

human embryos at either the morula or the blastocyst stage would require evaluations of not only normal birth but also unknown longterm risks to the person even into adulthood, it would have to be considered a very high risk and ethically questionable endeavor. Because of the risk of harm, this research would also be ineligible for federal funding.

You had also asked NIH about the latest stage in development that an embryo can be artificially implanted into the womb. We know that infertility clinics transfer embryos at the blastocyst stage (approximately Day 5 in human embryo development) as well as at earlier stages.

Finally, I am providing an additional resource that was discussed at the April meeting. I have enclosed a copy of a recently released white paper developed by the President's Council on Bioethics (PCB) on Alternative Sources of Human Pluripotent Stem Cells. In this white paper, the PCB raised many ethical, scientific and practical concerns about alternate sources for deriving human pluripotent stem cells without harming the embryo. Your proposal is specifically discussed in this report.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

JAMES F. BATTEY, JR.,

*Chairman, NIH Stem Cell Task Force.*

Enclosure.

### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, it is an honor to be here before the House of Representatives and have an opportunity to speak to the Members and to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we would also like to thank the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), along with the Democratic whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), and our chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the chairman of the Democratic Caucus, and also the vice chair, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for providing the kind of leadership that Americans need and want here in this great country of ours.

This week, as every week, we come to the Floor, the 30-something Working Group that was formed in the 108th Congress by Leader PELOSI to talk about the issues that are not only facing the 30-somethings, but also facing the American people in general.

We also come to the Floor, along with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), my good friend, we come to the floor to be able to talk about a number of issues, not only Social Security, but also student loans; to talk about issues facing the environment, as well as the ever-growing debt, which is always on our agenda.

Without any further ado, I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) how much I appreciate the fact that he commits, and our good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), who will not be

here tonight, every night to come to the floor to share good and accurate information not only with the Members of Congress, but with the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the opportunity too.

In the past several months, really since the beginning of the year, the President initiated a Social Security plan that he wanted to promote to the country, to say that privatization, these private accounts were going to be the answer to the Social Security solvency problem. We have been, just about every week since the beginning of the year that we are in session here in Washington, we have been talking about why the President's privatization scheme really is not the answer for the country.

The President, when he initiated this discussion after the election, began to say that it was a crisis and it was a crisis for the country that we all needed to address. What we want to do tonight is, we want to begin by saying that Social Security is a solvent program. There is no crisis within the Social Security program. Do we need to make some minor adjustments? Of course, we do. Do we need to tinker with the program? Yes, we do. But is there a crisis there? We really do not think so.

So tonight we are going to begin to talk a little bit about why Social Security is a solvent program and show a few numbers that we have shared with the American public every week that we have been on, but also to get into some of the areas where we believe a crisis does exist in this country that needs immediate attention.

So we have this graph here that basically shows that Social Security is secure for many, many decades to come. These are facts. These are the Congressional Budget Office numbers that they have given us.

The CBO is a nonpartisan organization, a nonpartisan group, and if they would lean one way or the other, the Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House, so if they are going to lean any one way, which I do not believe that they do, they would certainly lean in favor of making it look like Social Security is less secure than it actually is.

So this graph here, we can see it starts in 2005, and it goes to 2075, so it gives us a 70-year span. And from 2005 to about 2047, 2048, 2049, right in there, if we do absolutely nothing with Social Security, Social Security recipients will still receive 100 percent of their benefits. And all in the blue here. So from 2005 to the late 2040s, if we do absolutely nothing with the program, if we do not touch it at all, we are still going to get 100 percent of our benefits up to the late 2040s, 2047, 2048. So at 32 years old, after 40 years, I will be 72 years old, just about 72, on Social Security. So I will be guaranteed, if we do nothing, to at least get 100 percent of what I would earn right in here, or

someone else who is 32 years old. Then, after that, from the late 2040s into 2075, one would still receive 80 percent of one's benefits if we did nothing.

So what we are saying on this side of the aisle is, is there a problem? Yes, of course. From 2047 to 2075 and beyond a recipient would only get 80 percent of what they should be getting now. So that is a problem.

Is that a crisis? No, that is not a crisis. Something that happens 40 years from now is not a crisis. What we want to do is just show tonight that this is not a crisis; 100 percent of the benefits will be paid until the late 2040s and, beyond, still get 80 percent.

So if the President wants to sit down and work out a program, we are going to be able to deal with this 80 percent issue here coming 40-some years from now, and we will sit down and talk with the President.

□ 2100

But, unfortunately, the plans that are floating around Congress cut into the 100 percent benefits here and begin to reduce some of the 100 percent benefits there.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), just one moment. I want to ask just a quick question. What is a crisis? I mean, the President is saying, and some of the Members of the majority side leadership are saying that Social Security is in a crisis. And I cannot help but look in the dictionary when we start talking about crisis, because a crisis, there are a number of things that we can point out that are actually a crisis. And as the gentleman from Ohio knows, we received some e-mails that I hoped the gentleman would read early in our Special Order here. But we took a look at Webster's and exactly what does crisis mean. And basically it says, an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty.

