

the past. He has been instrumental in promoting the Volga-German heritage of Ellis County, Kansas; and he has authored a history of the Volga-German people and their immigration to Kansas, as well as a pageant play marking the centennial anniversary of these events.

When he is not volunteering his time and talents, Norbert is a successful attorney and a partner in the law firm of Dreiling, Bieker and Hoffman. Despite his many activities, his family comes first. Norbert is a devoted husband to his wife Jeannie, and a proud father of four children: January, Mark, Curtis, and Kathy.

Like his Volga-German ancestors who crossed the Kansas prairie many years ago, Norbert's hard work and strong values have made his community and our State a better place. I want tonight to thank Norbert for his many accomplishments, for his civic-minded spirit, and for his sound leadership. Despite a difference in our party affiliation, he is a friend and adviser; and I commend him for his longtime service to our great democracy.

Norbert has spent his life advocating for those in need and enabling others to overcome life's challenges. Today, Norbert himself is facing a great challenge, a personal battle with Parkinson's disease. And tonight, our prayers go out to Norbert and his family during these difficult times. May the strength and courage demonstrated in his years of service throughout his life help him fight the effects of this terrible disease.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT ON RENEWING ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEUGEBAUER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this week, we all take our 6-week break before we come back to the House. That means we only have 9 days left before September 13 when we are going to see the assault weapons ban in this country expire. We have already seen where the gun manufacturers are coming out and saying they cannot wait until this expires, mainly because on September 14 they will be able to supply assault weapons back into the stores so anyone that wants to can buy them.

Mr. Speaker, since I have been here in Washington trying to fight and reduce gun violence in this country, I have always been fair. I have never tried to take away the right of someone to own a gun. But assault weapons go way overboard. Do we want to see our citizens in this country be able to have assault weapons? Assault weapons are the guns that we are seeing every day, unfortunately, in Iraq. Assault weapons are guns that are made to take down as many people as possible in the shortest period of time.

A recent poll by the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence shows that

an overwhelming amount of Americans support renewal of the ban, including gun owners around the country and NRA supporters. Voters in key Midwestern States, including Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Missouri, average 72 percent in support of the renewal. In Florida, 81 percent of likely voters support renewing the ban. In rural States, including West Virginia and South Dakota, 68 percent of voters support the renewal. The majority of gun owners in this country support the renewal, mainly because the majority of gun owners in this country are fair, and they know what kinds of guns they need and what kinds of guns we do not need.

In the face of these dramatic numbers in favor of the ban, the issue, unfortunately, remains in a political deadlock. In 2000, the President, President Bush, said that he would sign the bill if it got on his desk. Well, we know that the President has been able to get everything that he has wanted through this House by making some phone calls. It is time the President stands up. It is time the President says, we should have the assault weapons ban certainly renewed, at the least.

Listen, I support our police officers across this country. The police officers across this country want this ban kept in place. Why? Because they have found over the last 10 years fewer and fewer assault weapons are being used in crimes. Fewer and fewer assault weapons are being used to hurt our police officers across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to believe very strongly that one person can make a difference. That is why I came to Congress. But I also know that it takes the American people to wake up, to be able to have their voices heard here; and this is one chance when the American people can come together.

Do not let this time run out. This is where the American people can get involved. Certainly e-mail the Speaker of the House and the President of the United States. Let us keep this promise that the President made back in 2000 a reality. Do we want assault weapons back on our streets? Do we want the possibility of terrorists that are supposedly in this country being able to buy these guns? Do we want the drug lords to be able to have these guns? Think of the shootings that we have had in this country over the last several years. Can we imagine if they had had an assault weapon and how many more people they could have taken down?

I spent my life as a nurse before I came to this great House. My job is to take care of people. My job is to prevent people from being ill, to give them the best quality of life possible. Having assault weapons is deadly for all of us. It is deadly for our children. It is deadly for our police officers. I here in Congress refuse to let this die. That is why I came to Congress, to save lives.

