

after another, these Iraqi military personnel are on the point. They are leading the fight, along with 160,000 American military personnel.

And the Iraqi people themselves are becoming more involved in advancing their own security and stability. Here is an interesting fact, Mr. Speaker, that I just learned today: in March of this year, there were essentially 400 tips by Iraqis of insurgent activities, tips made to U.S. and coalition forces. In the month of November, we logged more than 4,700 tips from regular and ordinary Iraqis. The people of Iraq are partnering in their own security and in their own freedom, and that 10-fold increase of that partnership speaks for itself.

On the economic front, we have seen 30,000 new businesses. And GNP per capita in the last year has more than doubled in Iraq for ordinary Iraqis. It is an extraordinary record of success.

Politically, we have around the corner parliamentary elections; and as we speak, Mr. Speaker, there are 327 political entities, or as we might call them, parties or organizations, and 7,000 candidates that will be answering the call of millions of Iraqis who will put themselves, as 8.5 million Iraqis did in January of this year, in harm's way to exercise their own freedom.

It is my fondest hope, Mr. Speaker, that when the President of the United States comes into this well on January 31 of 2006 that maybe in this Chamber, in a seat in this Chamber, might be a legislative leader, or two, of the newly elected Iraqi Parliament.

I have been to Operation Iraqi Freedom three times. I have sat even today with our military commanders and the President of the United States. As we go into this weekend, let the word go forth from here: we are winning the war and winning the peace in Iraq.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP: TAX CUTS AND THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be on the House floor here tonight with my good friend from Florida (Mr. MEEK) to continue our discussion that we have been having with the American people and with Members of Congress from all over the country the past few months and even few years.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the Republican-led Congress has once again taken a step in a direction that I think moved it and this Congress away from mainstream America.

Today, the majority has passed another wealthy-focused tax cut in which \$60 billion, up to \$80 billion, over the next 10 years will be spent subsidizing the wealth of the people in this country who make millions and billions of dollars, an average tax break of \$32,000 to wealthy millionaires who have already received more than \$103,000 in tax cuts. More than half the taxpayers making less than \$100,000 a year will receive less than \$30 back from this tax cut. This is a tax cut that has clearly been focused on the wealthy Americans.

And coincidentally enough, a couple of weeks ago, our friends, our good friends on the Republican side, have said that they passed a budget deficit reduction package which made cuts of \$50 billion; and then they passed a tax cut which took away \$80 billion, which is a negative \$30 billion deficit in the hole. Only in Washington is that deficit reduction.

And before we get going here, I want to just share and read into the RECORD, if my friend does not mind, a letter that was sent, and I know I received one of these and a statement on behalf of several religious organizations. Bishop Frank Griswold of the Episcopal, Anglican, Church USA, together with leaders of four other mainline denominations, has called on the United States Congress to defeat the 2006 Federal budget once and for all because it betrays the poor.

And I just want to say to Bishop Griswold and the Anglican Church in the United States of America and the other denominations that are there,

Dr. Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church; Reverend Thomas, general minister and president of the United Church of Christ; Mr. James Winkler, general secretary, Board of Church and Society for the United Methodist Church, thank you for speaking out against this.

Because in this day and age, morality and values have been such a strong topic of conversation in the United States, I want to commend these folks for stepping out front and saying that this budget and tax cuts for the rich while we are cutting food stamps; free and reduced lunch; child support enforcement payments; money for college, Pell grants; cutting those programs and then giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country is something that goes in direct contradiction to what they are trying to teach.

And if I could just take a minute or two to read some of these comments into the RECORD, if my friend does not mind:

The church leaders declare: "At each stage of the complicated legislative process, we have viewed the budget through the lens of faith and our values and found it wanting. Now we ask that it be defeated once and for all."

"Despite the exposure of poverty in the U.S. revealed in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the statement says, 'Congress continues to make decisions which benefit the rich but are paid for by the poor and most vulnerable in our land.'

"The leaders criticized the budget's potential compromises which would cut funding for food stamps, heating subsidies, Medicaid, and child support enforcement.

"They will seek to find compromise where there should be no compromise, that is, with the lives and future of the poor of this country."

"They asked that Congress reflect during the season of Advent, reject the budget and join with the President to craft a budget that will reflect 'our Nation's historic concern for justice and the least among us.'"

This is not TIM RYAN. This is not KENDRICK MEEK. This is not the 30-something Working Group. This is a group of bishops and church leaders all over the country who have stepped out front and stated that cutting taxes for the wealthiest people in our country and doing it on the backs of the poorest among us is not consistent with the values that they teach in their churches every week.

Here is Cal Thomas. Cal Thomas is one of the most conservative columnists. I do not even know if he is a Republican, but he is a conservative columnist with the Washington Times. When we are finding all this money to balance our budget, Cal Thomas says: "Here's a suggestion: Don't start with the poor. Start with the rich."