Now, 40 years from now, as the gentleman from Ohio had the other chart here, I could say that it would be a crisis if Social Security, like the administration and the majority side use words like, is going bankrupt. What does bankrupt mean? Bankrupt means that there is no money coming in or no money going out, and it is tomorrow, and it is eminent danger.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. There is no money.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There is no money. And I can tell the gentleman from Ohio right now, from what the gentleman has just said, and it is not just the gentleman from Ohio's (Mr. RYAN) report. That is from the Congressional Budget Office of this House of Representatives that put forth the kind of information that we need here in Congress, that we need to share with the American people and the Members of this Congress.

I think it is also important to understand that, yes, we do want to work on Social Security and strengthen Social Security on this side of the aisle, but

we will not buy into the rhetoric of a crisis.

I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), a crisis, in my opinion, is what we are in on the deficit. We are at a crisis level when it comes down to the deficit. Highest deficit in the history of the Republic.

You want to know what a crisis is? And I hope that we continue to share this with our colleagues. A crisis is that family right now that is a part of the 46 million American families that are working that do not have health insurance. That is a crisis. A crisis is the fact that small businesses cannot provide health care insurance for their employees. Many businesses are telling their employees you can get a better plan if you apply for Medicaid. That is a crisis.

Furthermore, if you want to talk about a crisis, a crisis is families trying to put gas in their tank. That is a crisis, because some families have had to put their car down to try to figure out some sort of way that they can be able to take their kids to school or football or soccer or Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, to be able to conduct themselves in the way that they want to. That is a crisis, these gas prices that have doubled and tripled in some cases.

And then we talk about issues that are facing our veterans. Providing health care for our veterans, that is a crisis. And so there are a number of issues that are out there. And I say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) this whole issue of abuse of power, I am sorry, I just want to point out a few things.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Nothing to be sorry about.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Because we are, I think those of us that are in 30-something, and Members of the Congress, are sick and tired of individuals in Washington using Social Security as though there is some sort of imminent danger or, going back to the definition, an unstable situation.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I thank the gentleman. And let us take the definition and apply it to this chart. A crisis is an unstable situation of extreme danger, or difficulty. Unstable situation.

Now, how could you call this, 100 percent of the benefits for the next 40 some years, how is that an unstable situation? It is a very stable situation. And I would even argue that 80 percent, without doing anything, 45 years from now is not unstable. That is a stable situation. It needs to be dealt with. But extreme danger or difficulty? How could you call from 2005 to the late 2040s extreme danger or difficulty? It does not apply here. And using the word "crisis" is extreme, and it is trying to scare the American public. And you see it in the poll results. The American people are beginning not to buy it.

Now, we could even try to go to the second definition of what a crisis is, a crucial stage or turning point in the

course of something. There is no crucial stage or turning point that needs to happen here. We are not on a brink here that we have got to change something immediately. There is no crisis here. And as the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) stated very eloquently, there are many more issues that I think we need to deal with.

And there was one other thing, and we are kind of moving things around a little bit here, that I want to share just briefly.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) just briefly, but before the gentleman moves from that chart, I think I know the reason why some in Washington want to try to fool the American public that there is a crisis, because we have individuals that are on Wall Street that have been guaranteed, if the President has his way, if the majority side leadership have their way, that they will receive over the next 20 years \$944 billion worth of the taxpayers' money in risky investment, Social Security. So I think that is the crisis of trying to close the deal before the term runs out on the present President and the term may run out on the present leadership.

But I can tell the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), I want to talk, when the gentleman is finished, when the gentleman makes the point that the gentleman is about to make, I want to make sure that we share with the Members, if we had the opportunity to lead, not necessarily you and me, but the Democratic side, working with some of our Republican friends that understand the importance of making sure that we work for all Americans and making sure that Social Security is strengthened.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, I thank the gentleman. And after this we are going to move on to what we believe that the real issues are that need to be dealt with immediately, issues that we think are causing unstable situations, issues that we think are providing extreme danger or extreme difficulty for families here and issues, quite frankly, that we think the country is at a crucial stage or at a turning point on. We want to talk about what we believe those issues really are.

Now, last week we asked Americans who were watching to write in and to e-mail us with what they thought were the immediate issues that needed to be dealt with, what was the crisis that they believed the country needed to address. And I am just going to share a couple of these because we want to get into some other issues. Mrs. Richard from Kansas said she had been watching and listening to our program on C-SPAN. Our country now has so many needs. And we asked her to give them to us and she said, I will write them to you.

To me, the number one need is to get out of Iraq. Stop losing lives and spending money. That may be a crisis. Probably is. After that, health care, fixing

our national deficit, which we are definitely going to get into tonight, and many more things that need to be fixed. She appreciates the concern.

