

think we have \$1 billion yet. Photo-ops are one thing. But that is, once again, how we talk the talk, but we do not walk the walk. And the world community had expected some assistance and some leadership from the United States in this area, and none has come so far.

I just need to know what kind of dollars have been put up for the AIDS that the gentlewoman worked so hard on.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for bringing that to our attention.

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Ms. LEE. That was a \$15 billion, 5-year initiative. It should have been \$3 billion for each year. We still have not gotten to the \$3 billion for the first year yet. We are fighting very hard to increase the appropriations. The trust fund was supposed to be up to \$1 billion a year. So far the administration has put up maybe \$200 million a year. We bumped it up a little bit on this side and are hoping the Senate will bump it up, but we still have not gotten to \$1 billion a year for the trust fund.

I share that because the trust fund again has the ability to leverage \$8 billion to \$9 billion worldwide for people living with HIV and AIDS, for prevention, for care and treatment, for orphans, for young men and women, for families, and we still cannot get the type of funding that is required for the whole HIV-AIDS initiative. It is shameful.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield further, I guess, once again, it is not a priority. It is back to Robin Hood. They do not have the big-time lobbyists up here, although the world community is looking to the United States for leadership in this area, and it is just has not been a priority.

I really want to commend the gentlewoman. I am going to let her close. I want to thank her so much for her leadership in the housing area, in what she has done as far as HIV, just stressing the importance of having a dedicated source of revenue for housing, because, as I said, the memo went around where this administration indicated if reelected, every single domestic, domestic, program, would be cut.

Ms. LEE. I want to thank the gentlewoman.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Elections have consequences.

Ms. LEE. I thank the gentlewoman for joining us this evening and for her steady hard work and leadership on housing and so many issues, especially with regard to our veterans, our children, senior citizens and all of those that she so forcefully and eloquently speak on behalf of. Hopefully, after tonight, maybe the bell will alarm, maybe the drum has been beat a bit louder because of her very powerful statement tonight.

Mr. Speaker, let me just close by saying how important this discussion is and how many of us feel that housing is a basic human right, and until we real-

ize that and establish policies that indicate that, the American dream will continue to be a nightmare for millions of Americans.

Our country does not have a housing policy. We need a national housing policy. We need a national housing agenda that speaks to the housing needs of the low income, the poor, the working poor, the middle income, the upper income, all of those who care about housing and the homeless.

Until we provide those basics, such as food and shelter, for the least of these, I do not believe we are living up to our commitment in terms of our faith, in terms of those who we care about, in terms of making sure that liberty and justice for all is the order of the day.

I just urge all Members of this House to please help us move our housing initiative forward by signing the Lee-Sanders-Capuanio discharge commitment. Please sign it next week before we leave, because the people of America need to know that housing and the economic security of families and children is not a partisan issue; that Democrats, Republicans, independents, all care about it, and we want this American dream to be real for each and every American.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, from Vermont to California, there is an affordable housing crisis in this country and it is only getting worse. Millions of Americans who are working 40 hours a week, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities are paying over 50 percent of their limited incomes on housing. For families living paycheck to paycheck, one unforeseen circumstance—a sick child, a lost job, a medical emergency—can send them into homelessness. These life-shattering events happen every day in America and it is a national disgrace.

Mr. Speaker, if you don't believe us, just ask the half-million veterans who put their lives on the line defending this country or the more than one million children who will experience homelessness this year if they believe there is an affordable housing crisis. Ask moms and dads who are working 40 hours a week that have to sleep in their cars or out on the street because they can't pay the rent, if there's an affordable housing crisis in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is that there is not a single place in America today where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford an average 2 bedroom apartment. Not a single place in America.

Legislation that I have introduced to establish a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund (H.R. 1102) will begin to put an end to this crisis once and for all. It will give states and localities the resources they need to build at least one and a half million affordable housing rental units in this country leading to the creation of 1.8 million new jobs and nearly \$50 billion in wages. In other words, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund is a win-win that will put people back to work and into affordable housing.