We passed an energy bill several months ago out of this Chamber that had \$16 billion in subsidies for the energy companies and the oil companies,

the most profitable industries today. This Congress took your tax money that you send to Washington and gave it to the oil companies to basically subsidize and increase their profits. There is something wrong with that.

And the 30-Something Working Group is here and we will have charts later, talking about some of our ideas that we have and some of the ideas that Leader PELOSI has and the Democratic Party has and what direction we want to move this country in. And we believe that what is going on here is not only contrary to what we believe in, but also contrary to what the American people believe in. We should now be making investments in education. I mean, why would we give millionaires a tax cut and not have enough money to actually heat homes in the wealthiest country in the entire world?

And I know my friend from Florida wants to get in here and talk a little bit. But just today, this just happened, we were cutting taxes to the tune of \$80 billion over the next 10 years. At the same time a few weeks ago, we were cutting food stamps and increasing the cost of college tuition.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that Mr. RYAN set the pace here and he laid the foundation for continuing our discussion as it relates to responsibility. I can tell the Members the ideas that we had here on this floor as it relates to sensible tax policy that will not drive us further into debt.

What happened today on the floor, not because of our votes, but because of the majority vote, the Republican majority, they took this country further into debt.

□ 1700

They made it so we are going to have to change our board here, because we are going to be borrowing more money from foreign countries, Mr. Speaker, because of the deficit.

I will say this again. President Bush, with the Republican majority, I guarantee you he could not do it by himself without the Republican majority here in this House, has borrowed a record-breaking, mind-boggling \$1.05 trillion in the last 4 years, more than 42 Presidents prior to the President taking office.

42 Presidents, Republican and Democrat. Some of the gentlemen here on this board were once members of the Whig Party. But I can tell you they were only able to achieve borrowing from foreign nations \$1.01 trillion over 224 years. This is the same majority and the same President that says that we know exactly what we are doing as it relates to putting this country on the right track.

Well, I can tell you, Members of the Congress, that I am very, very concerned. We used to have a discussion about future generations and putting the burden on their back. We are putting the burden on this generation's

back. It is going to cost more for kids to go to school. It is going to cost more for parents to send their children to school. It is going to cost more for those young Americans that would like to educate themselves to be able to save enough money to be able to go to college, because we cut it by \$14.3 billion.

So I think it is important that we take all of this into account. But what I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, in my opening comments, I cannot help but commend our Democratic leader for her privileged resolution here today, outlining a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence in Washington, D.C.

I think it is important that we say that out loud so that individuals understand that we must not only police ourselves in how we conduct business, but what we are doing when we have investigations, unprecedented here in this Congress and investigations over in the White House, dealing with national security breaches. It is important that we make sure that the American people know exactly what is going on and that we take appropriate action in a bipartisan way.

Right now we are not taking any action. There is discussion about action. And I just want to commend the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) and the Speaker about having ethics training here in the House. I just wanted to say that. That is something. That is something. That is something. That is better than what we had yesterday.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Do you need any ethics training? You and I served in the Florida house of representatives together, in the Florida senate together, now we serve in the United States Congress. You know, the ethics training I got began in kindergarten when my mom and dad taught me right from wrong.

I have had ethics training my entire life. It is not understandable to me why we would need and why there are some Members in this body that appear to need it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, let me just say this, and I say this is something that I have read in the paper today, and I am pretty sure some sort of memo is going to come out on it: when you are in a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence, you have to start, I guess, somewhere.

Apparently, Federal prosecutors and other investigating bodies here in this Capital City have taken steps to try to help those of us here in Washington, D.C. that need help as it relates to that kind of training. But let me just make this point. Do we need ethics training? I think we need to be reminded of that, because as I said last night, Mr. Speaker, 33 percent of Americans feel that we are doing the right thing here in Washington, D.C.

I saw a poll today that said 28 percent of Americans agree with what we are doing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I want to ask you another question. Do you need ethics training to tell you that you should not take bribes? Do you need ethics training that tells you that you should not circumvent State law and provide fund-raising assistance and direct contributions to candidates for State office?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just want to say that it is alleged activity.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I was just asking a question.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is important. Anytime anyone can get information between right and wrong, I think it is good. I think it is good. I think it is good that we have this discussion. But we need action.

The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) had a colloquy with a Member on the other side talking about the war in Iraq and the kind of action that we have to take as it relates to the corruption and cronyism and incompetence in contracting.

He said that it was important, and he yielded to this distinguished Member of this House. And he said, yes, we should have a discussion on it. Mr. DELAHUNT reclaimed his time and said, no, we should not have discussion on it, we should have action on it, because that is what the American people want.

And I think it is important that we get to the bottom of it. I think it is important. We have to. We must get to the bottom of it. It is important that we start taking steps in a bipartisan way.

Now, I am going to tell you that the Democratic leader brought up a privileged resolution today that basically talked about the spirit of the rules of the House being violated, talked about the fact that we had issues here of former Members that served in this Congress and the previous Congress, in the 108th Congress, that were a part of not only questionable, illegal activities.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Allegedly.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. No. Some have left and have pled. Forget about a trial. They have said, oh, I am guilty. So that is not an issue. Some of it is alleged, ongoing now; but some of it is actually proven. So that means that we have a lot of work to do in a bipartisan way. And I am going to be honest.

