

There he is. The face and the voice of the Democratic Party, the leader of the left. One of the inspirational voices that mobilizes the other party for pessimism, negativism, and attacks. This individual whom we know pretty well, Howard Dean, DNC chairman, spent a lot of time in my home State of Iowa, about a year and a half in there.

He was there most of the time going through the counties and the cities. I will grant him, he worked very hard running for President. And this is the picture that I think has been made famous by that mainstream news media that finally did turn on one of their own. I do not think he quite deserved the hit that he took over that.

But that frustration from the scream, his failure to win the caucuses in Iowa and his failure to win the nomination on through that process did not really come from the scream. The scream was a result of, but the people who met him in the coffee shops and the living rooms understood the real man here, the man here that says, "The idea that we are going to win is just plain wrong."

Do you not think these other people I put up here see this man as a leader of the United States of America, the voice of the Democratic Party, the almost-majority in the House of Representatives? Of course they do. And they hear this message: the idea that we are going to win is just plain wrong.

Now, if you had seen your troops decimated like al Qaeda has, if you had watched 3,000 of them disappear from your ability to utilize them in combat, in battle, 3,000 every month, those that are either killed or captured, and you do not see that in the mainstream news media, that is a number that does not come out here anywhere that I can find. But I can tell you that that is the number that has been the average over the last several months, 3,000 of the enemy off the streets, killed and captured.

So that has got to be dispiriting to them. We are losing casualties. It hurts us. It breaks the confidence of the people on the other side of the aisle. What would our confidence be if it were 3,000 of ours lost every month instead of the numbers that we are facing today?

So what happens? This man stands up and says the idea that we are going to win is just plain wrong. Well, if you are all beaten down after your 3,000th casualty for the month, and if you are looking for some optimism, here is the place to go. There are plenty of voices over here that bring this optimism for the other side.

They keep mentioning the Vietnam War. That is the only war that the liberals ever won; they just won it for the wrong side, Mr. Speaker, and are trying to win another one. They have got so much invested in failure in Iraq, they could not abide by that.

So I would ask this other side of the aisle, define victory. I will define it. We have had this sequence of it that took place. We listened to the gentleman

from Texas (Mr. POE) talk about being in Iraq during the elections, the first free elections in January, with the purple fingers in air, 8½ million Iraqis voted.

We went through sequence of liberations, martial law, a Coalition Provisional Authority under Paul Bremer and handed over to a civilian government until such time as they could set up the elections, which they did in January, and they elected then a provisional parliament, an interim temporary parliament whose job it was to write the Constitution. On October 15 then they ratified their Constitution.

And 10 days later we had leaders of this country that were speaking against the effort and undermining their freedom. And now here we are just a few days from a real election in Iraq that finally culminates this whole process and gives them a legitimate sovereignty in Iraq, one that will select a prime minister, gives them the ability now to take this massive amount of oil wealth that they have, market some oil contracts for development so that they can start to get this cash-flow coming back into Iraq, lift that country up.

They are just dilapidated and depreciated from 35 years of neglect. We have given them a little shot in the arm, \$18.5 billion. The number was wrong over here, by the way, last night. It was not 87 billion that went in there to rebuild Iraq. It was 18.5. The balance was for the military. But 18.5 billion of that, 12½ the Army invested, and the balance of that was scattered through some other entities. That was like the down payment on your house that gets them started.

They will be certified December 15. There is hope. There is freedom. We must stick it out.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHENRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to appear before the House again this evening. My colleague on the other side and I, we are here almost every night.

I just wanted to say the new government, of course the election will take place December 15. They will not be seated until March. I know that sometimes we are having to close and say things and we are under the clock. They are going to be seated in March. Then we are going to have to wait to see how they feel about us, the United States of America, not having a plan as it relates to being able to draw down our troops, allow a NATO force to go in. I just left there the week before. I met with General Dewey talking about the NATO force that is going to come in after hopefully we start to draw down our troops.

So we have to allow that process to take place. But I do appreciate some of

information you shared tonight with Members of the House. Thank you for your service here.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but tell you that the 30-Something Working Group, we continue to work hard, not only working hard on behalf of the people that we represent in our given districts throughout the country, but also representing the entire population of the United States of America.

As you know, and I have mentioned night after night, this is truly the people's House. You cannot be appointed to the U.S. House of Representatives; you have to run. If someone resigns or leaves the House for some reason, a special election is set by the Governor.

If a Senator were to leave, as we see right now, the Senator of New Jersey was elected Governor of that State, he has to make the decision on who he wants to fill that seat. That will be by appointment. That individual will serve until that next election until that term is out.

But not in the House. So that is the reason why we are like on the frontlines of providing the American people with the kind of leadership that they deserve. Now, I want to talk a little bit about leadership and responsibility. I also want to compare, in a way, because, Mr. Speaker, I hope and I wish and my prayer is that there can be a paradigm shift here in the House of Representatives, a paradigm shift in a way that we can all work together in a bipartisan way on a number of issues.

I think the issues that we are facing now, there is a health care crisis in this country, could be addressed in a bipartisan way. I think some of the issues that some Members of the House brought up as it relates to Social Security, we are definitely concerned about some of the issues that are facing Social Security.

But the majority side tried to ram it down the throats of the American people to privatize Social Security versus fixing Social Security in a way that it will be here for generations beyond the 50 years that it is already set to provide the services at today's levels to the recipients of Social Security, need it be disability or retirement or survivor benefits.

