying we want more money in Washington, therefore we are going to increase taxes.

Let us move ahead with the Republican proposal that has the marriage penalty relief. And I will make this commitment. If we do not stick to our guns on holding the line on spending, like we did in the House budget, then I will simply vote against those bills that increase spending.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I think my time has run.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) if the Speaker will let me.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The time of the gentleman from Michigan has expired.

Mr. HOYER. If my friend will yield, I was wondering who is in charge of this splurge of spending that the gentleman is concerned about?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would ask the gentleman to abide by the rules.

The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) is recognized.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to mention that the last time I looked the majority party is in control of both the House and the Senate and controls any spending bills that come out of this Congress. Of course, they first are sent over to us by the White House, meaning the President as well. So in terms of who controls the spending and who

is splurging, the minority party would love to have control of both the House and White House, but at this stage that is in the hands of the majority party, so the gentleman should take his concerns directly to his leadership of his party.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I can tell the gentleman who I think is in charge of spending and taxing in this administration and in this Congress; it is Harry Houdini. Because if Harry Houdini was a Member of Congress, he could not have come up with a better "now you see it, now you don't" tax gimmick. That is what we are doing today.

My Republican colleagues want to pass what they claim is a \$96 billion tax cut for married couples today, but then the AMT denies \$99 billion in promised marriage penalty relief tomorrow. "Here today, gone tomorrow."

We have just heard the gentleman from Illinois state that 36 million families deserve this tax relief today, but the AMT is raising taxes on 41 million taxpayers by the year 2010. In 2001, we promised taxpayers real relief. At that time 1.8 million were paying the AMT. This year, 3 million of them pay the AMT. By the year 2010, 41 million of them will pay the AMT.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle rush to give the deepest tax cuts to people making over \$1 million, then sit idly by while taxes are skyrocketing for 70 percent of people making between \$75,000 and \$100,000: our cops, our firefighters, our nurses, and our teachers.

The American people do not have to listen to this debate and take a side. They get it. All they have to do is listen to their accountants. I got a call from a constituent in Northport, New York, today. He told me this story. He is newly married. He now has two children. He and his wife both work as educators. They are exactly the kind of family we want to help, but here is the effect of the Houdini tax policy on him. He went to his accountant in April. They figured out his taxes. And just when he thought it was safe to mail in his tax form, presto, the AMT. His deductions for property taxes, disallowed; his deduction for business exemptions and child exemptions, disallowed.

Congratulations. Only in Washington do we turn a tax cut into a \$6,000 tax increase for that middle class teacher.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to our constituents to be honest and accountable. We have to get away from these Houdini policies of making tax cuts appear and disappear. We have to get away from this stealth and secret tax on the middle class. We have to give meaningful tax relief to the American people. That is what the Rangel substitute does, and that is why I will support it today.

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

note that we continue to debate the Democrat proposal to raise taxes by \$207 billion on individuals and small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time to debate this important issue because I really think ending the marriage penalty is one of the most important accomplishments that we have had in the last couple of Congresses.

We should be encouraging marriage, not discouraging marriage. Married couples should not receive an extra gift at their wedding from Uncle Sam with an extra tax bill. All we are trying to do is keep it neutral, neither discourage or encourage, but certainly not penalize them. If we do not pass this amendment, if we do not reject the Rangel amendment, we will be having a tax increase on married couples coming up next year of \$300 or more and even higher in outer years.

Yes, we heard the minority whip say that Democrats support marriage penalty relief. In fact, 72 Democrats did join nearly every Republican in voting for permanent extension. So it is fair to say that essentially all the Republican side and some Democrats do see this. But when it comes to actually coming to the point of saying we support families, we lose too many Members on this important issue.

Now is not the time to have a gigantic tax increase. Our families should not only not be penalized for being married but we should be doing what we can to grow this economy and grow jobs. At a time when we are just beginning to get the economy coming back and growing those jobs, we should not pass a tax increase bill, which this amendment would be, which would devastate small businesses and their job creation. It would be a back-door sneak attack on them. Now is not the time to abandon hard-working Americans and hard-working small businesses that are creating jobs for American families.

The debate really comes down to who should be looked to to come up with solutions for this country. Do we look for government, or do we look for families? We heard a lot of talk on the other side about the deficit of the Federal Government. We have not heard a lot of talk about the budgets of families, which their amendment would increase the cost to them.

We also hear how weak an argument they have against what we are trying to do here by bringing up the AMT. The gentleman from New York said that we needed to be honest and accountable. Well, let us be honest and accountable about the AMT and why increasing numbers of Americans are facing that burden. It is because under Clinton and a Democratic Congress, where we passed AMT without an index, each and every year we bring in more and more hard-working families

in the middle class to do this perverse tax. It comes, if we are to be honest and accountable, from the tax policy that they are now proposing in this Rangel substitute, and it must be rejected.

Look at how far they are searching for excuses to come out against eliminating the marriage penalty. The gentleman from California says that this would certainly stop us from doing the right thing in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, I am not sure what marriage penalty relief has to do with preventing us from doing the right thing in Afghanistan and Iraq. I do not know if it is the confusion about what the right thing in Afghanistan or Iraq should be, but certainly I think our fighting men and women are doing a wonderful thing of extending freedom and keeping us safe here at home.

This bill will do nothing to prevent the full commitment we have and will give our troops for that. But those troops are hoping to come back to an America that values the families that bore them, that values the families that they are creating themselves, and America cannot at this point in time back away from helping American families, from helping the small businesses that create jobs for those families, and I encourage my colleagues to reject the Rangel amendment and vote to keep marriage penalty relief and not allow a tax increase on hard-working American families.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time.

Let us be straight about what is happening here. This is a \$207 billion tax cut for people who make less than \$1 million a year, the kind of people that need the tax cut. This is a tax increase, in order to pay for the bill, a tax increase of \$207 billion for those people who make more than \$1 million a year.

This is very simple math. We are not being irresponsible with this substitute. We all support getting rid of the marriage penalty. We all want to encourage marriage through the Tax Code. We do not want to penalize anybody for getting married. But to sit here and say that this is somehow a tax increase on middle America, on average Americans, is not telling the whole story.

This is a tax cut for people who are married and make less than \$1 million a year. These are the people who are paying increased property tax and who are experiencing tuitions that have gone up by 15 percent, increased sales taxes, and health care costs that have gone up by 15 to 20 percent a year. These are the people we are trying to help here, and the Democrats are in support of that.

But we do not want to go out and borrow money and put it on the next generation. You borrow money, you have to pay interest on it. This is rev-

enue neutral, so that when we have the challenges we need to face down the pike with Afghanistan, with Iraq, making sure our troops have the proper equipment, then we will be able to answer that call.

□ 1530

We are asking millionaires to give back only \$30,000 of their Bush tax cut. They are still going to get \$100,000. They are still going to get \$100,000 back from the Bush tax cut. When are we going to ask the top 1 percent in this country to start making sacrifices? When? Now is the time with this substitute bill to say that we are not going to push it onto the next generation and we are finally, since this country had the greatest tragedy it has ever had in its history, finally we are going to ask the top 1 percent to sacrifice a little bit to help move the whole society along.