I am asking the American people to get behind this. When we come back in

September, over 2,000 people will have died during that time. Two thousand people. Two thousand families, not even counting how many have been wounded. I know this is personal for me, but the rhetoric that we are hearing from the NRA is false.

Ten years ago we heard constantly the only reason we wanted to get this assault weapons ban done is so we could go down that slippery road. Well, let me tell my colleagues something. Second amendment rights, the Constitution, each one of us swears that we will uphold that. I am not out here to take away anyone's right to own a gun.

Please, the American people must become involved in this.

DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of debate lately about the definition of marriage. It seems that the position taken is determined largely by a person's world view. Some are primarily interested in what best serves adults. Issues such as health insurance benefits, Social Security benefits, survivor benefits, hospital visitation rights tend to dominate the debate. There is emphasis upon individual rights and personal freedoms.

There is resentment of those who would attempt to limit the definition of marriage. On the other hand, there are those who are primarily interested in children's welfare and long-term cultural implications as they seek to define marriage. For these people, marriage is viewed as the most basic, elemental social contract. It is the bedrock of the culture. Its primary purpose is the conception and rearing of children in a stable, long-term relationship between a man and a woman. The strength of the culture, possibly for its very survival, depends upon this process.

If one subscribes to the primacy of the importance of children, then certain facts appear to be incontrovertible. First, a man and a woman produce a child; no other arrangement seems to work very well. Second, research shows that children do better when they live with their biological father and mother in a long-term, stable relationship.

Twelve leading family scholars summarized thousands of studies on child rearing as follows: children raised by both biological parents within a marriage are less likely to become unmarried parents, live in poverty, drop out of school, have poor grades, experience health problems, die as infants, abuse drugs and alcohol, experience mental illness, commit suicide, experience sexual and verbal abuse, engage in criminal behavior. And they conclude their observations as follows: "Marriage is more than a private, emotional relationship. It is also a social good." In

other words, all of these behaviors certainly impact all of us as tax payers and certainly break down the culture.

I worked closely with young people for 40 years and personally witnessed the emotional pain and dysfunctional behavior brought about by the destruction of marriages. Most of this dysfunction was caused by the absence of fathers. Fathers contribute to a child's well-being in a unique way. Mothers also obviously make a unique contribution. It takes both.

Opponents of traditional marriage will refer to studies refuting this data. However, these studies almost always compare families where no father at all is present, are not longitudinal, and are poorly designed. Several countries, notably in Scandinavia, have changed the traditional definition of marriage. The result has been a decline in traditional marriage and a surge in out-of-wedlock births in these countries. Children born in such circumstances on average suffer significant dysfunction and distress.

The strength of a culture can be measured by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens: its children. So the question before us today is this: Do we allow a small number of members of the judiciary to alter an institution which has been the backbone of this Nation? Do we allow these same jurists to do so with the great majority of our citizens in our cities and our States firmly opposed to a change? Forty-four of 50 States have laws defining marriage in a traditional manner.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that speaks directly to the welfare of our children and our Nation. Same-sex marriage issues such as survivor benefits and health care benefits for adults can be addressed without doing violence to a time-honored institution which is vital to our national well-being and particularly to our children.

BUDGET ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, an earlier speaker tonight said the economy is showing signs of some considerable improvement. Jobs are being created, GDP is increasing. Well, it should. We have borrowed \$2.5 trillion in the last 3½ years and spent it. We should get the kind of results with that amount of borrowing.

Last week, the administration failed to meet the deadline to release the mid-session review of the budget. If the administration had released the mid-session review, it would have shown that our budget is in a deep hole. As my colleagues have heard me say many times, when you find yourself in a hole, the first rule is to quit digging. Soon we will have an announcement of another record deficit, somewhere between \$425 billion and \$500 billion.