In a bipartisan way, we can move in that direction. That is what the American people want. As it relates to making sure that we can keep U.S. jobs on U.S. soil, we can do that in a bipartisan way. And I must say bipartisan, because when the Democrats were in the majority, we did do things in a bipartisan way. Right now we are under an environment, we are as partisan as we can be, not because we have the control to make ourselves partisan, it is the fact that we cannot have input in making sure here in this House on the Democratic side, we are not allowed to have the kind of input, because the majority believes so shall it be written, so shall it be done.

Just watch what we do. If you question us, we will insult you, or we would

say, oh, well, you do not quite know what is going on. Oh, you just want to derail our plan. Why do we not have a unified plan for America? And that is what Americans are calling for.

I want to talk a little bit about the budget, talk about the responsibility that we must have as we start moving forward. We want this country to strengthen, not only in security, but also in unity, and make sure that we protect the environment, and make sure that we protect the homeland as it relates to homeland security, to make sure for the very individuals that are getting sand in their teeth now, be it Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan or Iraq, we have to make sure that we run this country in a way that it should be run, so that not only this generation but future generations can celebrate not only personal finance but also making sure that they are safe.

The Republicans passed the \$54 billion cuts in the budget. I must say that it is quite crippling, Mr. Speaker. The Republican majority will add to the deficit some \$8 trillion under what the majority calls, Mr. Speaker, a deficit reduction. We passed a budget of \$52 billion today. We took action today to increase the budget by \$8 trillion. That is according to the Department of Treasury.

It is important to also let every American know that this number is inching up. In the 108th Congress, it was lower. The beginning of this Congress, it was even lower. But now it is higher: \$6,983.89 cents every American owes as it relates to the debt. You would have some believe or have Americans believe and some Members believe here in this Congress that we are doing the right thing by the American people by putting them further into debt.

It is almost like the high-interest credit card that you receive in the mail. I get them all the time. I mean, they mail credit cards to me. Sign right here. No problem. Interest free for the first 3 months. But in the fine print, I must say in this Congress on the majority side there is a lot of fine print. There is a \$75 annual fee that will be tacked onto the credit card even before you use it. Just by you signing it and mailing it back in, that is \$75.

And then the interest rate goes up, if you read the fine print, if you are late on one payment. It goes up to a 24 percent interest rate, because you signed that contract.

Well, the American people went into the ballot box on a given Tuesday in a given community to vote for representation, not for individuals to exploit the fact that they are here to represent them and turn their head when proposals are put forth that can help save the American taxpayer money in the short and long run.

And so we are going to talk a little bit tonight about what we call here in Washington, D.C., the Potomac two-

step. We are going to talk about what some people call in parts of the country "hoodwink."

So we want to make sure that people understand what is going on here with third-party validators, not just fiction, not just what they say, or not just what some unidentified Member said on the floor. We are going to make sure that the Members know exactly what is going on, how it is going on, and when it is going on. It is going on right now.

I always say, Mr. Speaker, when the historians look at the 109th Congress, they are going to be looking at fiscal irresponsibility. They are going to say, how did this happen? How did we try to nation-build in Iraq when we had leaders, be it the executive branch or Members here in the Congress, say we are not in the business of nation-building? Now we are in the business of nation-building.

We are in the business of nation-building in a foreign land. We do not want anyone else to be a part of it. We do not want folks to come in and be a part of what we have to do to be able to allow the Iraqi Government to move in a direction so they can be self-sufficient. We must take the training wheels off the Iraqi Government.

Being a Member of the Armed Services Committee, I must add, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we give them some direction as it relates to security forces and as it relates to the responsibility of their very own government. And whatever internal conflicts that may go on on that given plan, if we may see it from the leadership, not just talking about we are going to have complete victory without really looking at how you are going to bring about complete victory, but if we are going to continue to stay and spend the taxpayers' money when U.S. cities are hurting, and when the American people are hurting, then we really have to look at our checks and balances.

□ 1900

That is the only thing I can share with the Members. All we can do is what we present here in the Congress. We play under the rules of the majority side. But I believe the American people, they do have a voice in this.

Now, I would feel a little uncomfortable talking about that, Mr. Speaker, if I did not see poll after poll that the American people disagree with what the administration is saying, with what the White House is saying, with what the majority of Republicans are saying. So I can see if I was all by myself in saying, folks do not necessarily feel that. I do not know what the Democrats are talking about. I do not know what the 30-something Working Group folks are talking about in Congress. No, we are talking about what the American people are talking about, and we are here to give them voice.

Going back to this budget, \$12 billion in Medicaid cuts over the next 5 years; \$12 billion in Medicaid cuts over the

next 5 years; \$47.7 billion in Medicaid over 10 years. The Democratic budget that we wanted to bring to the floor, we were not even allowed to bring to the floor under the rules. We did have it in the committee, made no cuts to Medicaid.

I think it is important that people realize what is happening. I am going to share these cuts and then we will talk about today's action. You have the Republican raid on student loan aid or student aid to help young people make it to college. \$14.3 billion cuts in students aid programs. \$14.3 billion. I am just going to let that sink in. \$14.3 billion. And I think that is important for people to understand. \$7.8 billion in new charges on student loans that students and parents borrow. That is \$7.8 billion, everyday Americans, Democrats, Republicans, heartland, east coast, west coast, Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, east Texas. We are not discriminating where you are from.

The bottom line is that you will pay more in charges for student loans that you borrow to educate your children and educate yourselves. And the Democratic budget as it relates to student aid, zero cuts, zero. I am going to let that sink in. Zero. A typical student, an individual that graduates, is \$17,500 in debt. Over the last 5 years, tuition has gone up 57 percent at public colleges and universities. Tuition has gone up 32 percent at private colleges and universities. Forty-one percent of college graduates have an average of \$3,071 in credit card debt, and financial barriers already prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending college.