Really the only problem that I see right now with this substitute is that you need a job to be able to qualify to get it, because there are no jobs in this country. The previous speaker said the economy is growing. Where? If you have stocks, you may be doing okay. In Ohio, we lost 200,000 jobs, most of them manufacturing, and 2 million jobs nationwide. This is Herbert Hoover's economy.

Let us be responsible. Let us ask the top 1 percent, people making over \$1 million a year, to pay their fair share. Only \$30,000 of the Bush tax cut do they need to give back and they are going to give it back to average families who have seen increases in a variety of other tax structures, with their cities, with their counties, with their school districts, with their mental health levies. Those are the people we want to help.

I urge passage of this substitute. It is the right way to go about it by not pushing it off on our kids.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the Democrat proposal to increase taxes on individuals, families and small business by \$207 billion, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS).

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, there are still Members in this body that do not understand what marriage penalty relief is about. They only understand tax and spending increases, for any reason regardless of whether any particular tax may be unfair or inefficient or damaging to our economy or destructive to our Nation's families and their moral fiber.

Let us take a quick look. Marriage penalty relief is not about how much is paid, but it is about how it is paid. There is absolutely no reason that any married man and woman in this country should pay more in taxes than similar individuals who are not married. A wife and a husband that make minimum wage should not pay a nickel more in tax than two unmarried people making minimum wage. A husband and wife making \$1 million a year should

not pay a nickel more in tax than two unmarried people making \$1 million a year.

Americans of both parties were united behind this concept. Leave it to our liberal opponents to seek a way to destroy national consensus and attempt to convince Americans that inequality is not only acceptable but it is justified as long as it is against someone else and, in this case, married couples. If those who oppose eliminating the marriage penalty want to raise taxes on families, be honest. Come forward with a bill to raise the tax rate on middle and upper income households. We will have that debate and vote. But any proposal must ensure that all taxes paid by Americans are paid equally, instead of once again penalizing good citizens for being married.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to defeat this substitute and support the underlying bill.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Democratic substitute. I believe strongly that we must provide as much permanent marriage penalty relief as possible, which is why I will be voting today for H.R. 4181, the permanent extension of the marriage penalty bill. However, I believe that the Democratic substitute will do an even better job of providing real marriage penalty relief for middle class families.

For increasing numbers of families, April 15 is becoming April Fool's Day thanks to the alternative minimum tax. Unfortunately, more families are finding out that the joke is on them when they realize that they will not receive many of the promised tax cuts. The alternative minimum tax was originally designed to make sure that wealthy taxpayers did not completely avoid paying taxes. However, the AMT was not indexed for inflation nor does it allow many popular deductions, including marriage penalty relief. So it is increasingly impacting middle class families whose incomes have risen over the years, particularly two-parent working families with children.

I am from Long Island where the voice of our business community, the Long Island Association, has declared the AMT to be the number one threat to Long Island's taxpayers. The problem with the Republican bill is that it does not protect marriage penalty relief from the AMT. The AMT hits Long Islanders particularly hard, as State and local income taxes, property taxes and other personal deductions are added back in for the purpose of calculating the AMT. In a sense, Long Island is being double-crossed and double-taxed. In fact, more Long Islanders pay the AMT than taxpayers in any other region of the country.

I find it deeply disingenuous to promise marriage penalty relief to millions of Americans who we know will not reap the benefits of it. When many

families who think they are getting marriage penalty relief instead have to pay the AMT, I believe that they will be outraged that we had the opportunity to act, which we do, but we did not.

The Democratic substitute provides more marriage penalty relief to 13 million families than the Republican bill by ensuring that tax relief from the marriage penalty is not taken away or reduced by the AMT. The Republican bill denies the full marriage penalty tax relief to 13 million families next year, including more than 25 percent of the middle class families making between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to debate the Democrat proposal to increase taxes by \$207 billion on individuals, families and small business, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GERLACH), one of our leaders in the effort to permanently eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. GERLACH. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge opposition to the Rangel substitute here today. It is unbelievable that just as the economy in our Nation is starting to turn around, seeing increasing jobs, lowering the unemployment rate, higher rates of home ownership, that we are going to be asked through this amendment, through this substitute, to raise taxes on our job creators. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, this substitute will hit approximately 200,000 individual returns, 75 percent of those returns having small business income, income that can be used to plow back into those small businesses, plow back into increasing the number of jobs at that small business, plow back into that small business for better equipment, better technology, a larger physical facility to handle the operations of that small business. That would be cut. That would be adversely impacted by this substitute.

The substitute also reverses the effects of the President's 2001 and 2003 tax relief. At a minimum, affected families and small businesses will pay a marginal tax rate of 38.6 percent.

Mr. Speaker, now is not the time to stifle economic growth in this Nation through higher taxes. Now is the time to continue economic growth through lower taxes. I would urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the Rangel substitute.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time.

I say now is the time to get back the money we gave to all those rich folks when we gave them the tax cut because we really need it. We could use it to pay for some of the equipment that the folks in the armed services need right now.

But let me speak more specifically to the legislation that we are here to talk about. I rise in support of the Rangel substitute amendment, which not only makes permanent marriage penalty relief for millions of hardworking families eligible for the earned income tax credit but also provides that relief immediately, not 3 years from now like the Republican bill.

In 2001, the marriage penalty relief that was enacted was phased in over a long period of time. Last year, the economic stimulus legislation that was enacted accelerated the phase-in of the 2001 marriage penalty relief provisions except for the marriage penalty relief in the earned income tax credit. I ask, why not? Why was immediate relief for the most needy neglected and not accelerated like the other marriage penalty provisions?

The earned income tax credit assists lower and middle income earners. In Cleveland, Ohio, more than 80,000 individuals filed for the credit. In the State of Ohio, more than 700,000 individuals took advantage of the credit. Nationwide, about 18 million Americans utilized the credit. These hardworking Americans should not be penalized because they are married and they should be provided relief immediately, not 3 years from now. We should accelerate their relief just like the other marriage penalty provisions. Those eligible for the earned income tax credit are in the most need and we should make sure that they get relief as soon as possible.

An in-depth study on the earned income tax credit was conducted by an Ohio think tank and Ohioans were asked what they would do with the extra money they would receive through the earned income tax credit. They provided the following responses: "I would spend it on the kids and on visits to the doctor. I have health insurance but my youngest has to see a foot specialist and the shoes are not covered by insurance. They cost \$140." As I said, I rise in support of the Rangel substitute and would ask all of my colleagues to consider it the best thing for us to do.

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

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California for yielding me this time.

In 1993 and 1997, we both reduced the deficit and in 1997 balanced the budget by cutting taxes for working families and middle class families who were trying to meet their obligations to their children and their families. We did not make a choice between tax cuts and deficit reduction. We did both effectively, resulting in 22 million more Americans having jobs, half the poverty rate in this country cut, incomes at all levels going up and the ability of families to send their kids to college being achieved and realized.

Today we have two proposals but also two different visions, both providing

tax relief. One, I believe, the Democratic alternative, more equitably, more fairly and more progressively and being paid for, that does not literally in my view provide a head fake to future generations who will be left the obligation to pay for this tax cut.

I note in the Republican proposal that they do finally have in 2008 the earned income tax credit extension. My view is if it is good in 2008, let us do what the Democratic proposal does and bring that tax cut forward to 2005. Because if it is good in 2008 and if it is a good enough tax cut in 2008, let us extend to working families that tax cut in 2005. It always surprises me, they never use the opportunity to be progressive and to be fair.

