

The Army says that our stocks will not be reset for at least 3 years after the end of the conflicts.

Equipment casualties are significant. During the war in Iraq, the Army has lost 503 pieces of major equipment, including 51 helicopters, 76 heavy trucks, 217 Humvees, and 97 combat vehicle-like tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles and Strykers.

The Marine Corps reports that 1,800 pieces of equipment valued at over \$94 million have been destroyed.

Why do I mention all of these statistics? I want my colleagues and the American people to understand that we are coming dangerously close to weakening our military, and we must understand the enormity of the problem. And it must be known that it is going to take a lot of money to fix the problem.

The 2005 supplemental appropriation passed by the House earlier this year includes \$554 million to replace 800 worn out or damaged pieces of equipment. The CBO estimates that the Department of Defense already needs between \$13 billion and \$18 billion to fund maintenance costs not covered in the budget. And the Army will require at least 2 years of supplemental appropriations after the end of the conflict in order to reset the force. I regret that the President's 2006 budget request does not include the money we need to replace and modernize our worn and lost equipment.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Members of the Committee on Armed Services deeply care about our troops and about our military. We must fulfill our constitutional duty to ensure that our troops have what they need to succeed wherever they are deployed. They can only succeed and we can only carry out our duty if we provide them sufficient equipment to complete their mission. That is going to be a long and expensive process.

Congress, therefore, needs to take prompt action, and I call on all of my colleagues to provide the needed support to make that happen.

**REPUBLICAN BANKRUPTCY BILL
MEANS FALSE HOPE AND
ENDLESS DEBT BURDEN FOR AMERICANS**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority today or tomorrow will put before this House and the American people a WMD, a Weapon of Mass Debt. They call it the Bankruptcy Abuse and Consumer Prevention Act of 2005. This legislation is as far away from protecting consumers as a snake oil salesman pitching an elixir to cure all of your ills.

This legislation should be called the Credit Card Company Enslavement Act

of 2005. It does not help the American people. It was conceived by the credit card people for the credit card people and packaged by their Republican surrogates for one reason and one reason only: to entrap low- and middle-income Americans.

As always with this Republican majority, if you are rich, do not worry, they have your back covered. But for every other American, you are the payoff for special interests and corporate greed. Disguise legislation with a phony name and let them clean your clock over and over and over again.

Debt, and pain and suffering associated with economic enslavement, has been a major concern throughout recorded history. The Bible speaks about debt in the books of Exodus, Micah, Amos, Nehemiah, Romans, Kings, and Deuteronomy, among others. I could go on all day long with that. That is a lot of spiritual guidance.

So what is this all about? Economic justice is what the Bible preached, knowing full well that debt bound a person tighter than any chain, enslaving hope as it extracted money. For thousands of years, spiritual leaders, including John Paul, have preached a gospel of economic justice for people throughout the world. Instead, today we are expected to pander to corporate greed while we deny social responsibility.

I personally am not going to go for it. The legislation before us is about grinding people into the dirt. It is not a fresh start, but false hope and an endless debt burden.

The Republican majority today would like us to condone stripping people of all of their worldly possessions and then denying them the right to hope to make a new life for themselves and their loved ones.

Here are some facts behind the fraud the Republican majority has in front of us: Ninety percent of those filing for bankruptcy protection are doing so because of losing a job, a medical emergency, or the breakup of a family. Half the personal bankruptcies in America today are because of illness or unpaid medical bills.

What are the President and Republican majority doing about health care? Nothing, nada, zippo. They have not touched it for the last 4 years, and they will pander to the special interests over the next 4 years. After all, people without health care do not go to those fancy Republican fund-raisers. They go to the emergency room when they cannot avoid illness any longer.

Mr. Speaker, 45 million Americans have no health care and no hope from this administration, and 1.6 million American households filed for bankruptcy last year. That is one measure of the President's economic program he is not talking much about. The rich get richer and the poor get outed.

Divorced women are 300 percent more likely than a single or married woman to file for bankruptcy because of the consequences of divorce, from lower

wages to the financial strain of raising children alone. So much for Republican family values.

African American and Hispanics are 500 percent more likely than white homeowners to end up in bankruptcy court because of discrimination in everything from mortgage costs, to hiring, to wages. It is real, and the Republican majority would like us to look the other way.

More older Americans are filing for bankruptcy because they are being forced out of their jobs, cannot find new ones that pay when they were earning, and they are victims of runaway health costs.

□ 1300

But wait, there is even more. Credit card companies are an equal-opportunity scourge. This environment inundates students, the working poor and middle America with dozen of offers for more credit cards and more debt every week. How many offers have you received in the mail or on the phone this week, 3, 4, 5? The marketing is not aggressive. It is predatory. They tempt you with offers that promise anything and everything. Pre-approved, platinum, gold, silver. The truth is, the credit cards are not made of plastic. They are made out of lead, and they are hung around your neck like a yoke.