Unfortunately, despite over 200 tri-partisan co-sponsors; despite the support of over 5,000 organizations representing organized labor, big business, environmentalists, banks, religious leaders, and affordable housing advocates, a vote has not been scheduled for this

bill. For over 3 years, the Administration has opposed this legislation, while its policies have made the affordable housing crisis even worse. While Congress has provided hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest one percent over the past 3 years, we are forcing our nation's low-income senior citizens, veterans, and families with children to pay the price.

Well, in less than 48 hours, over 100 Members of Congress have signed a discharge petition to force a vote on the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act immediately.

Mr. Speaker, while 218 signatures are required in order to succeed, I hope you don't make us wait that long. I hope that we can convince you that this bill is needed now more than ever.

Mr. Speaker, I know that is a tough decision for you to make. But, quite frankly, people all over this country are making much tougher choices.

This evening a mom and dad will be at the kitchen table staring at their bills. They will have to make a choice. Do we pay the rent; or do we feed our children.

Tomorrow morning a senior citizen who worked hard and played by the rules all of her adult life will have to make a choice. Will she pay the rent; or will she pay for her life saving prescription drugs.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. In the richest country on earth, families should not have to make these unacceptable choices. That's what the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund campaign is all about.

And, just today, Jack Kemp and Henry Cisneros, former HUD Secretaries under President George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, respectively have endorsed the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

David Broder, wrote in the Washington Post this morning that the Kemp-Cisneros "Recommendations strike me as practical and specific—not tilted to the left or the right. . . . They endorse the establishment of a National Housing Trust Fund, an idea that has gathered increasing support in Congress, to provide the capital needed to produce, preserve or rehabilitate at least 1.5 million affordable housing units over the next 10 years."

And, according to the bipartisan National Millennial Housing Commission, created by Congress, and co-chaired by our former colleague Susan Molinari, "The addition of 150,000 [affordable housing rental] units annually would make substantial progress toward meeting the housing needs of extremely low income households, but it would take annual production of more than 250,000 units for more than 20 years to close the gap."

Mr. Speaker, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act will close this serious affordable housing gap. In fact, if H.R. 1102 was signed into law, we could more than triple affordable housing construction next year and provide accommodations to more than 100,000 families. In short, the establishment of a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund is needed now more than ever. I urge my colleagues to sign the Discharge Petition. By doing this today, we can mark the beginning of the end of the affordable housing crisis.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the remainder of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

THE FAIR TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, in the last 5 or 6 weeks, a bill that I introduced, H.R. 25, the FAIR Tax, has been getting a great deal of interest in the national press, part of it because the Speaker mentioned it in the book he recently published, and part because the President took a look at it just prior to the Republican convention.

A lot of it is because the last 2 days the Democrats have taken a keen interest in it and have found unusual forums in which to trash it, including a 27-page critique that the House Minority leader put out today. I will say some of those criticisms are interesting, and some are even true.

But, in any case, what they failed to do in the 27 pages was to discuss the problems we are facing precisely because of our current system. They can spend all the rest of the next year or two defending the current IRS system, saying it is a good system, and ignoring the problems, but we cannot ignore them much longer.

Americans spend between 6 and 7 billion man-hours each year just filling out IRS forms. We spend that much time calculating the tax implications of a business decision. We lose 18 percent of our economy to making tax decisions instead of economic decisions.

The current director of the Congressional Budget Office informally in a conversation told me he believes we spend upwards of \$400 to \$500 billion a year to comply with the Code and remit \$2 trillion. This is hardly an efficient way to raise taxes.

Studies show that it costs the average small business \$724 to collect, comply with the Code and remit \$100 to the Federal Government. And who pays all those compliance costs? Who pays all those payroll taxes that get embedded into the costs of goods at retail? Who pays the income taxes?

It is not the business. There simply is not a mechanism for a business to pay a bill other than through price, and our customers pay them all. In fact, the only taxpayer in the world is a consumer, who finally consumes the product and all the embedded costs, we have it.

The study we had commissioned out of at Harvard 5 or 6 years ago argues that 22 percent of what we spend at retail represents the imbedded cost to

the IRS. Anybody who is working and spending 100 percent of the income to live is losing 22 percent of their purchasing power to the current system.

But it also causes us to ship goods and services into a global economy with a 22 percent tax component in the price system, making us less and less competitive in a world economy and causing jobs to move overseas, where the embedded tax component in the price system is considerably less, particularly in those nations that have a value-added tax that is rebated at the borders.