Like it or not, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that this Speaker took some steps as it relates to talking about the issue that we do have a problem and we need to do something about it. Is it almost like many people that are struggling with substance abuse, they have to first say they have a problem for them to even get on the road of recovery.

I talked last night about the fact that how can you operate a government in a fiscal way, in a responsible way, in a way that Democrats, Republicans, independents and other party members would like for their government to function in this democracy; how can you do it under a culture of corruption, cronyism and incompetence. You just cannot do it.

This is not the 30-something Working Group report, this is not your report, it is not my report. It is what the American people know, and that is what people are reporting about, and we have all of these investigations going on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let us break this down. If people are saying that Members are doing things or former Members, I want to correct myself, former Members were doing things that would cost the government money or would spend money that otherwise would not be spent, that is a problem.

And I think we have to look no further than the Medicare prescription drug bill that came out of this Congress. We were told the night at 3 in the morning, when we were voting, that this bill was going to cost \$400 billion. We find out later that the actual cost of the bill is \$700 billion, \$300 billion more; and there is nothing in the bill to reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

The Democrats, I know you remember this, the Democrats wanted to put a provision in the bill that would have allowed the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate down the drug prices on behalf of the Medicare recipients, so the Secretary of HHS would go to Merck and Pfizer and some of these other big drug companies and say, you know, if you want the Medicare prescription drug contract, we need to sit down and talk price.

And not only did our friends on the Republican side not put that provision in, put the Democratic provision in there, they actually explicitly put in the bill that the Secretary of Health and Human Services is not allowed to negotiate down the drug prices.

The Democrats also with what we thought was a \$400 billion Medicare prescription drug bill that ended up being, months and months later the truth came out, over a \$700 billion bill, we also wanted to allow, the Democratic Caucus wanted to put in a provision that would allow for reimportation from Canada and some of the other G-7 countries to drive down the costs of prescription drugs here in the United States, to basically free-trade pharmaceuticals with countries who have the proper health and safety standards like we have here in the United States of America. That was not allowed in the bill, Mr. Speaker.

So two basic provisions that would have saved the taxpayer billions of dollars were not put in because it would have maybe hurt the profits of the drug companies. And the drug companies raised millions and millions and millions of dollars for our friends on the Republican side. Now the average American is left to put two and two together.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I ask the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), who would be happy tonight, based on the passage of the bill that passed today? Who would be happy?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. There are a lot of people who make more than a million

dollars a year or a few hundred thousand dollars a year that are going to be very happy with what we did here today.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You mean what the majority did?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What the Republican Party did today was make a lot of rich people very happy. That is the answer.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I would also add corporations that have influence and power. What is it, K Street?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Shakedown Street.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I thought so.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I got this chart here. This is the end result. This blue is the Clinton-era budget deficits that by 1997 started turning into surpluses; and by the time President Clinton left, \$128 billion surplus. And that was all based on the 1993 vote that was passed, the budget in 1993 without one Republican vote.

Now, these are just the facts. I am not making this up. This is not a partisan statement; it is just the facts.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I want to go further. It is from the Congressional Budget Office. I mean, I just want to make sure that is clear.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is the Congressional Budget Office. \$128 billion surplus in 2001 due to the fiscal policies, the fiscal restraint, the fiscal discipline that the Democratic Party had at that point.

But check out when Mr. Bush and the Republican House and the Republican Senate started getting in charge here, we have a \$323 billion budget deficit going into 2006, and we are borrowing the money from foreign interests.

We are borrowing the money to pay for these deficits from the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Saudi Arabians to plug this deficit hole. And we are trying, Democrats are trying, to say, why would you give \$80 billion in tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country when we are already running a \$323 billion deficit in 2006, we already have borrowed \$1 trillion from foreign interests in the last 4 years, more than any President has borrowed from foreign interests in the past 224 years?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. \$1.05 trillion.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 1.05 trillion we have borrowed from foreign interests in the last 4 years.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. When you say foreign interests, who are they?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The Chinese Government. The Japanese Government. The House of Saud in Saudi Arabia. I mean, we are borrowing money from China. I do not even want to get into the whole manufacturing and the rise of China and the competition that we have right now.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And the U.S. workers are training people to replace them.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is a real issue. So we are borrowing money from a country that we are in direct competition with. They are taking billions and

billions of dollars of investment that is coming from the United States and going into China, whether it is Delphi that has filed bankruptcy, General Motors which has significant investment in China now, Ford just announced that they are going to cut 30,000 jobs in 10 plants in the United States. And we are borrowing money from the country that they are making the investment in?

Now, China is not in a bad position right now. Check it out. I mean, they are getting investments from Delphi, General Motors, General Electric and Ford and a lot of the automakers; and at the same time they are loaning us money that we are paying them interest on.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. A piece of the American pie.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. A big piece of the American pie. And I think we were talking the other day, it is over \$300 billion a year this country pays just in interest payments on the debt.