Now, that is today's statistics. By the time this budget passes, we will find ourselves in deep trouble right here again on this chart, Mr. Speaker. I want to make sure that the Members see this because these are the facts. It is not fiction. This is not something that was drawn up in the backroom and said, oh, we will just say that, we will just say that they did this. This is actually what happened in the budget that passed this House, the Republican budget.

Once again, a typical student graduates with \$17,500 in debt. Over the last 5 years, tuition has gone up 57 percent in public colleges and universities. Tuition has gone up 32 percent in private colleges and universities. Forty-one percent of college grads average \$3,071 in credit card debt, and financial barriers already prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending college.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what the Republican Congress has done to the American people they have done with the \$14.3 billion in cuts in students aid programs, and then to turn around \$7.8 billion in new charges, that means that this statistic is going to go up from 44 to possibly over 50 percent. You want to talk about responsibility and who is on your side and who is not?

We also have to look at the fact of what happened in this Republican

budget that affects rural America. I got a lot of cousins in the area called Montezuma, Georgia, and they are farmers. And they farm and they really look to their government for assistance because we have given other countries subsidies so that they compete against our farmers. A billion dollars in cuts, a billion dollars in cuts in farm programs in the Republican budget, rural development research and energy programs, cuts, \$1.1 billion. Conservation programs cut by \$760 million; \$844 million reduction in the food stamp program.

Also, when you look at rural America, I have to add in the over-\$650 million that they instructed the Republican majority budget, instructed the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to cut out of their budget over the next 5 years. And so I think it is important that people understand in rural America, veterans, farmers, people that are living in the heartland.

I was in Kentucky a couple of years ago. Folks that are out there trying to make themselves whole, educate their children, you are getting a double whammy. Number one, we will take the very programs that assist you in the little way the U.S. Department of Agriculture is able to assist you. But when this Republican majority gets finished with you, if you happen to be a farmer, you are going to have big problems because we are around here cutting the budget to do what? What we did today: to give millionaires tax breaks. That is the way this thing circles back around.

So let us just tell the whole story here. Let us just not flick and pick and say we will talk about this because that sounds good. Rural America, if you are a veteran, we have veterans clinics, not hospitals, clinics that are in rural America where they are only open one day a week now. When this Republican majority is finished with you, I do not know when it is going to be, once every 2 weeks, once a month. I mean, they are going to have to go in there and dust things off because they will not be able to operate it.

I am going to get this next chart here as it relates to what the Republican budget cuts, how it affects children. I just want to take about 4 more minutes here because I think it is important. And I want the gentleman to get the chart that talks about the \$87,000 gift we gave to billionaires. I mean, what the Republican majority gave to billionaires today, and talk about what the hardworking Americans, what they have got, they got peanuts when people got folding dollars to put in their pocket. You cannot put \$87,000 in your pocket. You just cannot do that. But what the everyday American got, they will be lucky if they can even squeeze a dinner out of it.

So let me talk a little bit more about this. The budget as it affects children, \$4.9 billion in cuts from the child support enforcement programs, that is going to what, allow States attorneys and allow other agencies to go after

deadbeat parents that walk out on their children and do not pay child support. We cut \$4.9 billion, not million, not \$4,900; 4.9, almost \$5 billion from child support enforcement.

Now, I did not get one letter from a sheriff that said we want that to happen. I did not get one letter from a State's attorney that says we really appreciate the fact that you cut \$4.9 billion from child support; it is going to make our job harder. As a result, parents will receive \$7.1 billion less in child support over the next 5 years. I am going to say that again because that is one of those things that must sink in with the American people. Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green Party, whatever you are, non-voter, just everyday hardworking American.

As a result of the Republican budget that passed this floor with Republican votes, not one Democrat vote for that budget that they passed, parents will receive \$7.1 billion less in child support over the next 5 years and \$21.3 billion less over the next 10 years; \$577 million cut from child care. I am going to let that sink in.

AARP, the very organization that represents seniors in this country, was opposed to this budget in the Medicaid cuts. Here is the letter right here. This is not on my stationery. It is on AARP stationery. Editorial after editorial talked about the fact that Americans that are trying to struggle and they are trying to make it, I heard a lot of talk today about, well, you know, if the Democrats have their way, you will not even be able to buy gifts for your children. Oh, please. That is weaker than watered down tea or lemonade. I do not know if the Members ever had lemonade that is watered down. It does not taste good. As a matter of fact, it does not even look good. It looks like water.

I think it is important that the American people understand the bottom line is that people that make over half a million dollars are happy today. Corporations that have special interest contacts with the majority side and with the administration are happy today because once again they were able to bring about riches for them while the American people get crumbs. Watered down tea. Watered down lemonade.

As it relates to prescription drugs, still seniors will have an opportunity to do great things for them. We still have seniors. Guess what they were getting? Watered down and cut-in-half drugs that they cannot even afford the full dose. I just would like to ask the gentleman if he would break down, I mean, I talked about these cuts because these cuts, I was told by the majority side that they were to set the stage to decrease the budget, not increase the budget. Oh, we have to make sure that we no longer deficit spend. And today we turn around, or the majority turns around, and do exactly that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The reason I think it is important that we are down here right now at 7:15 on a Thursday night when most Members have gone home is because we are talking about the future of our country. This is to run the deficit up another \$30 billion in order to give tax cuts primarily to those millionaires. 45 percent of tax cuts that we passed today will go to millionaires. Forty-five percent.