Christie Fox, from the gentleman's great State of Florida, she is a second generation American. And on C-SPAN you asked for our comments or suggestions on what we think is important to America. Safety, the environment, the oceans heating and rising, need for solar power, recycling, windmills, fuel efficient vehicles, terrorism, which is a major issue that we are not really dealing with here, and to keep God in America. Great issues that we think may be or will have more of a profound effect if we address them immediately.

So, again, we ask the citizens who are out there tonight to give us an e-mail, what you believe to be your crisis of choice, that is, something that we need to deal with immediately in the United States of America. Send us something.

30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. That is the number 30, the word "something," and then dems, D-E-M-S @ mail.house.gov. Send us what you think, because, quite frankly, we do not believe that Social Security that is solvent for the next 45 years and will pay 100 percent of the benefits and then for the next 20-some years and into the future will still provide 80 percent is not a crisis.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we bring about great clarification of our message to make sure that individuals do not get confused of what the real issue here is. The real issue, I think, the reason why individuals want to, leadership on the majority side and the White House, want to talk about a crisis situation in Social Security is because they do not want to talk about health care. They do not want to talk about the issues that many Americans have to deal with on a day-in-and-day-out basis. I call it drugstore health care; when your child is sick, because you do not have health insurance, 46 million Americans without health insurance that are working families without health insurance, they have to go to a CVS or a Walgreens or a Rite-Aid or whatever the case may be, or Wal-Mart pharmacy, to make their kids better or try to hope that they just have a cold because they do not have the proper health care.

And I am so glad that House Democrats are committed to taking the bold necessary steps to move us in the right direction of making sure that we do what we are supposed to do for Americans.

In the 108th Congress, we worked very hard with Partnership for America's Future that reaffirms our commitment in six core areas. And those six areas are, making sure that we have American values, prosperity, national security, fairness, opportunity, community, and also accountability. And I think it is important that we think about that, and that is something that is not happening right now.

Now, one may argue, well, what is stopping you from doing that? I can tell you what is stopping us from doing that, not being in the majority here in the House of Representatives.

And I say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) that I think what is important is that we have to share with our colleagues and also with the American people, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that we hold the individuals that are sent here to Washington accountable not only for their actions but also for their inactions. And so when we start talking about crisis, look right, but we are really going left. And I think it is important that we point these issues out.

It is important that we take bold steps in expanding affordable health care and the health care coverage, including mental health coverage, making sure that we cut health care costs, increasing biomedical research, and also reducing racial and ethnic disparities, expanding affordable health care as it relates to coverage for small businesses by creating a new purchasing pool that will allow 50 percent tax credit to help small businesses and self-employed individuals in their health care costs.

That is Democratic legislation that is already filed in this Congress that should move, would move, if we had the Democratic leadership that we talked about early on in this hour. If they were in control, it would not be an issue of saying that is what we would like to do. And I think it is important, it is very important that not only Members of Congress understand our responsibility in standing up to the real needs of Americans that are out there now, but to make sure that we are able to stand up and say that health care is a crisis, the issue of our environment is a crisis, the deficit is a crisis, and not just say it as buzz words or in a speech or a punch line.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I had a Social Security town hall meeting last night at Warren G. Harding High School in Warren, Ohio; and we were having a discussion about these kinds of issues. And one of the gentlemen, as we were talking about him as a small business owner, self-employed, he had to pay his own Social Security tax. He had to pay the whole amount, the employer's share and the employee's share for himself. And he was struggling because he had health care issues that he had to deal with. The health care costs were going through the roof. He had two kids in college. And tuition costs in Ohio have doubled over the past few years. And when we get back after the break we are going to get into a little more about the cost of college tuition.

But the point is, the Social Security privatization scheme sounds like a good idea to some employers, because the way that the blueprint has it set up is that the employee will be able to take 4 percent and divert it to an account, and the employer will not have

to match that 4 percent; and so it is basically a tax break for the business person, which may be okay for small business folks and help them a great deal.

But what we are saying as Democrats is, why are we not dealing with the real issue, the health care costs that are going through the roof? And if we want to help small business people, then we need to use the Democratic proposal that we have that is going to help small business people contain health care costs and contain tuition costs and give them aid and assistance and grants and lower tuition costs with block grants to different universities. We have a plan to do that. And what we are saying is, let us stick together on the greatest social program in the history of mankind, and let us fix these other programs that have been causing a great deal of economic pain to the small businessperson. We want to be there, and we have a plan to do it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. When you have employees that are healthy, you have what? A more productive company. And then what do you have then? You have more productive American workers that will be able to compete against other countries that are competing against us now.

Before the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) goes to the chart, I think it is important we talk about the fact that health care costs, when we start talking about cutting health care costs, we have to look at the issue as it relates to prescription drugs.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Absolutely.