The average American, the average Member of Congress is not paying attention to our \$8 trillion debt that we have. That means \$27,000 per American citizen. So if a baby is born today, I had a nephew that was born a couple of months ago, 9 weeks ago tomorrow. That young man, Nicholas John Ryan, owes \$27,000 to his government, and this young man is 9 weeks old.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), they each owe \$27,000 to the United States Government because of the reckless spending that we have. So, you know, we have really got to get our house in order. We need to balance the budget.

Ladies and gentlemen, Members of Congress, my friends from Florida, you just cannot do it by giving away \$80 billion to the wealthiest people in the country in the form of a tax cut.

□ 1715

We also have two wars going on.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is what I was going to say. I think it is important we talk about this all the time. We work on this as a working group. I think it is important that the American people understand that we have a war going on, we have a war going on, that we still have people that are delusional as it relates to our commitment, our financial commitments, Mr. Speaker, to what we have to do. And I think it is important that people understand, Mr. Speaker, that if we are going to talk about the strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important that we have a serious discussion on how we are going to be fiscally responsible in making sure that we do not have more and more and more money being spent in an irresponsible way and giving it away.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time to the gentleman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN

SCHULTZ) as I have to step off the floor for a moment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). The gentleman yields back his time.

Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for the remainder of the minority leader's hour.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, just to piggyback on what the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) was saying, when we are talking about the costs and the impact of the decisions that the Republican leadership is making in this country, let me just highlight for a few minutes exactly what this tax cut package that passed off this floor today is really going to mean for Americans.

We have given yet another round of tax breaks to our wealthiest Americans. Now, when you hear the term "wealthiest Americans," there is a lot of different ways that people might think of that. What we are talking about when we are referring to the wealthiest Americans is the top two-tenths of 1 percent of the wealthiest Americans in this country, people who are making more than a million dollars a year.

The Republican bill that we have passed off this floor today will raise taxes on more than 17 million middle class families by as much as \$3,640, while millionaires would get tax cuts of as much as \$32,000. These tax breaks for the wealthy few will be paid for directly through the spending cuts that we passed a couple of weeks ago in the Budget Reconciliation Act that we just adopted.

We are talking about budget cuts that impact people who need child support enforcement. We are talking about food stamps that provide school lunch funding for thousands and thousands of children across this country, both school lunch and school breakfast funding. We are talking about cuts in financial aid. We are talking about cuts to programs for senior citizens, for children, for rural families.

The Republican leadership here, Mr. Speaker, has pushed a tax bill and adopted a tax bill on this floor that will increase the deficit by \$81 billion, \$81 billion because when I do the math, and I spend quite a bit of time doing first grade math with my first graders at home, I see this as pretty simple math. If you have \$50 billion in budget cuts and you try to call the Budget Reconciliation Act, the Budget Deficit Reduction Act, which is an obvious misnomer when you hear what I am going to describe next; and then 2 weeks later you pass a tax cut package that adds \$70 billion in tax cuts, well, the difference is another \$20 billion on the deficit.

I mean, that is just unbelievable that the Republican leadership here would have the nerve to call this bill from 2 weeks ago a Budget Deficit Reduction Act. And to add insult to injury, the

kind of money that we are talking about, the kind of fiscal impact that we are talking about, really boils down to a direct impact on individual Americans. Every newborn that is born as I am speaking owes \$27,000 that adds up to the \$8 trillion deficit that we have in this country.

We have difference in terms of our views on what is considered fiscal responsibility. Obviously, there are differences of opinion when it comes to the approach that Democrats and Republicans take. But layered on top of those differences is the culture of corruption and cronyism that exists in this country and in this Congress and in this administration. Just over the last several months we have had details of that. I mean, we have layer upon layer of cronyism, of corruption and of incompetence. To me it smacks of incompetence when you continue to pass tax cuts and budget cuts and balloon the deficit bigger and bigger and bigger. I mean, we are not going in the right direction here. There should not be any delusions that we have reduced the deficit in any action we have taken in the last several weeks.

Then you add that to the fact that we had a nightmarish, disastrous response to Hurricane Katrina. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was clearly the result of indifference. There was an opportunity in the previous fiscal year before Katrina hit the Gulf Coast region to put the money and keep the money in the budget, to fund the levees in New Orleans and the administration took it out. They took that funding out. So where it was possible to stave off the disaster that struck New Orleans, instead the administration put tax breaks for the wealthy as a higher priority.

Let us move on to, we have covered incompetence briefly, now we can talk about cronyism. The cronyism that exists in this administration is just absolutely rampant. It runs deep. It is not occasional. It is not an anomaly. You have example after example.

Let us take Michael Brown, for example, who was formerly the director of FEMA. Not only was he absolutely unqualified for the job and had little to no emergency preparedness or disaster response training or professional experience before taking the job at FEMA and being offered the job at FEMA, what his specific qualifications were prior to becoming FEMA director was to be head of the Arabian, excuse me. Let us give credit where credit is due. He was head of a national organization. The National Arabian Horse Association.