Now 45 percent of taxpayers are not millionaires, but they are going to get 45. So it is totally disproportionate to the average income in the United States of America. Here is what we have been doing before today as far as the tax cuts go. And if you have made \$441,000 and up, you have got on average \$87,000 back. \$87,000 back. And today the average millionaire is going to get \$32,000 more back. And that is so you are talking about a millionaire getting well over \$100,000, \$130,000 because this is the average: \$130,000 back in tax cuts.

You are talking about borrowing money from the Chinese Government, from the Japanese Government, from the Saudi Arabians in order to pay for this. We do not have money. We are not running a surplus right now.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There is a war. There is a war going on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This President has been the first President in the history of our country to cut taxes for the wealthiest Americans in a time of war. Where is the shared sacrifice? I mean, average people are struggling. I have a district that has thousands of Delphi workers, General Motors workers. We are hearing now that Ford is going to cut 30,000 jobs and close 10 plants in North America. These are the challenges that people in middle America are facing, and the time and energy of this body is spent figuring out a way to reduce the tax burden.

So I tell you what, if you make over a million dollars and you are out in America today, today has been a great day for you. This Congress has treated you pretty well. You are going to have a good holiday season probably for the next couple of years because of what has been happening.

□ 1915

Our obligation here is to represent the public. Our obligation here, when we swear to the Constitution, is to do what is best for the entire country and to do this in a couple of different ways.

We are running a \$323 billion deficit projected for 2006, \$323 billion that we are going to have to borrow in order to close the hole in the Nation's budget. We are borrowing that money from the Chinese, the Japanese, the Saudi Arabians and other countries.

At the same time, because we are running those huge deficits, we are also giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country. So, if you make over \$440,000, you are going to get on average \$87,000, plus what we did today. So you are talking about closer to \$100,000.

If you make between \$34,000 and \$54,000, that is what you get, \$840. I think we said today that the average person who makes under \$100,000, half of those people will get \$30 back. So, if you make \$100,000 a year, on average, half of those people will get \$30 back today. That is not much of a middle class tax cut as far as I am concerned.

We are moving in the wrong direction. At the same time that we are borrowing money from the Chinese, running these huge deficits, cutting taxes for the wealthiest people in our country, at the same time we are doing that, we are also cutting programs here in the United States, the food stamp program, the college tuition program. The Pell grant program is being cut. The child support enforcement program which will help fund local county commissioners and local county organizations to go out and get deadbeat dads who are not paying their child support, that is what we are cutting.

It just does not make any sense, and I think the American people, when they start hearing this stuff, they intuitively know something wrong is happening. But I think when they hear the facts of what is going on in their government right now, this culture of corruption that is here is starting to make its way back into their households.

Let me make one final comment point. At the same time we are doing all this, the legislation that we are passing out of here is benefiting the interest groups that donate a lot of money to our friends on the other side, to the Republican majority, and this body, this Congress and this White House has been used as a sand box, as a trough to where the cronies, the Michael Browns who are running FEMA and the seven or eight top people at FEMA, this administrator who was over in Iraq who had \$87 million to administer in the war and took a couple of hundred thousand in kickbacks, who was convicted of fraud in the 1990s, they hired him anyway because he was a crony of one of the administration officials. This is completely incompetence and an inability to govern, and these tax cuts are out of control, and they are happening at the expense of average people.

Again, today has been great day for the millionaires in the United States.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I hate to break in when you have a stream of thoughts that are there, but I wanted to just share just one moment, and I think it is important for us to realize, when you start talking about what is happening and how we got to where we are, Mr. Speaker, once again my famous chart we know we have to put more on to it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. There is more than that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We have to put more into this and we have to do more with this. Matter of fact, I want to make sure that staff get this on. It is factual. Matter of fact, it is from the department of the U.S. Treasury so

this is not fiction. This is third party validators. I am going to possibly get this on my Web site if it is not already on there, on my House Web site, to make sure the American people understand what is happening to them.

\$1.05 trillion this President has borrowed along with this Republican Congress here in this House and over in the Senate. Forty-two Presidents before this President, \$1.01 trillion, 224 years, 1776 to 2000. I am going to say that again, year 1776 to the year 2000, \$1.01 trillion borrowed from foreign Nations. From this government, one President, one Republican majority, \$1.05 trillion.

Oh, we know exactly what we are doing on the majority side. They say, oh, yes, the Democrats, they do not have any thoughts on balancing the budget and making our country more sound financially; we have all the great ideas. Well, guess what, the great ideas have countries like China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, just to name a few, their hand in our cookie jar. They have a piece of the American pie right now, not because they took it. It is because the Republican majority gave it to them on a silver platter.

The Republican majority is saying we can go to war, we can Nation build in a foreign land, we can also give tax cuts to billionaires and millionaires and give the American people peanuts in a tax cut. The first time in the history of this country, there is a lot of record-breaking things that are going on here, and it is not all good. \$1.05 trillion, Mr. Speaker, in money that foreign Nations that we borrowed from foreign Nations. That is making history in the wrong way.

I do not see anyone coming to the floor on the majority side saying guess what we have done, \$1.05 trillion, we have borrowed more than 42 Presidents before this President and before this Republican House, we have done that. We have done it. We have accomplished that. No one is cheerleading about that. No one is willing to talk about that. So, if we want to level with the American people, let us tell them the truth. Go on to the U.S. Treasury Web site.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Some people say what does that have to do with the 30 Somethings, are we not supposed to talk about the interests of college education and child tax credits and that stuff? No. The future of our country is being placed in another country's hands, which gives up control of our own destiny because we are going to have to make payments.