□ 2115

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I think it was a blown opportunity here on this floor by the majority side saying they were carrying out true prescription drug reform and failed to do so by not allowing us to negotiate with drug companies to have lower prices, not only for seniors but for people with disabilities. Also, guaranteed American consumers the right to deal with the whole issue of importation.

I have some reservations about that, but the real issue is the fact that we have Americans that are now making a choice between groceries and prescription drugs. We still have Americans, and I am not just talking about older Americans, I am talking about middle-aged Americans and even children, because a number of children are on prescription drugs, be it for allergies, or middle-aged Americans taking heart medication or medication for diabetes or other ailments that we found that through prescription drugs that can prevent death or prolong life they are making decisions.

They have to make decisions. So they are excited about the fact that we are looking at prescription drug reform, but it was not a true bipartisan effort because if it was we would have negotiating power. And I will tell Members right now, because I want to make sure that my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle and I want to

make sure, Mr. Speaker, that the American people understand that the Democrats have a bill filed right now to allow that to happen. Prescription drug costs would go down if we were in charge of this House right now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have a discharge petition too that will allow Members of Congress to sign it and discharge it out of the committee process and bring it right to the floor. We have had this debate. We can bring it to the floor and let us vote on it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But still, if we were in control of this House, if the American people said they were going to allow Democrats to be the majority in this House, we would have the following:

We would have a Social Security debate about strengthening Social Security, not privatizing it. We will have not only a debate but we will have a bipartisan bill to make sure we can combine buying power to take prescription drug costs down for everyday Americans. We would not only have legislation that will be true environmental legislation, but it would be bipartisan legislation because we believe in working together with, at that time if we have a perfect situation where we are in a majority, working with the minority party in doing that.

We would also have a health care plan, a health care plan that is a 6-point plan that would bring about health insurance for everyday working Americans, and also allow those Americans between the ages of 55 and 65 to be able to buy into Medicare early so they would have an opportunity to take advantage of good health care at a low cost as they reach their years of the 60s and 70s. So that is so very important.

I am not laying "what if," but I am saying what could be. And so I am saying this more of a challenge to the Members on the majority side because they do have the power. They have the power to be able to set the agenda and say what will be able to come to the floor. They have the power to be able to say that this is what we are going to work on and this is what we are not going to work on. I think it is important that the American people and I think the Members of this Congress also understand, Mr. Speaker, that the power of the majority sets the agenda and what happens in this House, nothing comes to this floor without the authority of the Republican leadership in this House.

Now, I am going to tell you, because I always, I do not use it as a disclaimer, I am seeing it as a Member of this House and someone that communicates with Members of the majority party, there are a number of Republicans that will go unnamed because of repercussions that want to see that kind of environment return back to this House, a true bipartisan environment that we had in 1983 when Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill brought about the kind of bipartisan partnership we

needed to save Social Security at that time, a true bipartisan vote, not bickering, not we are going to run Social Security into the ground in some sort of scheme privatization plan, but a true approach to making sure that we do the right thing.

So it is important that individuals understand that bills like the bill that we have here on the floor to drive down prescription drug costs that we would like to pull out of on this discharge petition that is right here behind the gentleman for Members to sign to be able to have a true debate as it relates to bringing down prescription drugs costs, the buying power which AARP is on board with us on. But I think it is also important for issues as it relates to the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the gentleman does not leave out what is happening to the American worker and our negative trade balance. If I can say the word China, I would like to say that, because I think it is important that not only Members of Congress understand our responsibility but the American people also understand what is happening right now. It is not on the 6 o'clock news, but if someone is at home right now without a job wondering where their job went, wondering why the factory, especially in the gentleman's State of Ohio, the whistle in that factory is no longer blowing when they knock off, like a blue collar worker would say, for the evening, while no lunch box is there, be it a man or woman.

The reason why we are continuing to put forth trade agreements in my State that are putting agriculture industries out of business or having them to give away jobs like the citrus industry, like the sugar industry and the nursery plant industry that is in my county of Miami Dade County that are concerned about these free trade agreements that are taking place.

Now, I voted for some free trade agreements, but I will state that some of those agreements that are coming down the pike are going to hurt the American worker and continue to give away the kind of apple pie that we have been talking about for so many years.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I think this is the issue for me, that this is the crisis. This is just the issue that how can we say that a problem 40 years out from now is the crisis when you look at the numbers here. This is the crisis here. This is the manufacturing jobs loss, and I will go through some quick charts here.

Manufacturing jobs lost. In Ohio we lost 216,000. In Florida, the gentleman's home State, they lost almost 73,000. All the red States here have lost more than 20 percent of jobs in their States: Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, Illinois, all of these. And all throughout the country, the only two States with any kind of net gain are North Dakota and Nevada. That is the crisis and that is the issue that we

need to be dealing with here in the United States.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Before the gentleman leaves that chart, would he please let the Members know and, Mr. Speaker, we definitely want the American people to know where this information comes from, because I want to make sure we are clear.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, so it is nonpartisan. It is from June 1998 to February 2005. This is the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics controlled by a Republican, so it is not any lies that we are just trying to stoke up propaganda here.