I am not sure what type of emergencies or disasters occur with Arabian horses, but there does not seem to be much of a nexus between that type of experience and the type of experience that you need to run the largest disaster response and preparedness organization in the country.

An organization where the director is expected after a disaster to have the

command of every agency at his fingertips, to be able to direct each of those agencies in a particular direction to respond as quickly as possible. Yet, not even that was possible after Katrina because, unfortunately, FEMA has been brought under the Department of Homeland Security and is no longer an independent agency directly responsible to the President with an independent secretary.

Now we have so many layers of bureaucracy in the Department of Homeland Security that by the time the FEMA director's request gets all the way up the food chain, many lives have been harmed, a lot more damage has occurred. And if there is any organization that needs to be lean and clean and responsive in this government, it is FEMA. And we have, unfortunately, hamstringed FEMA and FEMA's director to such a degree that we have seen the results after Katrina to that disaster and the disaster response.

We saw the nightmare traffic jams when the folks in Texas and the western part of the gulf coast tried to get out of their homes and community on the roads to get away from Rita potentially. And then in my home State, when Wilma hit 2 months after Katrina, one would think that after Katrina hit that maybe a couple of lessons would have been learned and we would not be repeating the same mistakes. Yet, even today we still have victims of Wilma in South Florida who are without housing, who are not even in temporary housing, who are still in shelters. That is the type of person we put in charge of an agency that has that much responsibility.

Let us look at Julie Myers as we continue on with the subject of cronyism. Julie Myers was nominated to be Assistant Secretary of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. The responsibilities in that job were that she would have been in charge of the second largest investigative agency in the Federal Government with over 20,000 employees, including 6,000 investigators and an annual budget of more than \$4 billion.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE, is comprised of five divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency. It is an agency that my office at home contacts every day to help people with their immigration problems.

Her resume includes that she is currently a special assistant handling personnel issues for President Bush. She was, of course, recently married to the chief of staff to Michael Chertoff, Secretary Chertoff of the Department of Homeland Security. She is the niece of General Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I am not sure what qualifications she has for a job of that size and scope. Her only previous experience was that of being a special assistant handling personnel issues. I do not really see the nexus or the connection from that job to the job that she was nominated for as the head of an immigration division.

Right now, basically, even Republican Senator VOINOVICH told Ms. Myers at her nomination hearing that he would really like to have Secretary Chertoff spend some time with the committee, telling them personally why he felt Ms. Myers was qualified for the job because he said, based on your resume, I do not think you are.

Let us move on to David Safavian, if we are going to continue the examples of the culture of corruption and cronyism here. Let us continue in the cronyism theme. David Safavian was the administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy in OMB. His responsibilities included being in charge of a \$300 billion budget and ensuring fair competition for Federal contracts. His job also included setting the procurement policies for the Office of Management and Budget, including funding for Hurricane Katrina efforts.

Let us detail some of his experience. He is currently out on bail after being arrested and charged with obstructing the criminal investigation into indicted Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff. He is also married to Jennifer Safavian, who is also a person who has numerous ties and connections to Republican leadership. That also includes lobbying partnerships with the likes of Grover Norquist and Jack Abramoff.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but that is just a smattering of examples of people who were appointed or recruited or nominated for major positions within the administration with not so major qualifications.

Now, let us talk about the culture of corruption that has existed. I can tell you that as a freshman Member of this body, and as someone who served in the Florida legislature for 12 years, I can tell you that I am not naive. We are obviously a representative body and there are going to be instances of ethical lapses. We are all human and that does occur, especially in a representative body the size of this one. But when you get to the size and scope and proportion of ethical lapses and of corrupt activity or at least people who have been accused of that corrupt activity, it becomes deeply, deeply troubling.

We have a former Member, only recently former as of last week, who admitted guilt to bribery. I mean, this is a person who was a ranking member on an appropriations subcommittee in this body, and someone who absolutely violated the trust of his constituents and the trust of the American people.

I know we have other Members in this Chamber, in this body, who have been accused of ethical wrongdoing, and there have been quite a few of those who have been accused of ethical wrongdoing in the administration as well.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that America deserves better. We can work together and give America a better government, a government that stands up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. A government who under-

stands that we are not all of the problem and we can be part of the solution to the problems in America and to the problems in people's individual lives.

□ 1730

That is unfortunately not what it appears are the priorities that are shared by the Republican leadership in this institution or in the administration.

We have got to move this country in a new direction, Mr. Speaker. We have an agenda on the Democratic side that would do just that. I want to spend a few minutes talking about that agenda.

This is the 30-something Working Group, and in the 30-something Working Group, one of the things that we try to do is help our generation understand. What happens with our generation is that often they feel less in touch with the inner workings of government. They do not really see, for example, how Social Security reform could potentially alter their future. The 30-something Working Group comes to this floor each night and tries to help demystify a lot of the government programs that maybe our generation does not feel the impact of directly.