It is just like when you go to a bank. You borrow money, you have to pay interest on that money, and we are borrowing it from the Chinese. We are going to have to pay interest on it, and the Chinese are taking that interest. They have a lot of State-owned companies that they are going to pump our money back into. It is bad enough that General Motors and Delphi and a lot of these other corporations are investing money into China. Now they are get-

ting it from the American taxpayer, and the Chinese Government will invest that money into their economy, whether it is in the auto industry or some other industry. They will have that money invested into their economy, long term.

This is a dangerous proposition to not balance your budget in the United States of America, and we are Democrats. We believe in fiscal discipline. This long-term recklessness coming from the Republican party and Republican leadership is putting our country in danger, not just danger, grave danger.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, let me just say this. I will not say it is the Republican party because I know some Republicans that are upset about what this Republican majority has done to the deficit. You know why we can speak with meaning and with backing on the Democratic side? Because we have actually balanced the budget and took it into surplus when we were in control of this House, Mr. Speaker. That is not fiction. That is fact.

So for folks that run around here and talk about what could be, what we will have if we do this and are using these words, going out and taking polls and saying how can we John Wayne this thing with the one liner, let me tell you something. The reality is here in America we are weakening a country, not a foreign country, weaken a country, not the special interests that come down here and from Shakedown Street like Mr. RYAN said, weaken a country. We are the ones carrying the voting cards. We are the stewards of this government. We are the Americans that were chosen out of many to come to this House and represent the people of the United States, not represent special interests, not represent the billionaires that are saying keep the tax cuts going while I watch a war on CNN and MSNBC and WorldNews Tonight as entertainment, saying, oh, wow, another bomb. That is not what they sent us up here for. They sent us up here to lead. We have to make the tough decisions, and I want to say this.

It is important that we take our job seriously, in a serious way, and when we come to this floor this is not political rhetoric. I have gone to Iraq twice, not because someone asked me to go. It was because I wanted to go. I met with our troops. I have talked to our troops, our soldiers, Marines. I have talked to the commanders. We are both on Armed Services. We have heard it since the war started what they have been telling us, what the President has been telling us, what the Iraqis have been telling us.

Now it is time to lead. It is time to lead in the way of making sure we make right decisions, not only on what happens in Iraq, but what happens here in the United States of America, period.

So I think it is important. Folks can have as many press conferences as they want to have. We need to have action

in giving the American people the direction that they are asking for. One poll says 28 percent, another poll says 33 percent approval rating because they want more leadership out of us. They want better and more sound ideas out of us.

Mr. Speaker, they want a bipartisan approach to the issues that are facing Americans today, and they do not see it. That is the reason why they are frustrated, and they are frustrated because they understand what the Republican majority is doing, not allowing Democrats to be able to put amendments on legislation, not allowing Democrats to offer their budget here on this floor, not allowing Democrats to play a vital role in making sure that this country is on equal footing with other countries.

So when folks want to talk about being partisan, that is a party game. That is a political game. That is not an American game. What I am saying is that the real issue here is the fact that, yes, we come to the floor and point out the fact that we are working in a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. You know something, if somebody gets upset about that, anybody gets upset about that, that is a personal problem because it is going on.

This is not the Kendrick Meek/Tim Ryan Report. It is not the 30 Something Report. This is reality. You pick up the paper. You watch the news. We have got investigations going on over in the White House. We have got investigations going on here in the Congress, and at an unprecedented rate, national security breaches. This is by the majority that says trust us, we are the folks that you can trust. So I think it is important that we point that out.

Pointing that out, does that mean now we cannot play in this democracy with the ideas that we have, ideas to be able to help this country become even stronger? That is in the job. We come to Congress to strengthen the country, not to weaken a country financially, and so I think it is important that we realize that.

We said last night you cannot run a business, you cannot go to talk to shareholders and say, listen, do not worry about it. We know that the business, it is like with Enron, the company. It is not like they can go to their shareholders and admit, well, you know, we know that we have a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence and we know that even when it has been pointed out, it still continues here in the corporate headquarters, but do not worry, everything's going to be okay. We know we are borrowing money and we are running deficits, but if we just stay the course, we will end up coming out some kind of way. That CEO will be fired on the spot.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we know when the shareholders ask the leaders of the corporation, we want to see the books, we want to see what is going on, the leaders of the corporation

or the business cannot say no, no, no, you are not allowed to see that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If they ask to see the books and they ask to take part and are trying to help with the problem, trying to get out of the hole that you are in a financial way and they are called, well, you must be a mole from another company; no, you are not really with us, name calling, attacks. That will not happen because the bottom line is that they will not allow it.

□ 1930

So here in the Congress, we have to make sure as it relates to this culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence that we should not allow it to happen.

That is the reason why the hour before, I mean some folks say, why would you give the Speaker credit? I give the Speaker credit by saying there should be some ethics courses here in this House. That is a start, okay? If we have a problem, first we have to say we have a problem and then we can be on the road to recovery.

But if we deny that we have a problem, if we look at the front page of the paper and say, oh, I just do not want to read it today because it is talking about what is happening in the workplace, well, that may be okay if you are in a private company somewhere and you do not have stockholders and it is your money, that is your deal; but when you have the American people and you are using their money and you are making decisions on behalf of a country and you are not willing to look at the issues that are facing us right now as relates to governance, then you are making your problem the American people's problem and the taxpayers' problem.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And to take the analogy even further with the business, how can you just keep going on borrowing, borrowing, borrowing, borrowing, borrowing? That is all we are doing right now. This is the national debt today, \$8.120 trillion. That is a lot of money, \$8 trillion.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Right.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And each person at home owes \$27,000.