We also drive offshore, because of our Tax Code, capital. There is today 5 to \$6 trillion in overseas accounts because it is cheaper to borrow at 6 percent interest than to repatriate dollars at 35 percent tax. So they are protected overseas, and in some cases, able to be spent over there. Not to mention wealthy individuals who keep money offshore to protect it from a confiscatory tax system.

We drive underground illicit activity because of our Tax Code. It is estimated that pornography, illicit drugs and illegal labor constitute a \$1 trillion economy that is untaxed. Under a consumption economy, if they wanted to buy something, they would at least pay their fair share to the government.

The Alternative Minimum Tax was passed in 1969 to ensure that wealthy people who have no tax liability due to their legal use of deductions and credits would still have to pay some taxes. In 6 years, 35 million Americans will be subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax.

We spend over \$30 billion a year on Earned Income Tax Credit designed to rebate to low-income workers the cost of the payroll tax burden, the tax that pays for Social Security and Medicare. It is estimated that 25 to 30 percent of that is fraud.

Then the big issue, the big issue is Social Security and Medicare. The current dollar 75-year unfunded liability in Social Security and Medicare is \$51 trillion. Trillion. To put that in perspective, if you started a business on the day Jesus Christ was born and lost \$1 million a day through yesterday, it would take you another 720 years to lose \$1 trillion. We are looking at 75 years of costing us \$51 trillion.

How do we solve this? We abolish the income tax and repeal all taxes on income and get rid of the IRS; get rid of personal and corporate income taxes, self-employment taxes, capital gains taxes, the gift tax, the death tax. All would be replaced by a single tax on personal consumption.

Yes, we would get rid of the payroll tax. It was said on the floor yesterday that our bill did not deal with the payroll tax. I would be willing to have these debates, but I want to have them with people who have read the bill, because the bill is the only one that has ever been introduced that totally abolishes the payroll tax, and the payroll tax is the highest tax that 75 percent of America pays.

If you would get rid of the IRS and get rid of all tax on income and let competition drive the tax component out of the tax system and replace it with a one-time, single consumption tax, out of every dollar you spend on personal use, 23 cents goes to the government, the rest stays with the merchant, we would fund the government at the current level, but everybody would keep, get to keep their whole check and become a voluntary taxpayer.

Now, that number has been criticized as being rather high. I will repeat you are currently paying 22 cents, but just do not know it. But today, if you earn \$1, 36 cents goes to the government and 64 cents is left to spend. Would you not rather pay 23 cents out of every dollar you spend, rather than 36 cents out of every dollar you earn?

But, more importantly, the FAIR Tax is fair because it contains a rebate for every household in America which would totally rebate the tax consequences of spending up to the poverty line.

Currently people who spend all of their income lose 22 percent of the purchasing power to the embedded cost. Under our system, that rebate would totally untax them up to the poverty line. Poverty level spending, by definition, is that necessary for a given size household to buy their essentials. For my mother, it is \$9,500 year. For a family of four, it is about \$25,000. For a family of six, it is \$30,000. Their spending in a year up to that amount would be totally untaxed, plus they would not pay the embedded costs. It would be gone.

The FAIR Tax is a volunteer system. Every citizen becomes a voluntary taxpayer, paying as much as they choose, when they choose, on how they choose to spend. And I mentioned before that it would drive that 22 cents out of the system.

The FAIR Tax is border neutral. Under the FAIR Tax, imports to our shores when bought at retail for personal use would be taxed at exactly the same level as our domestic competition, something that has never happened before.

Lastly, it would solve our Social Security and Medicare problem. In the Democrat's report, 27 pages today, they have a study that said Medicare would run out of money in 8 or 9 years instead of 10 or 15 years under my system. I do not know how they could come up with that, because today Medicare is funded by the workers, 138.5 million people working to pay for Medicare for all the retirees.

We are going to increase the number of retirees in the next 30 years by 100 percent. We are going to increase the number of workers by 15 percent. I do not know how you can sustain that system.

Our system, the tax on consumption, would increase the number of payers from 138.5 million workers to about 300 million citizens every time something