I want to talk about Democratic leader NANCY PELOSI's innovation agenda, which is the innovation agenda of the Democratic Party and the Democratic Caucus. She rolled that out just last week, and it is an agenda that appeals and speaks directly to our generation.

We have a challenge today in this country that in years past countries around the world would follow the United States in terms of our innovation and our future technological advances. One has only to look back to when I was 3 years old in 1969 and we put the first man on the Moon. That was something at the time that no one thought possible. I heard my parents and I heard Leader PELOSI talk about it just the other morning where it was so foreign a concept, something completely unfathomable to my parents' generation, not something that they ever thought possible; and yet when President Kennedy talked about it, I think it was accomplished in 9 years.

America was previously a country that the rest of the world looked to as innovators; and now because of the direction that this Republican leadership and the Republican administration have taken us in, the anvil of Washington has stagnated our ability to be innovators.

What we have done is we took a process and went outside of Washington. We went to the technological centers across the country and sat with CEOs and the leaders of technological companies across the country and asked them what they think. Let me just give you a few examples of the type of leadership and the differences and the changes that have occurred.

America now ranks 16th in the world in broadband penetration. That is the difference between when I was a child

in 1969 and where we are today. America ranks 16th in broadband penetration, broadband subscribers per 100 inhabitants on January 1, 2005. You look at the countries, we are not at the top. Korea is at the top. Hong Kong and China are at the top. Iceland is doing better than we are in terms of broadband penetration. What happened to America leading the way on innovation? We are 16th in penetration.

We have an agenda that would change that. We have an agenda that would put broadband access in every household in 5 years. That is a goal that we absolutely should strive for. We have got to make sure that our generation raises their kids, that we raise our kids to be first, to have the attitude that it is America first. That is how it was when we were kids when President Kennedy was in office, and that is how it should be again.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it was interesting talking to Leader PELOSI the other day, and some of her conversations that she had were about she and our leadership team actually went out and engaged the technology community and sought their recommendations. They were saying we need to do this in the next 2 years. Our friends on the other side do not have a plan at all. We have a plan to do it in the next 5 years, and many people in the high-tech community are saying we need it done in the next year or two years.

This is something that we cannot wait on, and I think the difference here is that we are showing very specific proposals here, very specific goals that need to be achieved in order for America to push forward in the 21st century. It does not happen with the same old rhetoric of the supply side voodoo economics. It is just not working.

Last night, you know how you get on your computer and you just start floating around, and God knows where you end up. We got out of here late, and I could not fall asleep. So I got on my computer and I was floating around, and I got into some space stuff from the space program. Then I made my way to the space speech that President Kennedy gave in Houston in the early 1960s; and I tell you what, they have the audio version which is very cool. If any American wants to think about where we should be and the kind of leadership that they deserve from us, they just need to read that speech or listen to that speech. That was about just taking things to the next level.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We should put it on our Web site.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We should put it on our Web site, and I think we will have to do that.

It was about here is the vision, here is why and here is why it is our call at this moment in history; and I think when you talk about something like broadband, you talk about alternative energy sources, you talk about research and development, whether it is into the human mind or the human genome or whatever it may be. It is

about setting these lofty goals for our country, not to go shopping, which is the great call from this administration.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, the other place that we are lagging behind is global education standards. I was shocked to learn that the difference in the number of students who graduate with an engineering degree from nation to nation is staggering.

Here is another place, sadly, where we are no longer first. China is first. They are first by miles. They graduated 600,000 students with an engineering degree this year; 350,000 with engineering degree in India; and 70,000 in the United States.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. A lot of ours are foreign born who will return to probably one of those two countries.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There is no question, and I can tell you that if you even examine further the details of those numbers, what is even sadder is how few women and young women are graduating with those kinds of degrees. We need to make sure that we grow our scientists of the future and that we encourage our kids who are going through the universities, actually really we have to start in elementary school, to encourage them to pursue science and math pathways so that ultimately they get involved in the science fairs and enter their projects in the science fairs and work their way through so that they know they want to go to a university and get an engineering degree.

We have a plan that will take us in that direction. We have a plan that will add 100,000 new scientists, mathematicians and engineers to America's workforce in the next 4 years, and we can do that using our ability to provide scholarships and other financial assistance and work with the private sector to create opportunities for students who go to college to achieve that goal; but that is something that government has to initiate. That is not something that can completely be incubated in the private sector and occur on its own. Those things do not occur in a vacuum.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Think of the ripple effect. Throughout our society, from wages to new inventions, new patents, the whole 9 yards, the ripple effect throughout the community.

We have a business incubator in one of our towns, in Youngstown that is, whether it is computers or science or whatever, creating jobs in our urban centers; and you begin to put together a program where you have research, you have engineering graduates, you have business incubators, you have the arts.