We have a notice today that we are going to finish up next week and we are all going to go home for the holidays, Christmas and Hanukah. I cannot wait to get to our Christmas Eve party. We have a Christmas Eve party every year. My mom is Italian, and my Uncle Joe Guerra, who lives in Florida now, is in charge of the sauce. He is going to be making the sauce, and he is going to ask me, what did you do last year in Congress? And I am going to say, well, Uncle Joe, you owe \$27,000 to the national debt, and the country has borrowed \$8 trillion, and that is what we all owe. And as I stated a couple of hours ago when we were here, Nicholas John Ryan, born 3 weeks ago to my brother and his wife Carrie, he owes \$27,000, just like that.

Now that is no way to run a country. And when the Democrats are talking

about balancing the budget and we talk about making some tough decisions and maybe having to go ask a millionaire to maybe pay their fair share in order to reduce the debt and to reduce the annual deficits that we are running, we cannot find anyone with any courage on the other side. But when they have the opportunity to cut Medicaid, to cut the free and reduced lunches, to cut the budget for child support enforcement agencies in our local communities, who go out and try to get money from deadbeat dads, that is where they want to get the money from.

Now, we are not saying that government does not need reform, that we do not need to streamline it. But does it not start with a lot of these contractors in Iraq? We are spending a \$1.5 billion a week in Iraq, Mr. Speaker. A week. We are building dams in Iraq, roads in Iraq, schools in Iraq, training people in Iraq, training health care workers in Iraq and teachers in Iraq, and the outfit on the other side is cutting free and reduced lunches in the United States of America. They do not have the courage to go and ask a millionaire to maybe give up just a few thousand dollars of his tax cut, Mr. Speaker.

This is about leadership. We are at a critical point in the history of the United States of America, Mr. MEEK. We are in a war in Iraq, we are in a war in Afghanistan, and we have huge budget deficits. A \$323 billion budget deficit is projected for next year, yet we cut taxes tonight for millionaires up to the tune of \$32,000 per, after giving them over \$100,000 over the course of the last few years.

Are these good decisions long term for the United States of America? Because, again, we do not have surplus money to give back to millionaires in the form of tax cuts. We are running deficits. And what countries do when they have a deficit is the same thing a family does when they have an annual deficit. You have to borrow the money or you have to get out the credit card. And that is what this country is doing right now. We are putting the future of the United States of America on a credit card.

And we are asking the next generation, the same generation that we are asking to pay double the tuition that they paid 4 or 5 years ago, increasing the fees for student loans, increasing the burden of taxes on the middle class, we are going to also ask that generation to pay the national debt off; and to try to somehow close this gap by borrowing the money from the Chinese and making sure that they pay back our debts that we are borrowing from the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Saudi Arabians at the same time we are spending \$1.5 billion and a half a week in Iraq.

Now, one final point. You voted for the defense appropriations bill. So did I.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is correct.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You voted for probably almost every supplemental for the war in Iraq.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, sir.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And so did I. We are not going to have our troops in a forward area and have them not have what they need.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is correct.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. But to make these cuts on the backs of the middle class and the poor in this country at the same time, at the same exact time, and this is almost funny, this would be funny if it was not so sad, at the same time we are giving millionaires tax cuts.

Now, people at home, Mr. Speaker, who hear this and read about it in the morning newspapers have got to think this place is a mad house, that it is schizophrenic. Two wars, \$1.5 billion a week in Iraq, and we are cutting taxes. Tuition doubles, and we are cutting taxes for millionaires. Poverty rate goes up in Cleveland, in the State of Ohio, one of the highest poverty levels in the country. I think it was rated the poorest city in the country. We are cutting taxes for millionaires. Katrina. We have people living in their cars still, over the holiday season.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Being evicted.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Being evicted. I mean, come on, we can do better than this, KENDRICK. And that is what we are saying.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I think it is important that we realize that the President is talking about the economy in Iraq and is talking about infrastructure, yet ignoring infrastructure here at home; talking about boosting oil production in Iraq while ignoring soaring energy costs here that have, in some cases, risen three times more than what Americans spent last year.

He went down to New Orleans and gave a speech saying that we are going to build New Orleans back and it will be a shining example and it will be a city we can all be proud of because I will make sure, meanwhile the State legislature is trying to figure out how it is going to pay its share of the money that the Federal Government is saying it has to pay. And it literally has no economy right now.

We have children now within this budget that they will not have free and reduced lunches, but meanwhile, the children of Iraq and the people of Iraq have universal health care. We have mayors now trying to figure out how they are going to meet their budgets. They are laying off workers, which equals fewer services for the people that pay taxes in those local cities and governments, because they have to pick up some of the Federal responsibility, where we have cut programs and opportunities for cities like the COPS

program and many other programs like it.

There are issues as relates to making sure that we secure our airlines and have a national transportation plan as it pertains to security. We are encouraging people to not drive so much, yet we do not want to provide U.S. cities with what they have asked for. They have asked for interoperability, to make sure if there is a terrorist attack or there is an event that takes place, a natural disaster, that they would have the resources to be able to talk to one another in order to save lives. That still has not happened.

These are all issues, Mr. RYAN, that we on the 30-something side and on the Democratic side have already addressed with legislation that has been filed, filed from Democratic Members of Congress, ranking members on the committees of said jurisdictions to bring about the kinds of change we have talked about.

So when we get into the long and short-term effects of what this Republican Congress is doing under a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence, and when I say here in Washington, D.C., that that is an accepted practice, then we wonder why things are the way they are. You do not have to wonder. You know why.