Second, the notion that there will be 10 million families earning \$75,000 to \$200,000 who will get no tax cut under this proposal. In my view, we can cut taxes for middle class families and reduce the deficit, which will be good for the economy, producing jobs, and good for American families. There is a right way to do it and a wrong way. That is the wrong way. Our Democratic proposal and Democratic agenda has a right way without making choices; that is, to give a tax cut to working families while reducing the deficit.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me first of all thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for his leadership and the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) as well for his leadership and encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to just simply be fair. The Rangel amendment and substitute is simply clear and simply fair. It makes this legislation effective for millions of lower and middle class Americans, families, the working poor, who can also have the benefit as married couples and families under this legislation and particularly as it relates to the earned income tax credit.

□ 1545

Allow me to just share with you a young lady by the name of Nicole Goodwin. Yes, Mr. Speaker, she is an American. She is an Iraq war combat veteran who is homeless with her daughter. Say, for example, that she would get a job, as she is looking from one homeless shelter to another. This legislation would not benefit this working mom, this family, this individual, who may ultimately marry and be part of the working community, but not part of the millionaire community.

It seems that it is important when we talk about tax relief, inasmuch as we have already given to the top 1 percent an enormous tax cut that puts us trillions of dollars in debt, that it is only fair that as we come to the floor of the House with this benefit that is

now being given and will be made permanent by the Rangel substitute, but as well that we be allowed to extend it to millions and millions of working families, to the working poor.

I cannot imagine that we would allow an Iraq war veteran, a combat veteran, to suffer under this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support the Rangel substitute.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate today that this body must be consumed by debate on legislation that has no real hope of passing through the Senate, never mind the fact that it will not help real Americans. This Marriage Penalty bill is being used by Members of this body as distraction from the real issues at hand. Currently, our nation is engaged in a war that does not have an end in sight. In this body alone we still have massive transportation legislation that has not been resolved and we have yet to even approve a complete budget. Yet, we must be present here to debate legislation that is not realistic nor does it serve a true purpose in its current form. Members of this body who support the original legislation of H.R. 4181 seek to deflect attention away from the fact that to average Americans the economy is lagging, jobs are not abundant, and irresponsible tax cuts have hurt not helped them. However, the majority party continues to repeat the mantra that tax cuts for the rich will lead to a real economic recovery. The facts do not bear out their repeated statements. Average Americans are not the ones receiving massive tax cuts; instead they themselves and their children after them will be the ones paying off an ever increasing national debt. The original form of this legislation continues this skewed pattern of benefiting the rich over lower and middle class Americans. This legislation if passed in its original form will leave middle class couples in the cold when it comes to tax relief and furthermore it has no legitimate offsets to pay for its expense. This irresponsible legislation will only grow the deficit and make greater the burden on average Americans.

This is why I am in full support of the Rangel substitute which offers a responsible way to extend relief from the marriage penalty. Under the Rangel substitute, the marriage penalty provisions related to the standard deductions, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) phase-out increase, and 15% bracket would be made permanent, just as in the original legislation of H.R. 4181. However, the Rangel substitute takes the next step towards fiscal responsibility that the original legislation ignores. First, the substitute accelerates the increase for those eligible for EITC, so that they will not have to wait until 2008 to get the full benefit of this legislation. Second, it makes this legislation effective for millions of lower and middle class Americans who are ignored in the original legislation. \$100 billion of promised relief is taken back in the form of the alternative minimum tax in H.R. 4181. Additionally, three million families will only receive a partial benefit from this legislation. Those who only receive a partial benefit will disproportionately be couples with children because the minimum tax does not allow a deduction for dependent deductions. Now I ask, does this sound like legislation that truly benefits American married couples?

Too many average Americans are not seeing a benefit; instead they are being fed a

steady diet of misinformation and irresponsible policies. The Rangel substitute addresses all these loopholes that allow so many Americans to fall through the cracks and not receive real tax relief.

The strongest argument for the Rangel substitute is fiscal responsibility. The Rangel substitute would ensure that this legislation does not increase the national deficit as it would in its original form. The cost of this tax relief will be offset by adjusting the tax rate for married couples making over a million dollars a year. No doubt, this provision will draw the ire of the majority party, no doubt that they will assail us for daring to make adjustments to their tax cuts. But, I ask what other responsible options are we left with? Should we pass this legislation in its original form and just accept soaring deficits? Should we deny this legislation and leave married couples to lose the tax relief that they have earned? These are the meager alternatives left to us if we do not take the fiscally responsible action of adjusting the tax rate for the richest Americans. I can not understand how some in this body can possibly compare America's millionaires to American working class families as if their situation was one in the same. Clearly, that is not true; America's working class families are the ones in need of tax relief. America's millionaires can stand to pass on more tax relief for the sake of fiscal responsibility.

The difference between the original legislation and the Rangel substitute is that the latter is actually effective and furthermore it's responsible. In these trying times for our nation we can not afford anymore misguided policies.

Extending tax relief for married couples is an admirable goal, but creating irresponsible legislation is not.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), a member of the House Republican leadership.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to speak in general of the marriage tax penalty relief bill which the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) has worked so hard for so many years to pass in Congress.

The amendment offered here by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) might have some merits, but I also am aware there are so many people who are opposed to this legislation on the other side of the aisle, that sometimes you wonder if these amendments are not being offered in the clever way to derail the legislation itself. It is probably not the case, with the sponsor and many of the people who are supporting it.

I am absolutely not yielding to my friend, but let me say, as I just said, it is probably not the case. That is what I just said. I said that often many times these amendments are offered in an attempt to derail the legislation. However, when the record is written, I will have a chance to show my friend from New York, whom I respect immensely, that I said that is probably not the intent there. And let me say this to my friend from New York, that I also have said that the gentleman has consistently worked for legislation like

this. So it certainly is very, I guess, expected that the gentleman would use this opportunity. I would use it too, if I were the gentleman in his position.

Having said that, let me say again, I will be happy to yield to the gentleman, and I do know it is not his intent to derail something.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KINGSTON. I would be happy to yield to my friend, the gentleman from New York.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, because I misunderstood him. If his final argument is that my intent is just as honest as that of the underlying sponsor of this legislation, then I apologize to the gentleman for misunderstanding what he was saying.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, let me say this: I think the gentleman has been a great champion of tax relief in many respects, and certainly I have a lot of admiration for him.

My support today is for the marriage tax penalty relief. But I would love to see us pass this legislation in its entirety one time and have our colleagues in the other body finish the work that this House so many times has passed and that we cannot get through.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to go on record saying I do support the efforts of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) on marriage tax penalty. I think it is so very important for middle-class America, and I support it today.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, everyone who has spoken today on both sides of the aisle supports tax relief for married couples. In fact, I know of no one who is going to come here and say to you they are prepared to vote against marriage penalty relief for married couples in this country.

But at a time when we are facing as a result of policies in this government the largest deficit in the Nation's history, some \$521 billion, and at a time when there is a double whammy of having to fight a war in Iraq and Afghanistan with no sense of when we are going to have an opportunity to bring our troops home and at what cost, we have to move on legislation like this in a responsible fashion.