One of the things that I want to add to that, when I was in China, I went for 2 weeks in August. The two things that the Chinese were saying that American engineers have that those 600,000 do not have, they really do not have the skills that we have. We are more creative and we work in teams better, and they were

saying that they just cannot teach the Chinese how to do these things, no matter how hard they try. One party system, Communist system, everything is very narrow. You always look to the hierarchy. It is just very narrow thinking.

It occurred to me that the very two things, in addition to not creating enough engineers, but the very two things that give us our competitive advantage around the globe are the first two things that we usually cut in our schools, the arts programs and the team programs, the pay-to-play, where kids get boxed out. It is basketball season now for high schools, 12 varsity kids, 12 junior varsity kids and a freshman team, and that is it. No one else gets to play. We need to have an agenda that promotes teamwork, the arts, these things that create our advantage.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, the things that make kids grow up into whole people. What happens now is because we are inadequately funding education, our classrooms in most of the major urban population centers and now even in some places that would not be considered so urban, the classrooms are so crowded they are bursting at the seams. They are having to use the art rooms and the band room and the music rooms for classroom space.

So as a result, electives are so reduced or the funding is cut for them. So you are graduating kids who know how to take tests. They are test takers, and those are not the kind of skills that small businesses are looking for when they are sitting across the desk after a kid has graduated from high school or even college. I can tell you, because I taught at the college level for several years both at the university and community college level, you would not believe the writing skills or lack of writing skills that someone whose whole educational career has been structured towards taking tests, what those writing skills look like.

We are not graduating whole, well-balanced kids who have critical thinking skills and the creativity that those kinds of classes and elective courses help to shape them into adults that will be able to work in groups and dream big dreams and make us the innovators and that have been the tradition of innovation that Americans have always led the way on. It is just not that way anymore, and we have got to get back in that direction.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are in the process, I think everyone would agree, of creating a new economy. No one really knows what direction it is going to go in; but we know some of the fundamentals, like broadband, are a very important part of that. So why not make it accessible to everybody, just like we did with roads? That was a huge subsidy for the auto industry for years. I mean, where is the auto industry, where are the car manufacturers without roads? Where are the great railroad companies without the railroad lines?

These are the kinds of things that I think we need to do. Water lines, sewer lines were the key in the industrial age; and in the high-tech Information Age, that is the road and the bridge.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is it right there, and you cannot do those things when you are hampered every day by having to answer questions from reporters and from your constituents on your ethical lapses and on the corruption accusations and on cronism. We all know that those things are distracting. When you have to concentrate all of your energy and effort and attention on corruption and cronism and your incompetence, how are you going to be able to focus on innovation? How are you going to be able to focus on the future?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think that has been the focus of our friends on the other side. They have been so focused on taking care of their friends in particular industries that we have gotten away from the mission here, which is to strengthen the United States of America in a \$323 billion budget deficit that the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan organization, is saying we are going to have. That is less money that we are able to invest in the country, and a stronger America begins right here at home.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely. We are not addressing the high cost of gasoline. We have a plan that would make us energy independent within 10 years. We have got to make sure we start innovating in that direction. We have got to make sure we stop relying solely on foreign oil. We have investments that we can make in research and development so that we can expand our ability to generate alternative energy sources. We have to help small businesses. We have to make sure that small business can thrive. They cannot thrive with upwards of 15 percent increases in their health insurance costs every year. We have got to make sure we have access to health care in this country.

That is the direction the Democrats would take this country and break the gridlock that we seem to be mired in, in which every single day there is another accusation of corruption. Every single day there is another example of a person who was selected or nominated or chosen for a job in the administration who is wholly unqualified for the breadth and scope of experience that that person would need to do that job effectively. What happens? They make horrible mistakes, and that is the next day's headlines, not the headlines that we had in 1969 that America was first to land a man on the Moon.

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Ms. WASSERMAN-SCHULTZ. We have a limited amount of time, I think we have about 5 minutes left, Mr. RYAN, but I am really excited about this innovation agenda. I just wish that we were able to bring the other side of the aisle to the table.

One of the things that has been frustrating to me as a freshman, and I have only been here 11 months now, but I came from a legislature that had its share of partisanship. But we had partisanship on 10 or 12 issues, maybe. You would have 10 or 12 issues that the two parties and the leaders of the two parties would duke it out to the end. Both sides would go to their respective corners and you knew on those issues we would not find common ground and that was that.

But on other issues, and I am talking about other issues related to health insurance and property insurance and tax relief, and not little itty bitty issues, not the small stuff but some really big things, that if everybody on both sides of the aisle, all the interested parties are willing to sit down at the table and use another C word. Because we are really big on C words, I want a good C word, not cronyism, not corruption, not a lack of competence, I want compromise. That is the C word I would like to see used here. In my 11 months here, I have not seen a whole lot of interest in compromise. It is my-way-or-the-highway type of politics here, and that is really sad.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the agenda the gentlewoman has been articulating over the past 20 minutes or so I think separates us from even how our party used to be. Everybody has their crosses to bear, and I think we had been labeled many times as just a tax-and-spend party who never came up, at least in the last few years, with any really great ideas.

