

answer to both is the same: the financial condition of our country now and well into the next generation.

Why is it our biggest challenge? I think it is pretty straightforward and obvious when we think about it because our very ability to provide what we want to provide for ourselves and our children is reliant on a strong fiscal foundation. Otherwise, it is just talk. Need to protect ourselves here at home and overseas. Where is the money? Need to improve education and health care. Take care of the poor and needy, need to provide the infrastructure, need to honor our commitments to Medicare and Social Security. Yes, where is the money? It is not there right now. We know that.

Let us face up to it. Spending exceeds revenues as far as the eye can see. That is the definition of a deficit, when spending exceeds revenues, and total debt accumulative borrowings to match those deficits has now climbed well through \$7 trillion, \$7 trillion.

What is my biggest surprise? My biggest surprise is that all of this is happening on the fiscal watch and under the revenue and spending policies of a Republican administration. Do not jump all over that comment and assume that it is simply a partisan shot. I just spent the better part of a decade in my own home State of Hawaii working as an independent, moderate Democrat with Republicans to right the fiscal ship of my own State. The last thing I expected when I got up to Congress here was to arrive here and see the fiscal irresponsibility, on a massive scale, brought on by the national counterparts of those same people that I had worked with successfully in Hawaii.

My surprise does not arise just as a matter of policy disagreements because, after all, we can handle policy disagreements. We can identify choices. We can debate them. We can let the political process yield the result. That is not my surprise.

My surprise is the manner in which we are dealing with this. It is much worse: denial, concealment, misrepresentation. Let me give my colleagues a couple of examples.

First of all, this administration clearly overestimated job and growth recovery from its version of tax cuts. Second, it did not even include huge chunks of spending, spending we know we have to make, in the 2005 budget. What does that say when we do not even include the cost of the intervention in Iraq, do not even put it into the budget? What are my colleagues scared of? Are my colleagues afraid of the debate that will come from it?

Clearly underestimating expenses like Medicare, projecting the Medicare bill at \$500 billion and turning around mere weeks later and saying, whoops, we made a mistake, \$630 billion after all.

Finally, the one that bothers me the most, this is inexcusable. Bringing to this floor a budget that is only out 5

years into the future. The norm in Washington is 10 years, and I can make a good case to my colleagues that 10 years is not enough. Fifteen, 20, 25 years to account fully for Medicare, Social Security beyond that, and yet we are only going to talk about 5 years. That is like projecting a family's budget for an adjustable rate mortgage with a balloon at the end, but ending before the balloon is due. That is like projecting a family's budget for education, but stopping in the senior year of high school before their kids go to college. Why do you do that? Because you will not want to face the fact of what happens after that year has happened, and that is exactly what we have.

Do not take my word for it. Here is David Walker, Comptroller General of the United States, on the Nation's growing fiscal imbalance: current fiscal policy is unsustainable; the status quo is not an option; faster economic growth can help but it cannot solve the problem. Finally, the one I particularly agree with: the sooner we get started the better.

There are solutions, and what are they? Because talk is cheap. Here is the deal. They are there, they are tough, and they get tougher. We have to face up to those decisions right now, and we have to get to them right now. I urge my colleagues to be honest with the American people and address the fiscal problems of our country.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the gentleman from Tennessee's (Mr. COOPER) time.

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

There was no objection.

LACK OF JOB GROWTH IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the lack of job growth in America continues to reverberate, the jobless recovery they call it. That means even as investment increases, new jobs are not created. Now, there might be a recovery for a few in the financial elites that sit in our corporate board rooms, but it is still a recession around the kitchen tables of America's working families.

So where are our jobs? Millions of Americans are asking the Congress and

they are asking the President, Where are the jobs?

Toledo Blade reported this weekend: "Unemployment rises across Ohio." Toledo, the major community in my district, Toledo's rate of unemployment hit double digits, over 10 percent; and even rural counties, not accustomed to unemployment rising, those numbers are now increasing across the State of Ohio.

Even America's economists are starting to wonder what is going on.

□ 2015

When the Labor Department released the most recent job data last Friday, showing a mere 21,000 payroll jobs created in February, economists were left dumbfounded, shaking their heads. Alan Blinder, a former member of the Federal Board of Governors, told the Wall Street Journal, and I quote, "From an historical perspective, the lack of job growth is stunning, given what is happening to the gross national product."

Productivity is high, economic activity is up, interest rates are still very low, but even Ohio's Republican governor was forced to admit no job growth. So, where are our jobs? Sales at U.S. retail stores rose by 6.7 percent in February, and the consumer continues to keep our economy afloat. But how long can that last?

Household debt is climbing. The Federal Reserve reported on Friday that consumer credit outstanding grew at an annual rate of 8.6 percent in February. Households in America have refinanced everything and they have maxed out on their credit cards and they have borrowed to keep up their spending levels.

They have been carrying the load up till now, but they simply cannot do it by themselves. We have got to start creating jobs in America, and that starts at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Last month, President Bush promised that the economy would create 2.6 million jobs by the end of this year. Instead, we have seen almost 3 million jobs disappear since he was installed in office.

Now, America suffers twin deficits that are sucking the lifeblood from our economy. We have a \$5 trillion budget deficit and a \$5 trillion trade deficit. At the same time, these twin deficits total more than \$1 trillion sucking life and economic strength out of our economy. That is a \$1 trillion in the wrong direction every year under President Bush.

The failed economic policies of the Bush administration are choking any hoped-for economic recovery, destroying wealth and saddling future generations of Americans with more debt than they can possibly afford. How irresponsible.