This legislation will cost over \$100 billion. We do not have \$100 billion to pull out of the Federal Treasury's pocket to pay for this bill. That means the deficit of the Nation will increase that much more.

As I mentioned at the inception of this debate, we have a \$7 trillion-plus national debt. I guess you could continue spending, the credit card looks good, but at some point we have to pay. And if we are not going to pay, that means our children will pay.

At a time when we are this year, as a result of the administration's request, underfunding the President's own No Child Left Behind Act for education some \$8 billion to \$10 billion, at a time when we are underfunding the IDEA legislation, which is for special education needs of our kids throughout this country, by more than \$2 billion this year, at a time when we are failing to help 44 million Americans have access to health insurance, at a time when we see men and women every day sacrificing their life in places like Afghanistan and Iraq for us, here we are talking about giving \$100 billion in tax cuts, when we are not willing to pay for them.

The Democrat substitute simply says, let us give that tax relief, but let us pay for it. We do so by taking the top one-fifth of 1 percent of the richest Americans in this country, one-fifth of 1 percent, and saying to them, you are going to get about \$136,000 in tax cuts from the 2001 and 2003 tax bills that were passed. Take \$100,000 instead of \$136,000. That will help us take care of the millions of families, tens of millions of families that will otherwise face this marriage tax penalty.

Sacrifice a little bit the way the young men or women in Afghanistan are doing today or Iraq are doing today, or the working family making \$40,000 or \$50,000 is doing today. You will still get \$100,000. That is more in relative terms and in absolute terms in the tax cut than any other income group in America.

One-fifth of 1 percent of the richest families in America would help cover the cost. That way we do not add another \$100 billion to the national debt. Cannot do that? I guess that is considered responsible.

Some of us believe we owe it to the people of this country to spend, but spend responsibly; to enact legislation, but do it responsibly. That is what I think the Democratic substitute does.

It simply says, let us not try to hoodwink you, let us not do tax policy in the back room with a big black monster back there you cannot see. Let us do it so people can understand transparently, clearly. Big print, not fine print, is what we are trying to say.

Let us give marriage tax relief to all families, but do it responsibly without adding to the debt that will have to be paid by the children of the people that will receive some of that relief. Do not take it from Peter to give it to Paul. Let us do it the right way.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the Democratic substitute.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 1¼ minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to my friend from New York's substitute proposal that he is offering, which, again, is a \$207 billion tax increase on individuals, on families, and on small business.

The issue of the AMT has been raised today, and that is another issue which

concerns all of us. But I would note that in 1993 when President Clinton called for a tax increase, the biggest tax increase in the history of our Nation, Democrats controlled the Congress, and at that time they increased taxes, increased the rates; but they failed to index it for inflation. That has created the problem that we are facing when it comes to the AMT.

In the next few weeks, this House will be taking up legislation, broad AMT reforms, which will help prevent 11 million of those families that my good friend from New York has identified as needing help. We will be voting on that sometime, very, very soon. But today we are talking about the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I would note in directing my attention directly to the Rangel substitute that it does several things. It reverses President Bush's tax relief, and that means higher taxes, as I said earlier; it creates new taxes on families, individuals, and small businesses; and it makes the alternative minimum tax even more complicated.

Again, under my good friend from New York's proposal, you would have to essentially figure out your taxes three times before you could determine what your tax would be under this proposal. The Tax Code would become much more complicated and taxes would go up \$207 billion.

So I urge my colleagues to vote in opposition to the Rangel substitute. The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) is a good friend of mine. We work together on a lot of things. But I disagree with him on the substitute that he has offered.

But let us talk about what the real issue is before the House today, and that is, do we want to eliminate the marriage tax penalty permanently? If we fail to do anything, the marriage tax penalty will come back for millions of American families.

I remember all the years we have talked about eliminating the marriage tax penalty. I have a couple that I used as an example, a young couple who I had met when they just got married, Shad and Michelle Hallihan.

When we were working early on to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, twice we passed legislation to eliminate and wipe out the marriage tax penalty, and unfortunately it fell victim to President Clinton's vetoes. He wanted to spend the money, rather than give it back to married couples; so he vetoed that bill.

In the case of Shad and Michelle, what really was the problem was they both work, they are both school teachers, so they have two incomes. Under the Tax Code in the old days, before President Bush's tax cut was put in place, they paid higher taxes. In fact, the average married couple at the time we introduced the original legislation to eliminate the marriage tax penalty paid about \$1,400.

Well, after our legislation to eliminate the marriage tax penalty was ve-

toed twice by President Clinton, time marched on and the Hallihans had a son. In fact, that little boy is about ready to start grade school now. Over that little boy's lifetime, we have been working to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

If you think about it, Will County, Illinois, where the Hallihans live, \$1,400 for them is tuition at Joliet Junior Community College, several months of daycare at a local community college. So the Hallihans are a good example of a married couple with a young child who suffer the marriage tax penalty.

Well, this past year, with the help of President Bush, President Bush in 2001, President Bush in 2003, we were successful in enacting into law legislation that essentially wiped out the marriage tax penalty for 36 million married working couples.

Another example of a couple from the district I represent, Jose and Magdalena Castillo, Joliet, they are construction workers, they work in the construction field, they have two children, Carolina and Eduardo, and they work hard. But they suffered the marriage tax penalty too, and thanks to the legislation that the President signed into law, after it was twice vetoed by President Clinton, the Castillos have an extra \$1,125 when their marriage tax penalty was eliminated.

Of course, they have two children. That \$1,125 is money they could set aside in an education savings account, in a health savings account, to help with health care or college tuition needs. It is money they can use to put a down payment on a car. Or they could also put it in their individual retirement accounts for their later years some day when the kids are out of school, out of college, and they are empty-nesters and are ready to retire.

But the bottom line is that Shad and Michelle Hallihan and Jose and Magdalena Castillo represent the 36 million married working couples who will suffer higher taxes, unless we make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty.

We do have two alternatives here. My good friend from New York has offered one in which the code word "pay for" is used. Just to explain congressional terms, pay for means tax increase. My friend's proposal has a \$207 billion tax increase on families and individuals and small businesses, those who create jobs in America.

The Republican proposal, which I hope has bipartisan support, does not include a tax increase on families or small business. What we do is provide a simple extension of the existing marriage tax penalty relief that if we fail to pass into law would result in a tax increase on married couples, like Jose and Magdalena Castillo and Shad and Michelle Hallihan.

If we fail to extend this marriage tax relief, couples such as the Castillos would see a \$300 marriage tax penalty reimposed, a portion of that previous penalty they had. If we fail to make it

permanent, 35 million couples like the Castillos would see a tax increase of more than \$700 starting in 2011.

□ 1600

Overall, over the next decade, if we fail to extend and make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty, married couples will pay nearly \$105 billion in higher taxes.

This is what this is all about. It is a simple choice today. I urge my colleagues to do the right thing, and the right thing is to oppose a \$207 billion tax increase on families and individuals and small business by voting “no” on the substitute of my good friend from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and voting “yes” on H.R. 4181, legislation that makes permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty.

We do it in three ways. We extend the doubling of the standard deduction so that married couples can have a standard deduction twice that of singles that helps those who do not itemize. We also make permanent the widening of the 15 percent tax bracket so middle class married couples who are both in the work force make twice as much when they file jointly and stay in the 15 percent tax bracket as a single, and we also help the working poor, those who benefit from the earned income credit, a program that was created by Ronald Reagan to help the working poor make ends meet.