These States that are purple have lost between 15 and 20 percent. The green States have lost between 10 and 15 percent. The yellow States between 5 and 10 percent. We are getting decimated in our manufacturing base, and these are the jobs that pay well. These jobs are going to China. The high-tech jobs are going to India.

Now, another crisis, our overall U.S. trade deficit which led to the enormous job loss right here, overall trade deficit over \$600 billion last year. We are buying \$600 billion more worth of products than we are selling. And look at the growth. This is the startling thing. This is not just a kind of a temporary blip in the screen.

In 1991 we were a little over \$50 billion, or not quite \$50 billion; and look at this, the steady growth. And these have been the trade agreements that we have been signing, and especially when we cranked up trade with China, bang, right down at the bottom, bingo, in 2004 over \$600 billion in trade deficit. Of that the main culprit in this whole deal has been with China, another crisis that we need to deal with.

I mean, how we can say Social Security is the main issue is beyond me. Again, trade deficits from 1991 to 2004. Again, a slow gradual, this is what we call in economic terms, and I am not an economist, this is what you call a trend. This is a trend that is going on in the country and has been for a good many years now, U.S. trade deficit with China over 160-some billion dollars a year. And we can see it just continue to decline. It will probably be worse next year. And when we see the job loss in Ohio, in the Midwest, all over the country except for Nevada and North Dakota, this is what is causing it.

Companies are moving from the United States, not making the investment here in the country, making it in China; and we are getting walloped.

Now, the most important issue as we are running these huge trade deficits and we are also running a national deficit, and let me just show one, before we show that one and then I will let the gentleman talk about the other, not only are we running huge trade deficits; we are also running a record national, domestic deficit on our own budget here.

This red line starts with President Johnson where we pretty much were

balancing our budgets all the way along, and we pretty much stayed steady up and down throughout the 70s. And into the 80s we got into the pretty high deficit through the Reagan and Bush era. That is the red line coming down close to \$300 billion in our national deficit. That means the budget money that we spend out of here, we were spending \$300 billion more than we were taking in. And then the Clinton era, the balanced budget passed in 1993. Not one Republican vote, Democrat House, Senate, White House; Al Gore broke the tie in the Senate as Vice President. That led to booming surpluses in the United States. And then when the next administration came in here, we are again with record deficits.

Now, will a real fiscal conservative please stand up, because we do not have anymore here. And this is the kind of deficit that you are passing on to your kids and your grandkids and the scary thing that the gentleman will talk about right now.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, before the gentleman moves that chart, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office where the gentleman got this information from, am I right?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Absolutely. The source is CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, nonpartisan. The most scary aspect of all of this is if we are spending 400-some billion dollars more than we are taking in, we are borrowing that from somewhere because we do not have it. Tax revenues bring us to this line here, and we are spending that much more, up to \$400 billion more than we have in the kitty that we are taking in every year. So we have to go out and borrow it. This is the scary part. Who are we borrowing the money from?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is the question.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is the ultimate question, and I know the gentleman wants to talk about it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. No, I want the gentleman to talk about it because he is doing such a great job.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I will explain the chart, but I want the gentleman to lend his voice to it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want the gentleman to explain it because this issue is so very, very important. We both are on the Committee on Armed Services, and we know what it means as it relates to not only national security but financial security.

What is happening right now, and that is why it is important not only to the 30-somethings but to the 20-somethings and the teenagers and those that are yet unborn and also those seniors that understand what is going on, even the 50-somethings and the 60-somethings because this goes towards, I believe, our national security when we start looking at this issue.

Please explain.

□ 2130

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is absolutely right because

you can have, and Mitt Romney was in front of the Committee on Education and the Workforce last week, the Republican governor from Massachusetts, and he said you cannot have a tier two economy and a tier one military. And, unfortunately, we are moving into a tier two economy.

We were talking about the trade deficits and then our national deficit and the debt. The deficit is what we accrue every year. We are \$400 billion last year. The debt is the overall debt of the whole country, which is almost \$8 trillion, but last year was over \$400 billion.

Here is the portion of foreign-owned debt in our country that rose to 41 percent under this administration. So this is the bottom line here in the blue. Of all of our debt, that portion is held by domestic interests, from this here, the turquoise, a nice shade of turquoise, I must say.

The next level is the percentage of our marketable U.S. Treasury debt held by foreign interests, and this goes back to 2000. So over in California, 2000. Over here on the East Coast, it is 2004. Here we have domestic-held debt up to \$2.5 trillion. The rest here in purple was foreign owned.

As we move in 2001 and 2002 and 2003, you can see that the purple gets bigger. It gets up into Maine from the Carolinas. This purple is foreign-held debt. Basically what this chart says, and it is continuing to increase as the years go on, as we run these deficits that we had in the last chart, that we have been running as we are borrowing that money; more and more of that money is coming from foreign interests. This is a dangerous situation that we are putting the country in.