So it is important that we clear some of this stuff up and, hopefully, if we keep hammering at the door, that there will be a bipartisan approach to move this country forward, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, just to back it up, and we used this earlier, because we like third-party validators. This is from the Economic Policy Institute, www.epi.org, the conclusion of a report they put together regarding a briefing paper. It is called "The Boom That Wasn't." "The economy has little to show for \$860 billion in tax cuts." This is from the EPI. I did not do this. "A review of economic performance over the last 4 years indicates that the series of major tax cuts enacted in that time have not strengthened the economy. Almost every broad measure of economic activity, GDP, jobs, personal income, and business investment, among others, has fared worse over the last 4 years than in past cycles." Let me repeat that. "Has fared worse over the last 4 years than in past cycles. Proponents of the series of major tax cuts since 2001 had projected that gauges such as these would reflect improvements after enactment." The Boom That Wasn't. Because we were not cutting them for the middle class, we were cutting them for wealthy people.

And I just want to say that I do not have anything against people who make a lot of money. In fact, God bless you. That is great. But you have an obligation. You benefit from what is happening. And what is happening now in our country, and we have talked about this, I know privately a lot and here a bit, who is investing in the country? We are giving tax cuts to millionaires,

yet they are investing their money into China. They are putting it in a bond fund or a mutual fund that is an international fund, or they are investing in the stocks of private companies, publicly-owned companies that are investing into China.

We are cutting taxes, and those people are giving their money over there. Delphi, General Motors, General Electric, all these companies are investing in China. And here is what the Democrats want to do to just kind of talk a little about what you were doing.

Another problem we have is the amount of engineers that some of these other countries are producing. Just this year, engineering degrees in China, 600,000; engineering degrees in India, 350,000; and engineering degrees in the United States, 70,000.

So what the Democrats are proposing is to make an investment into the people, into the technology that is going to get this number where it needs to be. You cannot have a high number here when you have 70 percent of the kids in all of these school districts, inner-city school districts around the country living in poverty. You cannot get that number up when you have kids in rural areas that do not have the skills that they need.

One of the other things we want to do in the Democrat plan. America ranks 16th in broadband penetration. Here is Korea, per 100 inhabitants, 24.9; then China; then Iceland; then the United States of America. And the Democratic caucus here in the House has a proposal, should we get the reins of government next year, that we will have a proposal together to put broadband access in every home in the next 5 years.

□ 1945

You want to create a strong economy; you want to get people all over the country in rural areas and inner cities, in poorer communities to start generating wealth. An automobile plant is not going to set itself in Youngstown, Ohio again. A Delphi facility is not going to locate in Warren, Ohio, and hire 10,000 people any more. If the leadership on the Republican side does not wake up and recognize the country is suffering because of this, then we are going to continue down this long road that is leading us to nowhere.

When we have Iceland that has higher broadband penetration than the United States of America, that is a shame. I was telling Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ I was doing some research for what we were going to do today, and I got into some of the great initiatives of the United States, and I ran across President Kennedy's speech in the early 1960s about going to the Moon. I mean, talk about setting out an agenda and leading.

Where is it?

The Democratic Caucus that is here has proposal after proposal that cannot even make it to the floor for the American people to evaluate. We offer in

committees amendments that get voted down on a party-line vote. We are trying to improve this country, and we are being shut down because the Republican majority has to cut taxes for millionaires. We want to improve this.

In 5 years, if the Democrats had control of this Chamber and the Senate and the White House, we would have a proposal that would begin to penetrate communities all over the country with broadband access.

I want to make one final point.

This is a poverty program, this right here, this innovation program that the Democratic Caucus has put together and the majority leader has put together. We want to penetrate these communities, and we want these young kids who if they miss this great technological boom, if they get caught on the wrong end of this digital divide that we have in the country, they are not going to be creating wealth in our communities. They are going to be on Medicaid and on the earned income tax credit and need public assistance.

We want to make investments now into these communities, not for the sake of saying we helped these poor kids out, but because those kids want opportunity. If presented with opportunity, like broadband access, like access to the Internet and the latest technology, these kids will achieve.

But if this kid does not get broadband access in his school and he does not have it at home and then he is asked to go out and compete with the Chinese engineer who makes \$10,000 a year, he is not going to be able to do it; she is not going to be able to do it. We have to get on the stick here. We have to wake up and start leading this country.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this will not only help individuals out of poverty, but this will help educate America.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is right.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want Members to be able to go onto the Web site. We are not down here to talk about fiction; we are here to talk about fact and make this country stronger. The Web site is www.housedemocrats.gov. I want my colleagues to go on, look at the Democratic plan. Hopefully, we can move in a bipartisan way to strengthen America.

I think it is important that we share with Members because we like to hear from Members and we like to be challenged by Members and get information from Members on both sides of the aisle, and that is just the way it is.

I think as we come back next week, I think that some of the issues that we should be addressing are issues that are very, very important to the American people and hopefully in the last week before we go on break we can work in a bipartisan way in moving this country forward.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Web site is www.30somethingdems@mail.house.gov, and I want to thank

Mr. MEEK for his leadership. He is down here every night, sometimes 2 hours a night, dedicating himself. He has two young kids at home, a beautiful wife that you leave to come down here to promote this message. I know it is difficult sometimes to balance work and family, and I want to say I am really thankful for your leadership on this, and you are really an inspiration to all of us.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ; and with that, it was an honor once again to address the House, and I want to thank the Democratic leadership for the time.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SCHIFF) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WYNNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, December 13 and 14.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, December 12, 2005, at noon.