Most of the Democrats over here voted yesterday for the alternative minimum tax, to make sure that average people will get a tax cut and they will not be burdened. So I think we are moving away from that. And I would say most of us have voted for middle class tax relief on a variety of occasions. But what we are saying here is that this is the broadband and the engineering. And our approach to this thing, research and development, tax credits, our approach to this is a new approach that neither party has had, but we have it now.

The Democratic party is offering a new approach to this. And it is, in many ways, having broadband penetration for every single student and for every household in the next 5 years is an anti-poverty program. It is a job-creation program. These kids who live in poverty, we need to help them with heating oil and we do need to make sure these kids have the proper diet and the proper nutrition and all that. That is stuff that still needs to happen. But if that kid is caught in the digital divide, caught at the wrong end of the digital divide, that kid will never have an opportunity to hook up to any kind of economic growth that we may have because of this.

That is why it is so important to get it everywhere. And what we are saying is we want that kid, who is somewhere in rural America or somewhere in some

inner city, to have access to this. Because with a quality education, access to the technology and the proper community support, that kid will become a wealth creator. They will be creating wealth and paying taxes, instead of asking can I get qualified for the earned income tax credit, am I going to be on Medicaid, or what do I need?

We want to propel people. And America needs to be a country of opportunity again, Debbie. It needs to be a country where people can say, I can be anything I want, I can do whatever I want because the proper infrastructure was in place when I was a kid to help propel me into a bright future.

Ms. WASSERMAN-SCHULTZ. So as we close out, Mr. Speaker, and I think Mr. RYAN is going to put the board up that shows our 30-Something Web site, I have one wish. I have a wish for the holiday season; that we shift from the C words, the negative C words that have been prevalent in the headlines and in this Chamber, that we move away from the cronyism, from the corruption, from the lack of competence. And my wish for the holiday season and the new year is that we adopt a more positive C word; come together and find some common ground and some compromise.

That seems to have been elusive, elusive mostly because it does not appear the Republican leadership has had any interest in finding common ground and compromise. So that is my wish for the holiday season.

We want to thank the Democratic leader for the time spending some time on the floor discussing our views, and I yield to my colleague to give out the Web site.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yes, this is the 30 Something Working Group. Send us an e-mail at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. Thirty, the number, somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3199, USA PATRIOT IMPROVEMENT AND REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (during the special order of Mr. KING of Iowa) submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 3199) to extend and modify authorities needed to combat terrorism, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 109-333)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing vote of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3199), to extend and modify authorities needed to combat terrorism, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE*.—This Act may be cited as the “USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005”.

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS*.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—USA PATRIOT IMPROVEMENT AND REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Sec. 101. References to, and modification of short title for, USA PATRIOT Act.

Sec. 102. USA PATRIOT Act sunset provisions.

Sec. 103. Extension of sunset relating to individual terrorists as agents of foreign powers.

Sec. 104. Section 2332b and the material support sections of title 18, United States Code.

Sec. 105. Duration of FISA surveillance of non-United States persons under section 207 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Sec. 106. Access to certain business records under section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Sec. 106A. Audit on access to certain business records for foreign intelligence purposes.

Sec. 107. Enhanced oversight of good-faith emergency disclosures under section 212 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Sec. 108. Multipoint electronic surveillance under section 206 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Sec. 109. Enhanced congressional oversight.

Sec. 110. Attacks against railroad carriers and mass transportation systems.

Sec. 111. Forfeiture.

Sec. 112. Section 2332b(g)(5)(B) amendments relating to the definition of Federal crime of terrorism.

Sec. 113. Amendments to section 2516(1) of title 18, United States Code.

Sec. 114. Delayed notice search warrants.

Sec. 115. Judicial review of national security letters.

Sec. 116. Confidentiality of national security letters.

Sec. 117. Violations of nondisclosure provisions of national security letters.

Sec. 118. Reports on national security letters.

Sec. 119. Audit of use of national security letters.

Sec. 120. Definition for forfeiture provisions under section 806 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Sec. 121. Penal provisions regarding trafficking in contraband cigarettes or smokeless tobacco.

Sec. 122. Prohibition of narco-terrorism.

Sec. 123. Interfering with the operation of an aircraft.

Sec. 124. Sense of Congress relating to lawful political activity.

Sec. 125. Removal of civil liability barriers that discourage the donation of fire equipment to volunteer fire companies.

Sec. 126. Report on data-mining activities.

Sec. 127. Sense of Congress.

Sec. 128. USA PATRIOT Act section 214; authority for disclosure of additional information in connection with orders for pen register and trap and trace authority under FISA.

TITLE II—TERRORIST DEATH PENALTY ENHANCEMENT

Sec. 201. Short title.

Subtitle A—Terrorist penalties enhancement Act

Sec. 211. Death penalty procedures for certain air piracy cases occurring before enactment of the Federal Death Penalty Act of 1994.

Sec. 212. Postrelease supervision of terrorists.