As the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) stated, we are on the Committee on Armed Services. We see this in the committee hearings and with the poppy in Afghanistan. We see this dealing with the Chinese in their increase in military spending and the issue of Taiwan, and North Korea is beginning to test nuclear weapons.

The more power we cede to foreign interests dealing with our own personal monetary situation, the more dangerous a situation we are going to be in. It is a bad political move, it is a bad economic move, and it threatens our country as well.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as I look at the printed material that I have before me, I cannot help but say this maybe is at the crisis level. Maybe what the gentleman just pointed out, maybe the fact that we have the highest deficit in the history of the Republic, maybe because we have a number of Americans that are still cutting pills in half after we, the Congress, or the majority side, has said we have done all that we can do. Maybe that is the crisis.

Maybe it is important to let not only the majority side know, but also the American people know that it is about who is running this House and who is not raising an objection to what has

happened already, let alone what is going to continue to happen. If left up to the mechanics of the majority right now, 41 percent will be the early years of foreign countries buying our debt.

Mr. Speaker, it may very well go to 55 percent if the American people do not hold us accountable for the decisions we are making, or the decisions we are not making. I think it is important, and we have to talk a little bit about extreme measures in the Congress.

We know there are a number of issues that have come before us, and the American people are saying, When are you going to do something about the problems that we talk about every day? However, we spend more time in this Congress, especially in this House, getting involved in personal matters of families, taking the rules like the other side has attempted to do, which I understand some sort of deal has been worked out now on the other side of this Capitol as it relates to the filibuster, the other body. It is unfortunate we have to go to these extreme measures to threaten our way of democracy before we start to try to bring the best out of many Members of Congress.

I am concerned when the majority side in the 108th Congress made it illegal, prohibited the Medicare powers-that-be within the Federal Government to negotiate with drug companies for lower costs. They could have not addressed it and left it as a gray area for the administrators to say, maybe we can do something. But so indebted to big pharmaceutical companies, they prohibited it from happening.

That means if the administration said, Yes, we can bring diabetes or heart medication down \$15 if we were to use our buying power with the drug companies. If you do it, you are not only making a career decision; it has been prohibited in Federal law.

I am so glad that so many of us on this side of the aisle, I mean record numbers, voted against that prescription drug scheme, because it is not providing what the American people were told it would provide. AARP, along with others, understand that now and that is why they are fighting to bring those prices down.

Let me tell Members something. Being from Florida, prescription drug costs are a very important issue. Being a middle-aged American, 30-something, or heading to middle age, this is an important issue to my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I have said this before: We were not elected to have better health care than our constituents. I did not run into anyone at the polling place at 7 a.m. who walked up to me and said, "I am voting to make sure you and your family have better health care than I have. I cannot wait to go in there and vote for you so you can be better off than I am."

Mr. Speaker, they elected us to come to this House and fight on their behalf to make sure that that individual voter

and their families and future generations have better opportunities than what they have. We are not doing that now.

If we were in control, because I want to make sure that we really emphasize, if Democrats were in the majority, again I will say it, and I said it earlier in this hour, we would not be having a debate on privatization because privatization is bad. Individuals lose benefits under the privatization scheme that the President has put forth, if you are in the plan or not. That is the reason why the President has lower approval ratings as it relates to his Social Security privatization scheme. I would be worried out of my mind if it was the other way around, but people are getting it.

I can tell you another thing, we would not be having a discussion about why 46 million American families that are working do not have health care because this House would be moving in that direction to provide the health care that I talked about in our six-point plan, and also our partnership with America, which is a real plan that has accountability and has follow-through. It would not be a discussion, to point out the issue of the deficit and the fact that every American at birth, when we started this hour, at birth already owed the Federal Government \$26,349.67 and it has gone up since we have been here on this floor. It would not be a debate because we would be doing something about it.

We understand if we are going to do something in this Congress, we are going to start a new program, we are going to point out how we are going to pay for it, and that is not what the majority side is doing now.

The last point, because I can go on about the issue of responsibility and accountability, there would not be a what-if discussion as it relates to how we conduct business in this House and the real issues that are facing American families, programs that are working. Cut out the devolution of taxation to local governments and also to our State governments. There would not be a crisis as it relates to Medicaid and States ever running deficits in the States due to the fact that they have to balance their budget. Unlike our Congress, they have to balance their budgets on the backs of cutting programs that are helping so many young people stay out of trouble.

It would not be a what-if discussion; it would actually be reality. And the good thing that I am excited about, because of the leadership we have, the Democratic Caucus, it would be bipartisan. That is something that every American wants. They want to take the politics out of doing business here in Washington, D.C.