My good colleague from Texas said that somehow this proposal would not help this returning Iraqi war veteran and, with all due respect, she is wrong because under our legislation we make permanent the earned income credit which my friend says that she qualifies for. So she benefits as well.

The bottom line is low income and middle class married couples benefit in a significant way when we make permanent the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. Again, my good friend is offering a tax increase of \$207 billion. It is a bad idea at this time. We need to keep the economy moving forward. Let us help families by permanently eliminating the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an aye vote, an aye vote on H.R. 4181, and a no vote on the Rangel substitute.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Pursuant to House Resolution 607, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the further amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the

point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 189, nays 226, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 136]

YEAS—189

Abercrombie	Grijalva	Napolitano
Ackerman	Gutierrez	Neal (MA)
Allen	Harman	Oberstar
Andrews	Hill	Obey
Baca	Hinchev	Olver
Baird	Hinojosa	Ortiz
Baldwin	Hoefel	Owens
Ballance	Holden	Pallone
Becerra	Holt	Pascrell
Bell	Honda	Pastor
Berkley	Hooley (OR)	Payne
Berman	Hoyer	Pelosi
Berry	Inslee	Pomeroy
Bishop (GA)	Israel	Price (NC)
Bishop (NY)	Jackson (IL)	Rahall
Blumenauer	Jackson-Lee	Rangel
Boswell	(TX)	Reyes
Boucher	Jefferson	Rodriguez
Boyd	John	Ross
Brady (PA)	Johnson, E. B.	Roybal-Allard
Brown (OH)	Jones (OH)	Ruppersberger
Brown, Corrine	Kanjorski	Rush
Capps	Kaptur	Ryan (OH)
Capuano	Kennedy (RI)	Sabo
Cardoza	Kildee	Sánchez, Linda
Carson (IN)	Kind	T.
Case	Klecicka	Sanchez, Loretta
Clay	Kucinich	Sanders
Clyburn	Lampson	Schakowsky
Conyers	Langevin	Schiff
Cooper	Lantos	Scott (GA)
Costello	Larsen (WA)	Scott (VA)
Crowley	Larson (CT)	Serrano
Cummings	Lee	Sherman
Davis (AL)	Levin	Skelton
Davis (CA)	Lewis (GA)	Slaughter
Davis (FL)	Lipinski	Smith (WA)
Davis (IL)	Lofgren	Snyder
Davis (TN)	Lowe	Solis
DeFazio	Lucas (KY)	Spratt
DeGette	Lynch	Stark
Delahunt	Majette	Stenholm
DeLauro	Maloney	Strickland
Deutsch	Markey	Stupak
Dicks	Matsui	Tanner
Dingell	McCarthy (MO)	Tauscher
Doggett	McCarthy (NY)	Taylor (MS)
Dooley (CA)	McCollum	Thompson (MS)
Doyle	McDermott	Tierney
Edwards	McGovern	Towns
Emanuel	McIntyre	Turner (TX)
Engel	McNulty	Udall (CO)
Eshoo	Meehan	Udall (NM)
Etheridge	Meek (FL)	Van Hollen
Evans	Meeks (NY)	Velázquez
Farr	Menendez	Visclosky
Fattah	Michaud	Watson
Filner	Millender-	Watt
Ford	McDonald	Waxman
Frank (MA)	Miller (NC)	Weiner
Frost	Miller, George	Wilson (NM)
Gonzalez	Moore	Woolsey
Gordon	Moran (VA)	Wu
Green (TX)	Nadler	Wynn

NAYS—226

Aderholt	Boehner	Carson (OK)
Akin	Bono	Carter
Alexander	Boozman	Castle
Bachus	Bradley (NH)	Chabot
Baker	Brady (TX)	Chandler
Ballenger	Brown (SC)	Chocola
Barrett (SC)	Brown-Waite,	Coble
Bartlett (MD)	Ginny	Cole
Barton (TX)	Burgess	Collins
Bass	Burns	Cox
Beauprez	Burr	Cramer
Bereuter	Burton (IN)	Crane
Biggart	Buyer	Crenshaw
Bilirakis	Calvert	Cubin
Bishop (UT)	Camp	Culberson
Blackburn	Cannon	Cunningham
Blunt	Cantor	Davis, Jo Ann
Boehlert	Capito	Davis, Tom

Deal (GA)	Keller	Portman
DeLay	Kelly	Pryce (OH)
Diaz-Balart, L.	Kennedy (MN)	Putnam
Diaz-Balart, M.	King (IA)	Quinn
Doolittle	King (NY)	Radanovich
Dreier	Kingston	Ramstad
Duncan	Kirk	Regula
Dunn	Kline	Rehberg
Ehlers	Knollenberg	Renzi
Emerson	Kolbe	Reynolds
English	LaHood	Rogers (AL)
Everett	Latham	Rogers (KY)
Feeney	LaTourette	Rogers (MI)
Ferguson	Leach	Ros-Lehtinen
Flake	Lewis (CA)	Royce
Foley	Lewis (KY)	Ryan (WI)
Forbes	Linder	Sandlin
Fossella	LoBiondo	Saxton
Franks (AZ)	Lucas (OK)	Schrock
Frelinghuysen	Manzullo	Sensenbrenner
Gallegly	Marshall	Sessions
Garrett (NJ)	Matheson	Shadegg
Gerlach	McCotter	Shaw
Gibbons	McCreary	Shays
Gilchrest	McHugh	Sherwood
Gillmor	McInnis	Shimkus
Gingrey	McKeon	Shuster
Goode	Mica	Simmons
Goodlatte	Miller (FL)	Simpson
Goss	Miller (MI)	Smith (MI)
Graves	Miller, Gary	Smith (TX)
Green (WI)	Mollohan	Souder
Greenwood	Moran (KS)	Stearns
Gutknecht	Murphy	Sullivan
Hall	Murtha	Sweeney
Harris	Musgrave	Tancred
Hart	Myrick	Taylor (NC)
Hastings (WA)	Nethercutt	Terry
Hayes	Neugebauer	Thomas
Hayworth	Ney	Thornberry
Hefley	Northup	Tiahrt
Hensarling	Norwood	Tiberi
Herger	Nunes	Turner (OH)
Hobson	Osborne	Turner (OH)
Hoekstra	Ose	Upton
Hostettler	Otter	Vitter
Houghton	Oxley	Walden (OR)
Hulshof	Paul	Walsh
Hunter	Pearce	Wamp
Hyde	Pence	Weldon (FL)
Isakson	Peterson (MN)	Weldon (PA)
Issa	Peterson (PA)	Weller
Istook	Petri	Whitfield
Jenkins	Pickering	Wicker
Johnson (CT)	Pitts	Wilson (SC)
Johnson (IL)	Platts	Wolf
Johnson, Sam	Pombo	Young (AK)
Jones (NC)	Porter	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—18

Bonilla	Hastings (FL)	Smith (NJ)
Bonner	Kilpatrick	Tauzin
Cardin	Nussle	Thompson (CA)
DeMint	Rohrabacher	Toomey
Gephardt	Rothman	Waters
Granger	Ryun (KS)	Wexler

□ 1627

Messrs. GREENWOOD, RENZI, GRAVES and YOUNG of Alaska, changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the amendment in the nature of a substitute was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, on roll-call No. 136 I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted “no.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

(Mr. LEWIS of California asked and was given permission to speak out of order.)