OATH FOR ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Under clause 13 of rule XXIII, the following Members executed the oath for access to classified information:

Neil Abercrombie, Gary L. Ackerman, Robert B. Aderholt, W. Todd Akin, Rodney Alexander, Thomas H. Allen, Robert E. Andrews, Joe Baca, Spencer Bachus, Brian Baird, Richard H. Baker, Tammy Baldwin, J. Gresham Barrett, John Barrow, Roscoe G. Bartlett, Joe Barton, Charles F. Bass, Me-

lissa L. Bean, Bob Beauprez, Xavier Becerra, Shelley Berkley, Howard L. Berman, Marion Berry, Judy Biggett, Michael Bilirakis, Rob Bishop, Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., Timothy H. Bishop, Marsha Blackburn, Earl Blumenauer, Roy Blunt, Sherwood Boehlert, John A. Boehner, Henry Bonilla, Jo Bonner, Mary Bono, John Boozman, Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Dan Boren, Leonard L. Boswell, Rick Boucher, Charles W. Boustany, Jr., Allen Boyd, Jeb Bradley, Kevin Brady, Robert A. Brady, Corrine Brown, Sherrod Brown, Henry E. Brown, Jr., Ginny Brown-Waite, Michael C. Burgess, Dan Burton, G. K. Butterfield, Steve Buyer, Ken Calvert, Dave Camp, John Campbell, Chris Cannon, Eric Cantor, Shelley Moore Capito, Lois Capps, Michael E. Capuano, Benjamin L. Cardin, Dennis A. Cardoza, Russ Carnahan, Julia Carson, John R. Carter, Ed Case, Michael N. Castle, Steve Chabot, Ben Chandler, Chris Chocola, Donna M. Christensen, Wm. Lacy Clay, Emanuel Cleaver, James E. Clyburn, Howard Coble, Tom Cole, K. Michael Conaway, John Conyers, Jr., Jim Cooper, Jim Costa, Jerry F. Costello, Christopher Cox, Robert E. (Bud) Cramer, Jr., Ander Crenshaw, Joseph Crowley, Barbara Cubin, Henry Cuellar, John Abney Culberson, Elijah E. Cummings, Randy "Duke" Cunningham, Artur Davis, Geoff Davis, Jim Davis, Jo Ann Davis, Lincoln Davis, Tom Davis, Susan A. Davis, Danny K. Davis, Nathan Deal, Peter A. DeFazio, Diana DeGette, William D. Delahunt, Rosa L. DeLauro, Tom DeLay, Charles W. Dent, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Mario Diaz-Balart, Norman D. Dicks, John D. Dingell, Lloyd Doggett, John T. Doolittle, Michael F. Doyle, Thelma D. Drake, David Dreier, John J. Duncan, Jr., Chet Edwards, Vernon J. Ehlers, Rahm Emanuel, Jo Ann Emerson, Eliot L. Engel, Phil English, Anna G. Eshoo, Bob Etheridge, Lane Evans, Terry Everett, Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, Sam Farr, Chaka Fattah, Tom Feeney, Mike Ferguson, Bob Filner, Michael G. Fitzpatrick, Jeff Flake, Mark Foley, J. Randy Forbes, Harold E. Ford, Jr., Jeff Fortenberry, Luis G. Fortuño, Vito Fossella, Virginia Foxx, Barney Frank, Trent Franks, Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Elton Gallegly, Scott Garrett, Jim Gerlach, Jim Gibbons, Wayne T. Gilchrest, Paul E. Gillmor, Phil Gingrey, Louie Gohmert, Charles A. Gonzalez, Virgil H. Goode, Jr., Bob Goodlatte, Bart Gordon, Kay Granger, Sam Graves, Al Green, Gene Green, Mark Green, Raúl M. Grijalva, Luis V. Gutierrez, Gil Gutknecht, Ralph M. Hall, Jane Harman, Katherine Harris, Melissa A. Hart, J. Dennis Hastert, Doc Hastings, Alcee L. Hastings, Robin Hayes, J. D. Hayworth, Joel Hefley, Jeb Hensarling, Wally Herger, Stephanie Herseth, Brian Higgins, Maurice D. Hinchey, Rubén Hinojosa, David L. Hobson, Peter Hoekstra, Tim Holden, Rush D. Holt, Michael M. Honda, Darlene Hooley, John N. Hostettler, Steny H. Hoyer, Kenny C. Hulshof, Duncan Hunter, Henry J. Hyde, Bob Inglis, Jay Inslee, Steve Israel, Darrell E. Issa, Ernest J. Istook, Jr., Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Sheila Jackson-Lee, William J. Jefferson, William L. Jenkins, Bobby Jindal, Sam Johnson, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Nancy L. Johnson, Timothy V. Johnson, Walter B. Jones, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Paul E. Kanjorski, Marcy Kaptur, Ric Keller, Sue W. Kelly, Patrick J. Kennedy, Mark R. Kennedy, Dale E. Kildee, Carolyn C. Kilpatrick, Ron Kind, Steve King, Peter T. King, Jack Kingston, Mark Steven Kirk, John Klime, Joe Knollenberg, Jim Kolbe, John R. "Randy" Kuhl, Jr., Ray LaHood, James R. Langevin, Tom Lantos, Rick Larsen, John B. Larson, Tom Latham, Steven C. LaTourette, James A. Leach, Barbara Lee, Sander M. Levin, Jerry Lewis, John Lewis, Ron Lewis, John Linder, Daniel Lipinski, Frank A. LoBiondo, Zoe Lofgren, Nita M. Lowey,