That is the reason why our work is so important, making sure we come to this floor week after week, and letting it be known that we are doing all we can in the capacity that we are serving in to not only let the Members of Congress know about responsibilities and

what we can do versus what we cannot do, but also letting the American people know what is happening here as it relates to individuals taking leadership positions, wanting to take action, and those that do not want to take leadership positions and do not take action. That is the real issue here.

That is the reason why if there is a Republican, Independent, Democrat, Green Party, what have you, these issues get those individuals together because it is talking about real-life issues. The information that we are providing here, this is not something we were in the back of the room saying, Let us use that number, it looks good. It is bipartisan Congressional Budget Office information. This is information from outside sources that have a credible way of receiving their information, have credibility in the United States of America.

So I think it is important for us to not only challenge the majority side because competition is good. I believe in that. Challenge the majority side, but also let the American people know if we had the opportunity to lead this House what this Congress could be and what it needs to be.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We know what could fix the problem. The American people understand what is going on right now. If we review poll results, this Chamber is not one of the most popular institutions in the country. I think there is a 33, 34 percent approval rating for the Congress. I think some of the issues that the gentleman touched on are why that kind of sense around America is what it is.

I want to share one final chart here that we have. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) mentioned the \$7.7 trillion debt and the \$26,000 that everybody owes, and the general theme tonight is, what are the real crises in the country. We explained that Social Security is solvent for another 45 years, and then we got into our over \$160 billion trade deficit with China, a \$400 billion deficit here at home. We are spending more money, we are borrowing it from the Chinese. We are not participating in a sound fiscal policy.

One final thing that kind of sums everything up, if Members look at it, and this is in trillions of dollars here, how much tax cuts for primarily millionaires are taking away from funding priorities that we have in this country. If we make the tax cuts permanent over the next 10 years, it will cost \$1.8 trillion. The tax cuts for the top 1 percent, people making 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, over a million dollars a year, well above half a million dollars a year, will be \$800 billion we are going to spend or not take in because of tax cuts primarily for the top 1 percent.

□ 2145

Look at what we are spending on veterans. This is \$800 billion, this is \$3 bil-

lion, over the next 10 years. So we are basically saying in this country that our priority is the top 1 percent, not the veterans of the United States of America. The other side would say, well, we have increased spending for veterans over the past few years. The answer to that is, yes, but thousands and thousands of more veterans are beginning to enter the VA system now. They are losing their pensions; they are losing their health care in places like Ohio. When I was on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs last session, Secretary Principi was in front of us and I asked him, is the reason more people are going into the health care system in places like Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania because of the massive job loss and companies are going bankrupt? And he said, yes.

We have people in Ohio that were veterans, that never accessed the VA system, who lost their jobs, lost their pensions, lost their health care, they had nothing, and they entered into the VA system because they were veterans. So, yes, you may be increasing the number of what we are spending on veterans; but when you have thousands of more veterans going in and nursing homes being closed down and nursing home beds being closed down, it is time to reevaluate what the policy is. We could go on and on and on with this on what we are going to spend on education, health care, which you so eloquently mentioned, all these great issues that we need to invest in.

I want to make a point. We are not saying that some of these programs do not need reform. We are not saying that at all. These programs do need reform. We need to move into more preventative health care than we are doing now. You talked about CVS and Rite Aid and the emergency room. Why would we want people to go if they were sick into an emergency room? Because we are paying for that, anyway. The hospitals get charity aid that comes out of Federal money. Why would we wait until someone got pneumonia and went to the emergency room when we could have a clinic that provided them with basic antibiotics that would allow them to address their issue when they had a cold? But we wait. So the system does need reform.

We need to put more emphasis on early childhood education. There is no question about it. We did a study in Ohio, and I mentioned it several times here before. The University of Akron did this study. For every dollar that the State of Ohio spent on higher education, the State received \$2 back in tax money because you are educating someone and they are going to be worth more, they are going to create more value, and they are going to pay more in taxes over the long run.

These systems need reform to where we are making good investments and saving the taxpayer money in the long run. These tax cuts are not having the economic impact they thought they would have. We have given trillions of

dollars in tax cuts and the whole reason was to stimulate the economy. We are still in a recession or just modest, very modest, economic growth, if that. Some signs are saying we are going to go back into a recession. This is not having the impact, because these people who make this money are not investing it in the United States. I will pull out the China graphs again if you want me to, but these people are taking their tax cuts and investing it in Asia. The economic impact again is not being felt in the United States. It is being felt abroad. The old theory that tax cuts will stimulate your national economy no longer work. It is an outdated method; it is voodoo economics as President Bush, I, said; and it is not working here today.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio did make the point of what is actually happening here, and I think it is important that we highlight that. We are going to close out. I see my Republican colleagues that are here. We got a little excited in talking about some of these issues, but I want to make sure that when you mentioned the veterans, like I said before and I have said like three times during this Special Order, we do have some friends on the Republican side of the aisle that see it and get it. Okay? But this is what happens to them when they do the right thing and this is from Fox News.