Under the simple concept of pay-as-you-go, if we want to pass a tax cut or

spending increase, we need to say how we would pay for it. We need to take two shovels away from Congress and the President to stop us from digging the hole deeper. The original PAYGO legislation was part of the bipartisan 1990 budget agreement between President George Herbert Walker Bush and the Democratic Congress. It was subsequently extended in 1993 and 1997, but was allowed to expire in 2002 by President Bush and the Republican Congress.

We should be spending our time trying to find a bipartisan solution to balance our budget, but that may be too much to expect from this do-nothing 108th Congress. Not only has this Congress failed to make any serious efforts to reduce the deficit, we have allowed the budget enforcement tools, which we have proven the track record of in controlling the deficit, to expire. Last month, the House spent 7 hours on this floor debating 19 amendments on budget process reform, but the House leadership would not even allow an up-and-down vote on the Blue Dog budget enforcement proposals because the leadership knew that it would have enough bipartisan support to pass.

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Now, I associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Nebraska who just spoke regarding marriage. I strongly support middle-class tax relief. I support extending the marriage penalty relief, the \$1,000 per child tax credit and the 10 percent tax bracket. What I oppose is passing these tax cuts with borrowed money and leaving our children and grandchildren to pay our bills.

Those who want to extend expiring tax cuts or make the tax cuts permanent, which they will try to do again this week, adding another \$120 to \$180 billion to our deficit, should be willing to put forward the spending cuts or the offsetting necessary to pay for them.

Applying pay-as-you-go rules to tax cuts does not prevent Congress from passing more tax cuts. All it says is that if we are going to reduce our revenues, we need to reduce our spending by the same amount so the deficit does not get deeper.

If Republicans actually meant what they say about controlling spending, they would have no problem with applying pay-as-you-go to tax cuts, because it would force Congress to actually control spending when we pass tax cuts instead of just promising to do so in the future.

The problem is the actions of Republicans have not matched their rhetoric. They cut taxes without cutting spending and charge the difference to our children and grandchildren.

Last year we increased the debt limit by \$984 billion. The current debt limit is \$7.384 trillion. At the close of business last Friday, our total national debt stood at \$7,273,792,456,490.62. It appears very likely the debt limit will be reached sometime in late September or

October, with the most likely date being early October.

It is time for Congress to deal seriously with our Nation's fiscal affairs. We cannot keep having 70 percent of our debt being bought by foreigners and not paying the bill sooner or later.

LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK DESIGNATION ACT OF 2004

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

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that H.R. 3819, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park Designation Act of 2004, passed the House earlier today.

From Jamestown to the Cumberland Gap, Virginia has been a land of pioneers. Virginians have explored the New World and established America, and two of her most adventurous sons are Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

While the western trail of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is well-recognized, less known is the route taken in the preparation phase and return phase of the expedition. I thank my colleagues for joining me in support of H.R. 3819 and in recognition of the Eastern Legacy of the Lewis and Clark Expedition during this bicentennial commemoration.

On January 18, 1803, President Thomas Jefferson sent a confidential letter to Congress requesting an appropriation of \$2,500 to fund an expedition of exploration to the Pacific Ocean by route of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers with the hope of discovering a continuous water passage to the Pacific for the purpose of commerce. It was from Monticello that Jefferson conceived this idea, and he chose Captain Meriwether Lewis to lead the exploration. Thus began what would become the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

On March 15, 1803, Meriwether Lewis left the President's House in Washington, D.C. and began preparations for his adventures toward the Pacific. He stopped at the arsenal in Harper's Ferry with an authorizing letter from the Secretary of War and purchased items. He proceeded to Philadelphia, where he studied a wide range of scientific topics. Lewis returned to Washington when he wrote to Captain William Clark to enlist his aid and to share command of the expedition.

In Pittsburgh, Lewis had a keelboat constructed and recruited boatmen to man the vessel that would enable him and Clark to make the long journey. Preparations for the expedition, beginning at Monticello and ending in Wood River, Illinois and the return phase beginning in St. Louis and ending in Washington, D.C., included visiting sites in ten States in the East. These States include Virginia, Maryland,