RECOGNIZING THE PASSING OF FORMER COLLEAGUE ALPHONZO BELL, JR. AND CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF THE ROHRBACHER TRIPLETS

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the attention of the House by way of the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) and I joining together to make an announcement regarding our colleagues.

I get the side of it that is less than totally positive, while my colleague will take the other side.

I am here to announce to the House, or bring to their attention, the passing of former colleague Alphonzo Bell, Jr., who this last Sunday passed away at the age of 89.

Congressman Bell was known while he was in the House by Members of the House as a guy who covered the whole gamut. Some called him a liberal, some called him a moderate, some called him a conservative. He reflects the mix that we have here today. A fabulous Member of the House who passed away at a wonderful, ripe age.

Mr. Speaker, let me yield to my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, at the same time, our congressional family is renewed. I am pleased to announce that we have new family members to bring to your attention. The gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is thrilled to announce and, of course, his wife, Rhonda, is pleased to announce, the arrival last night of a baby girl, Annika Brigit Rohrabacher; and a baby boy, Christian August Rohrabacher; and a baby girl, Tristen Francis Rohrabacher. All three of the babies are doing well. They have a healthy birth weight and they are expected to go home soon.

I am told that after they had their Apgar tests they were instantly communicating with each other, these three, signaling each other trying to figure a way out of the nursery to head to the beach because they understand the Rohrabacher family motto is fighting for freedom and having fun, and they are already into it.

The Rohrabacher family is very much proud of this, as we should be. Congratulations to this newest congressional family of five.

□ 1630

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. STENHOLM

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. STENHOLM. I am, Mr. Speaker, in its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. STENHOLM moves to recommit the bill H.R. 4181 to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 4 TAX REDUCTIONS CONTINGENT ON AVAILABLE DEBT LIMIT.

No provision of this Act shall take effect unless the Secretary of the Treasury certifies that, upon enactment, the public debt limit set forth in subsection (b) of section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, is sufficient to allow for the increased borrowing required as a result of this Act over the next 10 years.

Mr. STENHOLM (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to recommit be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is recognized for 5 minutes on his motion to recommit.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2½ minutes.

Mr. Speaker, it is rather ironic but this is a very straightforward motion. It simply says to this body that if Members want to take credit for cutting taxes we need to take the responsibility for the increased debt as well. Or I would put it in light of the last announcement, the three new little Rohrabachers I am concerned about today and I do not want us to add \$95 billion additional debt to the three new little Rohrabachers that we just applauded.

This debate is not about whether or not we should end the marriage tax penalty. Every Member of this body supports marriage penalty relief. The debate is whether we should do so with borrowed money, adding more debt on top of our \$7.1 trillion national debt, or paying as we go.

PAYGO worked in the nineties, 1990 and 1997. I believe it will work today if we can just start enforcing it. I do not believe we should pay for tax cuts by borrowing money against our children's future. That is why I supported the Rangel substitute, which would provide for a full and permanent elimination of the marriage penalty without increasing the deficit. Congress should be required to sit down and figure out how to make things fit within a budget just like families across the country do every day. Unfortunately, the leadership of this House seems to have forgotten that common sense principle.

Since the Republican leadership refuses to pay for tax cuts by cutting spending or replacing the revenues, every dime of this bill will be added to the debt we leave for our children and grandchildren. I believe that at a time when our national debt is approaching \$8 trillion and our Nation faces tremendous expenses for our troops overseas it is irresponsible to pass legislation that would put our Nation even deeper in debt. But if my Republican colleagues believe that deficits do not matter, they should have no problem borrowing the money openly and honestly to pay for it.

I hope that all of the Members who have come to the floor today to brag about this bill will come to the floor with the same enthusiasm when it comes time to increase the national debt limit. But instead of taking the responsibility for the consequences of their economic policies, the Republican leadership is going to great lengths to avoid even having a discussion of the debt limit.

The budget resolution that this body may consider next week would increase the national debt to over \$8 trillion. All this motion does is ask the House to acknowledge that every dime of tax cuts would be added to our national debt. Perhaps if we take responsibility for the impact that our votes have on the national debt we will think twice before we vote to place more debt on our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER).

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, as bad as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) talked about the gigantic size of the debt, that is not the worst part of it. A tax cut today with borrowed money is a tax increase tomorrow in the form of interest on the debt. One cannot have it both ways.

If that is not bad enough, that is still not the worst of it. The worst of it is this: This country ran up a \$370-plus billion deficit last year. You know who financed it? Seventy percent of it was financed by foreign interests. Beijing, the Central Bank of China, has increased their holdings of American paper 105 percent since 2001. Now the Asians own almost \$1 trillion worth of our paper. Every dime you borrow, 70 percent of it is being bought by Saudi Arabia, OPEC, Caribbean nations. I have got the list of people we are in hock to all around the world.

Sooner or later, I am telling you, sooner or later, you keep on doing this and this bill, nobody disagrees with the substance of it, you just will not pay for it. Sooner or later when they do not see the world as we see it, we are going to be in deep trouble. They will have control of the financial markets. They will have control of Wall Street because all they will have to do is call the amount of paper that they hold and we are in trouble.

I would say this bill is just a symptom of a far greater, more serious problem that is every bit as important to this country as any national security matter that I know of.

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

Mr. Speaker, just in conclusion, I am a strong believer in pay-as-you-go legislation. It worked in 1990 when, in a bipartisan way, we passed it in this House. It worked in 1997 when, in a bipartisan way, you could not have done it without Democratic votes. I wished we were doing that. But since we are not going to even allow us to pay for the tax cut that is on the table today, we are going to brag about all the

things about it, it seems the least we can do is step up and acknowledge we are going to borrow it and say to the American people we are going to borrow \$95 billion on our children's and grandchildren's future. That is all this amendment does.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. Speaker, if this were a debate on the budget and the decision before the House was to bind every spending measure and every tax measure to a PAYGO rule, the debate might be more appropriate. But to assign to one particular tax cut, and only one, a rule that is not applied to any other decision in this House, whether spending or tax cuts, seems to me to point out that somebody does not like making sure that married people pay no more tax than any other two taxpayers.

It took us a long time to reach this point. It seems to me the gentleman's points will be well taken during a debate on the budget. There are a lot of people anxious to find out whether or not they are going to be able to continue the current marriage tax structure that we have.

The gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) and Rhonda Rohrabacher have diapers to change. Let us not leave them in suspense.