Does this so-called consumer protection action do anything to address predatory credit card marketing? Nothing, nada, zippo.

So what exactly are the Republicans proposing? This bill allows millionaires to shelter their assets in bankruptcy by protecting an unlimited amount of value in their residences.

What about child support?

Well, the Republicans have a real deal for you. This bill, their bill, would force women and children who are owed child support to fight with the credit card companies in court for the money. Given the Republican knack for words, they will probably call this a social safety net. And on and on it goes. Vote "no" on this bankruptcy bill. It is bankrupt.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, author of truth and creator of beauty, cherry blossoms in Washington usher in spring to the Nation.

May new life be made manifest in Congress this term, bringing glory to Your holy name and peace and prosperity to the cities and fields of the land.

Lord, as You inspire creativity in artists, engineers and scientists, also stir aspirations of hopeful negotiations in troublesome areas of the world and in the corridors of government.

May the seeds of peace and the beginnings of deeper understanding grow in the hearts and minds of Your people.

This we ask, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. McNULTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. McNULTY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 25. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the application of Airbus for launch aid.

RIDICULOUS, WASTEFUL SPENDING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, the Scripps-Howard News Service recently ran a story about what it describes as "Capitol Hill's extravagant new visitors center."

The story said: "Another year and another \$37 million in unforeseen cost increases" in what is becoming an annual sad joke.

There have been so many examples of ridiculous, wasteful spending at the Federal level over the last 30 or 40 years that it seems the Federal Government cannot do anything in an economical, efficient manner.

The Scripps-Howard story said: "Originally estimated to cost \$40 mil-

lion, the project has grown into a 5-story Taj Mahal that so far has cost taxpayers \$454 million."

The current final cost is estimated to be \$559 million, and Citizens Against Government Waste describes it as "monumental waste."

Apparently, if we want something to cost about 10 times more than it should, just let the Federal Government do it.

Those who are in charge of managing this project should be ashamed and embarrassed, but all they will probably do is laugh at these comments, since the money is not coming out of their pockets.

LATINOS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to voice my concerns regarding Social Security privatization and how it is going to affect hardworking Hispanics and Latino families and especially the women Latinas.

About 46 percent of older Latinas depend entirely on Social Security in retirement. In fact, 60 percent of Latinas over the age of 65 would live in poverty if they did not receive Social Security.

If President Bush privatizes Social Security, young Latinas in their 20s and 30s will see their benefits cut by at least 30 percent.

Latina moms rely on Social Security also if their husbands become injured or die. The work injury rate for Hispanics in the year 2000 was 16 percent compared to 11 percent of the overall population. Therefore, Social Security disability benefits are particularly important for Latinas and their families.

The President's plan will not help Latinos or our families. Let us start talking about real solutions, helping our families that work very hard day in and day out.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, we have heard all about the problems with Social Security many times here on the House floor: looming deficits, benefit cuts, payroll tax hikes. These problems are very real, and they are just around the corner if we do not act.

With that being said, my colleagues across the aisle continue to criticize, continue to say to the American people that there is no problem when, in fact, the 2005 Trustees Report showed the problem to be crystal clear. Social Security will begin paying out more than it collects in 2017. By 2041, the Social Security system as we know it will be insolvent with not enough money to pay 100 percent of the promised benefits.

Raising payroll taxes is not a solution. Just look at our history. Payroll taxes have been increased over 20 times since Social Security began.

Madam Speaker, across the aisle we hear the same old rhetoric of why things will not work. The question I have for them is what are their proposals to fix Social Security?

The challenges with Social Security are not Republican, and they are not Democrat. This is a challenge for all Americans, and I call upon those across the aisle to help us find a solution. Let us put people above politics.

IT IS TIME TO END THE DEATH TAX NOW

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, the gibberish my colleagues just heard about is the President says everything's on the table. We can reform Social Security.

Madam Speaker, this week the United States House will vote to eliminate the unfair death tax.

Believe it or not, the government gives you a certificate at birth, a license when you marry and a tax bill when you die. Is that not a shame?

Taxing people when they die smacks of all the things that are wrong with the government and Washington.

The death tax was created to target people like the Vanderbilts and the Rockefellers, with the original intent of paying and winning World War I. This bill hits hardworking Americans. The death tax hurts the mom-and-pop shops on Main Street, and that is just not fair.

Sadly, now if a person saved for the future, put some money away, built a business, ran a farm or achieved the American Dream in other ways, the death tax punishes them.

That is just wrong, and it is time to end the death tax now.

ANNOUNCING 527 FAIRNESS ACT

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, the summer of 2004 will be remembered for many years in American politics.

Groups organized on the left and the right under what was known as section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code and spent more than \$300 million to support candidates, while the two major political parties and the Nation's most respected labor unions, associations, businesses, and constitutional groups watched in silence from the sidelines.

In response to this summer of 527s, some in Washington will bring measures to rein in the 527 groups with greater government control and regulation, and that is certainly their right.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), a Democratic Congressman,