The failed economic policies of the Bush administration are the reason for the lack of jobs in America. Where are the jobs? They are being outsourced and exported to Mexico and China and

other low-wage countries. Some have called this Bush-onomics. But if you are a multinational corporation looking for low-wage workers, they roll out the red carpet for you. They even say outsourcing jobs is a good thing. The Bush administration will even drive down the value of the dollar to help their bottom line.

But if you are a family in Toledo or Cleveland or Akron, you are out of luck. Our workers are sitting around the kitchen table asking a simple question: Where are the jobs? And I hope they are also asking who are they going to elect to the job of the Presidency of our Nation and to this Congress come next November.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, No Child Left Behind was an Act passed overwhelmingly by a bipartisan majority in the Congress in 2001. It was signed into law by President Bush in January of 2002. While I was not here to vote for this bill, I am a supporter of the goals that this legislation is designed to achieve.

Interestingly, some of those who voted for final passage of the No Child Left Behind bill in the House and for the conference report now have proposed legislation to drastically alter this legislation, and some organizations say that it needs significant modification. What is wrong? What is wrong with asking for higher achievement in our schools? Why should we not provide more information for parents about their child's achievement?

I would like to highlight several facts about the No Child Left Behind legislation. First of all, No Child Left Behind supports learning in the early years, thereby preventing many learning difficulties that arise later.

Children who enter school with language skills and prereading skills are more likely to read well in the early grades and succeed in latter years. In fact, research shows that most reading problems faced by adolescents and adults are the result of problems that could have been prevented through good instruction in early childhood years. No Child Left Behind targets resources for early childhood education so that all youngsters get off to the right start.

Secondly, No Child Left Behind provides more information for parents about their children's achievement.

Under the No Child Left Behind legislation, each State must measure every public school student's achievement in reading and math in grades 3 through 8, and then at least once during grades 10 through 12. By the school year 2007 and 2008, State assessments in science will also be underway. It is important to note that these achievements are based

on State academic content and achievement standards. Each State defines its own standards and each State determines what test it will use to measure student achievement.

The third thing I think is important is No Child Left Behind provides parents and taxpayers with important information about the performance of local schools.

No Child Left Behind requires that State and school districts give parents an easy-to-read, detailed report card on schools and school districts, telling them which ones are succeeding and why. Included in the report card are student achievement data broken out by race, by ethnicity, by gender, by English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status, and low-income status, as well as important information about the professional qualifications of our teachers.

With these provisions, No Child Left Behind ensures that parents have important timely information about the schools their children attend, whether they are performing well or not, for all children, regardless of their background.

Fourth, No Child Left Behind gives children and parents a lifeline.

In this new era of education, children are no longer trapped in low-performing schools. Under No Child Left Behind, schools must use Federal funds to make needed improvements. In the event of a school's continued poor performance, parents have an option. They have the option that ensures their child receives the high quality education to which they are entitled. That might mean that a child would transfer to a higher-performing school in an area, or it may mean they may receive supplemental educational services in their community, such as tutoring, after-school programs or remedial classes.

No Child Left Behind improves teaching and learning by providing better information to parents, to teachers, to principals, and to the community.

Annual tests to measure children's achievement provide school officials with independent information about each child's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers, principals, and superintendents across the country are using the data from state assessments to make more effective decisions for students, schools, and districts.

Districts can use information provided from state assessments to determine needs and target resources.

Principals can use information from state assessments to determine the appropriate professional development needs of teachers and to help meet the needs of all subgroups of students.

Teachers can use information from assessments to inform classroom decisions and provide the best possible instruction to ensure that all students are learning.

No Child Left Behind ensures that teacher quality is a high priority. Because of the proven correlation between teacher quality and student academic achievement, No Child Left Behind includes provisions stating that all

teachers of core academic areas must be "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Each state is responsible for developing its own definition of "highly qualified" and each state has the flexibility to develop its own system to measure teacher qualifications. States are also encouraged to be innovative in finding ways to improve teacher quality, including alternative certification, merit pay, and bonuses for teachers in high-need subject areas like math and science.

No Child Left Behind focuses on what works. No Child Left Behind puts a special emphasis on implementing educational programs and practices that have been clearly demonstrated to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Federal funding is now targeted to support such programs.

For example, the Reading First program makes federal funds available to help reading teachers in the early grades strengthen old skills and gain new ones in instructional techniques that scientifically based research has shown to be effective.

No Child Left Behind provides state and local leaders with unprecedented flexibility as they implement the law. The foundation of No Child Left Behind is a system of state standards and state assessments to ensure accountability. Each state sets its own standards and each state determines what assessment it will use to measure student achievement.

To provide state and local school districts with as much flexibility as possible, No Child Left Behind provides the ability to transfer up to 50 percent of the funding they receive for Teacher Quality, Educational Technology, Innovative Programs, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools, to any one of these programs or to Title I. This ability to transfer federal funds among certain accounts is new under No Child Left Behind and no "permission" is required before transferring funds.

States and local school districts also have the opportunity to apply for demonstration projects providing even more flexibility in how federal resources are used.

Additionally, recent policies announced by the U.S. Department of Education are providing states and local school districts with even more flexibility as they meet the academic needs of students with disabilities and English language learners.

I'm pleased that my home state of Georgia is responsive to such concerns as AYP. The state Department of Education meets weekly to deal with challenges and suggestions on implementation. Tips and strategies are sent out on a monthly basis to help school systems improve with regard to AYP.

No Child Left Behind provides more resources to our schools.

Because reforms implemented by No Child Left Behind, President Bush and the Congress are now investing more in education than at any point in history. In fiscal year 2001, the Federal Government provided \$17.4 billion for programs that now constitute No Child Left Behind. The fiscal year 2001 appropriation was signed into law by President Clinton. In January of 2002, President Bush signed the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act, which reformed many of the Federal Government's educational programs, consolidated several programs to make them more efficient, provided new flexibility for