Vote no on the motion to recommit and yes on the underlying bill.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for an electronic vote on the question of passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 199, nays 220, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 137]

YEAS—199

Abercrombie	Berman	Capuano
Ackerman	Berry	Cardoza
Alexander	Bishop (GA)	Carson (IN)
Allen	Bishop (NY)	Carson (OK)
Andrews	Blumenauer	Case
Baca	Boswell	Chandler
Baird	Boucher	Clay
Baldwin	Boyd	Clyburn
Ballance	Brady (PA)	Conyers
Becerra	Brown (OH)	Cooper
Bell	Brown, Corrine	Costello
Berkley	Capps	Cramer

Crowley	Kennedy (RI)	Pelosi
Cummings	Kildee	Peterson (MN)
Davis (AL)	Kind	Pomeroy
Davis (CA)	Kleczka	Price (NC)
Davis (FL)	Kucinich	Rahall
Davis (IL)	Lampson	Rangel
Davis (TN)	Langevin	Reyes
DeFazio	Lantos	Rodriguez
DeGette	Larsen (WA)	Ross
Delahunt	Larson (CT)	Roybal-Allard
DeLauro	Lee	Ruppersberger
Deutsch	Levin	Rush
Dicks	Lewis (GA)	Ryan (OH)
Dingell	Lipinski	Sabo
Doggett	Lofgren	Sánchez, Linda
Dooley (CA)	Lowey	T.
Doyle	Lucas (KY)	Sanchez, Loretta
Edwards	Lynch	Sanders
Emanuel	Majette	Sandlin
Engel	Maloney	Schakowsky
Eshoo	Markey	Schiff
Etheridge	Marshall	Scott (GA)
Evans	Matheson	Scott (VA)
Farr	Matsui	Serrano
Fattah	McCarthy (MO)	Sherman
Filner	McCarthy (NY)	Skelton
Ford	McCollum	Slaughter
Frank (MA)	McDermott	Smith (WA)
Frost	McGovern	Snyder
Gephardt	McIntyre	Solis
Gonzalez	McNulty	Spratt
Gordon	Meehan	Stark
Green (TX)	MEEK (FL)	Stenholm
Grijalva	Meeks (NY)	Strickland
Gutierrez	Menendez	Stupak
Harman	Michaud	Tanner
Hill	Millender-	Tauscher
Hinchev	McDonald	Taylor (MS)
Hinojosa	Miller (NC)	Thompson (MS)
Hoeffel	Miller, George	Tierney
Holden	Mollohan	Towns
Holt	Moore	Turner (TX)
Honda	Moran (VA)	Udall (CO)
Hooley (OR)	Murtha	Udall (NM)
Hoyer	Nadler	Van Hollen
Inslee	Napolitano	Velázquez
Israel	Neal (MA)	Visclosky
Jackson (IL)	Oberstar	Watson
Jackson-Lee	Obey	Watt
(TX)	Olver	Weiner
Jefferson	Ortiz	Woolsey
John	Owens	Wu
Johnson, E. B.	Pallone	Wynn
Jones (OH)	Pascrell	
Kanjorski	Pastor	
Kaptur	Payne	

NAYS—220

Aderholt	Cole	Graves
Akin	Collins	Green (WI)
Bachus	Cox	Greenwood
Baker	Crane	Gutknecht
Ballenger	Crenshaw	Hall
Barrett (SC)	Cubin	Harris
Bartlett (MD)	Culberson	Hart
Barton (TX)	Cunningham	Hastings (WA)
Bass	Davis, Jo Ann	Hayes
Beauprez	Davis, Tom	Hayworth
Bereuter	Deal (GA)	Hefley
Biggart	DeLay	Hensarling
Bilirakis	Diaz-Balart, L.	Henger
Bishop (UT)	Diaz-Balart, M.	Hobson
Blackburn	Doolittle	Hoekstra
Blunt	Dreier	Hostettler
Boehlert	Duncan	Houghton
Boehner	Dunn	Hulshof
Bonilla	Ehlers	Hunter
Bono	Emerson	Hyde
Boozman	English	Isakson
Bradley (NH)	Everett	Issa
Brady (TX)	Feeney	Istook
Brown (SC)	Ferguson	Jenkins
Brown-Waite,	Flake	Johnson (CT)
Ginny	Foley	Johnson (IL)
Burgess	Forbes	Johnson, Sam
Burns	Fossella	Jones (NC)
Burr	Franks (AZ)	Keller
Burton (IN)	Frelinghuysen	Kelly
	Gallely	Kennedy (MN)
	Garrett (NJ)	King (IA)
	Gerlach	King (NY)
	Gibbons	Kingston
	Gilchrest	Kirk
	Gillmor	Kline
	Gingrey	Knollenberg
	Goode	Kolbe
	Goodlatte	LaHood
	Goss	Latham
	Granger	LaTourette

Leach	Pence	Shimkus
Lewis (CA)	Peterson (PA)	Shuster
Lewis (KY)	Petri	Simmons
Linder	Pickering	Simpson
LoBiondo	Pitts	Smith (MI)
Lucas (OK)	Platts	Smith (TX)
Manzullo	Pombo	Souder
McCotter	Porter	Stearns
McCrery	Portman	Sullivan
McHugh	Pryce (OH)	Sweeney
McInnis	Putnam	Taylor (NC)
McKeon	Quinn	Terry
Mica	Radanovich	Thomas
Miller (FL)	Ramstad	Thornberry
Miller (MI)	Regula	Tiahrt
Miller, Gary	Rehberg	Tiberi
Moran (KS)	Renzi	Turner (OH)
Murphy	Reynolds	Upton
Musgrave	Rogers (AL)	Vitter
Myrick	Rogers (KY)	Walden (OR)
Nethercutt	Rogers (MI)	Walsh
Neugebauer	Ros-Lehtinen	Wamp
Ney	Royce	Weldon (FL)
Northup	Ryan (WI)	Weldon (PA)
Norwood	Ryun (KS)	Weller
Nunes	Saxton	Whitfield
Nussle	Schrock	Wicker
Osborne	Sensenbrenner	Sessions
Ose	Sessions	Wilson (NM)
Otter	Shadegg	Wilson (SC)
Oxley	Shaw	Wolf
Paul	Shays	Young (AK)
Pearce	Sherwood	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—14

Bonner	Rohrabacher	Thompson (CA)
Cardin	Rothman	Toomey
DeMint	Smith (NJ)	Waters
Hastings (FL)	Tancredo	Wexler
Kilpatrick	Tauzin	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes to vote.

□ 1659

Mr. QUINN changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 323, noes 95, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 138]

AYES—323

Ackerman	Bishop (GA)	Burr
Aderholt	Bishop (NY)	Burton (IN)
Akin	Bishop (UT)	Buyer
Alexander	Blackburn	Calvert
Allen	Blunt	Camp
Baca	Boehlert	Cannon
Bachus	Boehner	Cantor
Baird	Bonilla	Capito
Baker	Bono	Cardoza
Baldwin	Boozman	Carson (OK)
Ballance	Boswell	Carter
Ballenger	Boucher	Case
Barrett (SC)	Boyd	Castle
Bartlett (MD)	Bradley (NH)	Chabot
Barton (TX)	Brady (TX)	Chandler
Bass	Brown (OH)	Chocola
Beauprez	Brown (SC)	Clay
Bell	Brown, Corrine	Clyburn
Bereuter	Brown-Waite,	Coble
Berkley	Ginny	Cole
Biggart	Burgess	Collins
Bilirakis	Burns	Costello

Cox	Jenkins	Pombo
Cramer	John	Pomeroy
Crane	Johnson (CT)	Porter
Crenshaw	Johnson (IL)	Portman
Cubin	Johnson, E. B.	Price (NC)
Culberson	Johnson, Sam	Pryce (OH)
Cunningham	Jones (NC)	Putnam
Davis (AL)	Kaptur	Quinn
Davis (CA)	Keller	Radanovich
Davis (FL)	Kelly	Rahall
Davis (TN)	Kennedy (MN)	Ramstad
Davis, Jo Ann	Kennedy (RI)	Regula
Davis, Tom	Kildee	Rehberg
Deal (GA)	Kind	Renzi
DeFazio	King (IA)	Reyes
DeLay	King (NY)	Reynolds
Deutsch	Kingston	Rodriguez
Diaz-Balart, L.	Kirk	Rogers (AL)
Diaz-Balart, M.	Kleczka	Rogers (KY)
Dooley (CA)	Kline	Rogers (MI)
Doolittle	Knollenberg	Ros-Lehtinen
Dreier	Kolbe	Ross
Duncan	LaHood	Royce
Dunn	Lampson	Ruppersberger
Edwards	Langevin	Ryan (OH)
Ehlers	Larson (CT)	Ryan (WI)
Emerson	Latham	Ryan (KS)
Engel	LaTourette	Sanchez, Loretta
English	Leach	Sanders
Eshoo	Lewis (CA)	Sandlin
Etheridge	Lewis (KY)	Saxton
Everett	Linder	Schiff
Feeny	Lipinski	Schrock
Ferguson	LoBiondo	Scott (GA)
Filner	Lofgren	Sensenbrenner
Flake	Lowey	Sessions
Foley	Lucas (KY)	Shadegg
Forbes	Lucas (OK)	Shaw
Ford	Lynch	Shays
Fossella	Maloney	Sherman
Franks (AZ)	Manzullo	Sherwood
Frelinghuysen	Marshall	Shimkus
Frost	Matheson	Shuster
Gallegly	Matsui	Simmons
Garrett (NJ)	McCarthy (NY)	Simpson
Gephardt	McCotter	Skelton
Gerlach	McCrery	Smith (MI)
Gibbons	McHugh	Smith (TX)
Gilchrest	McInnis	Snyder
Gillmor	McIntyre	Souder
Gingrey	McKeon	Spratt
Gonzalez	Meek (FL)	Stearns
Goode	Meeks (NY)	Strickland
Goodlatte	Mica	Stupak
Gordon	Michaud	Sullivan
Goss	Millender-	Sweeney
Granger	McDonald	Tancredo
Graves	Miller (FL)	Tauscher
Green (WI)	Miller (MI)	Taylor (NC)
Greenwood	Miller (NC)	Terry
Gutknecht	Miller, Gary	Thomas
Hall	Moore	Thompson (MS)
Harman	Moran (KS)	Thornberry
Harris	Moran (VA)	Tiahrt
Hart	Murphy	Tiberi
Hastings (WA)	Musgrave	Turner (OH)
Hayes	Myrick	Udall (CO)
Hayworth	Nethercutt	Upton
Hefley	Neugebauer	Ney
Hensarling	Ney	Van Hollen
Herger	Northup	Vitter
Hinojosa	Norwood	Walder
Hobson	Nunes	Walsh
Hoefel	Nussle	Wamp
Hoekstra	Osborne	Weiner
Holden	Ose	Weldon (PA)
Holt	Otter	Weller
Hooley (OR)	Oxley	Whitfield
Hostettler	Paul	Wicker
Houghton	Pearce	Wilson (NM)
Hulshof	Pence	Wilson (SC)
Hunter	Peterson (MN)	Wolf
Hyde	Peterson (PA)	Wu
Isakson	Pickering	Wynn
Israel	Pitts	Young (AK)
Issa	Platts	Young (FL)
Istook		

NOES—95

Abercrombie	Conyers	Doggett
Andrews	Cooper	Doyle
Becerra	Crowley	Emanuel
Berman	Cummings	Evans
Berry	Davis (IL)	Farr
Blumenauer	DeGette	Fattah
Brady (PA)	Delahunt	Frank (MA)
Capps	DeLauro	Green (TX)
Capuano	Dicks	Grijalva
Carson (IN)	Dingell	Hill

Hinchey	Meehan	Sánchez, Linda
Honda	Menendez	T.
Hoyer	Miller, George	Schakowsky
Inslee	Mollohan	Scott (VA)
Jackson (IL)	Murtha	Serrano
Jackson-Lee	Nadler	Slaughter
(TX)	Napolitano	Smith (WA)
Jefferson	Neal (MA)	Solis
Jones (OH)	Oberstar	Stark
Kanjorski	Obey	Stenholm
Kucinich	Olver	Tanner
Lantos	Ortiz	Taylor (MS)
Larsen (WA)	Owens	Tierney
Lee	Pallone	Towns
Levin	Pascrell	Turner (TX)
Lewis (GA)	Pastor	Udall (NM)
Majette	Payne	Velázquez
Markey	Pelosi	Visclosky
McCarthy (MO)	Rangel	Watson
McCollum	Roybal-Allard	Watt
McDermott	Rush	Waxman
McGovern	Sabo	Woolsey
McNulty		

NOT VOTING—15

Bonner	Kilpatrick	Thompson (CA)
Cardin	Rohrabacher	Toomey
DeMint	Rothman	Waters
Gotierrez	Smith (NJ)	Weldon (FL)
Hastings (FL)	Tauzin	Wexler

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1708

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the marriage penalty relief provided under the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, due to a family emergency I was not present to vote on rollcall votes 136, 137, and 138, which were held today on H.R. 4181.

Had I been present, I would have voted: "Yes" on the Rangel Substitute (rollcall vote 136); "yes" on the Motion to Recommit (rollcall vote 137); "no" on Final Passage (rollcall vote 138).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, personal business prevents me from being present for legislative business scheduled for today, Wednesday, April 28, 2004. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on H.R. 4219, legislation extending authorization of the surface transportation bill (rollcall No. 134); "aye" on S. 1904, to redesignate a courthouse located in Miami, FL, as the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. U.S. Courthouse (rollcall No. 135); "aye" on the Rangel Amendment to H.R. 4181 (rollcall No. 136); "aye" on the motion to recommit the bill, H.R. 4181 (rollcall No. 137); and "no" on the question of final passage of H.R. 4181 (rollcall No. 138).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes 134, 135, 136, 137, and 138. Had I been present, I would have voted

"yea" on rollcall votes 134, 135, and 138. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 136 and 137.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of the bill just passed, H.R. 4181.

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

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I take this time for the purposes of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the following week.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished whip from Maryland for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make all the Members aware that the House has completed voting for the day and the week.

Regarding next week's schedule, the House will convene on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to the Members' offices by the end of the week. Any votes called on these measures will be rolled until 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

On Wednesday and Thursday the House will convene at 10 a.m. We plan to consider H.R. 4227, the Middle Class Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act, which would increase the amount of income exempt from the individual AMT, thereby ensuring that hundreds of thousands of middle class taxpayers are not hit with a hidden tax increase next year.

Finally, I would like to remind all Members that we do not plan to have any votes next Friday, May 7.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I will be happy to answer any questions he may have.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader.

Mr. Leader, the transportation reauthorization, on a bipartisan basis today, as you know, we extended for 2 months. The surface transportation bill that would have been reauthorized last September was the final phase-out date, but we have extended that a number of times since then.

It is my understanding that a meeting at the White House is scheduled tomorrow, to which no Democrat Member has been invited, to decide the