Representative CHRIS SMITH, former chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, passed a Veterans Administration budget that put him on the opposite side of his leadership on the Republican side. Actually doing what he should do as a chairman for the veterans. What happened? Did he get a parade? Did he get a commendation from the Republican leadership in their caucus? No. He got fired. He was ripped of his chairmanship. And so when we start talking about what we want and what we actually get, that is a perfect example.

We had nothing to do with him being removed. NANCY PELOSI, Democratic leader, had nothing to do with him being removed. The Republican leadership removed him. It is very unfortunate that that took place. I would say this, it is important that we come to the floor with solutions and not just problems. I am glad that we shared with the American people and also Members of this House what we have in store for them. Before we close, does the gentleman want to give this e-mail out quickly?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Again, send us an e-mail, tell us what you believe the real crises are in the country, 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov, and possibly we will read your e-mail next week.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the time here on floor. We would like to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us to have this time on the Democratic side.

## METHAMPHETAMINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, the subject of my Special Order this hour is how meth is ravaging our communities in the United States. Yet in our budget, in our appropriations, it is called on to eliminate what are called Byrne grants and the HIDTA program reduced by 56 percent.

Let us talk a little bit about what meth does. I have a picture here from the Des Moines Register of a 13-year-old Iowa girl, a very pretty little girl. Unfortunately, she became hooked on meth. This is the before. This is within a year later. It is kind of a grainy picture, but you can see a stark difference. Unfortunately, even though her mother tried rescuing her from this life-style, this little girl committed suicide. Meth is just an incredibly difficult drug to try and break free from.

In my home State, Duaine Bullock, the captain of narcotics unit in Lincoln that the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) represents, gave a sobering assessment of the growing meth problem in Nebraska and just said pointblank, we have got a gigantic problem. He is right on the mark. According to Nebraska Attorney General John Bruning, 60 percent of the inmates in Nebraska jails have a problem with meth. The number of people in Nebraska jails for possessing, selling, or manufacturing meth has more than doubled since 1999.

When we talk about this fight against meth in our communities, the front line of this war, of our war on meth and drugs, the fastest growing drug in the Nation, meth has produced a wider and more extensive array of problems than any other narcotic we have ever faced before. It is no longer just a rural or Midwestern issue. The Byrne grants that I mentioned casually goes directly to our front line warriors, our local police and our sheriff. It is those folks that are going to know where the drugs are located, which houses perhaps in a certain community have meth labs or will see some of the characteristics within that family unit or that home that can lead them to the conclusion that perhaps a meth lab is in operation there.

And so it makes no sense to me, Mr. Speaker, that we have a proposal in front of Congress to completely elimi-

nate the Byrne/JAG grants which are the dollars that go to local police departments to help them become prepared and enter into task forces all the way up to the Federal level. What we are seeing is a system of centralization of our war on drugs away from our front line warriors to the Nation's capital. While I certainly can maybe not respect, but at least understand, why a drug czar, a department, would want to consolidate its own power, I think is doing it against the best interests of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce another gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE). Frankly, he has been on the front lines bringing this issue to the attention of just about anyone that will listen over the last 3 years. It is my pleasure to introduce my friend and colleague from the Third District of Nebraska.

Mr. OSBORNE. I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding. Obviously, I have the worst affliction that a politician can have. I have laryngitis. I am playing hurt tonight. This is an all-Nebraska deal, it looks like. I really appreciate the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) organizing this. This is a very important issue. Probably half the States at the present time have a serious meth problem, but the ones that do not have it are going to have it. We think the whole country needs to be aware.

I would just like to provide a little background here. Methamphetamines first came into prominence during World War II. Quite often the Japanese kamikaze pilots were given meth. It gets you in such a euphoric state that you will take off in an airplane with not enough gas to return and think you are still going to make it somehow.

It obviously has a powerful pull. It is the most highly addictive drug that is known to man. In many cases, one exposure to methamphetamine renders the victim permanently addicted. Sometimes people take methamphetamine without even knowing what it is they are getting into. It provides a high that will last from 6 to 8 hours. It dumps a huge amount of dopamine which makes you feel good and, of course, eventually the next time it takes a little bit more and a little bit more and so on. It provides increased energy. Many working mothers, people working two jobs, will eventually get drawn into meth, truck drivers that want to stay out on the road for 48 to 72 hours. Some people on meth will stay awake for a week, sometimes even 2 weeks.

It does provide some energy. It also will provide the ability to lose weight, which is very attractive. On top of that, it is relatively cheap. In any place where you have a problem with cocaine or with heroin, meth will fix the problem, because it is cheaper, it is more powerful and almost without exception when meth comes in, the other things begin to decrease but the meth problem is so much worse that obvi-

ously the community is much worse off.

Whatever goes up must come down. I guess that is a law of physics, and so the accompanying emotions to meth abuse are anxiety, depression, hallucinations. Sometimes it is psychotic behavior. Violent behavior is often a side effect. Most meth addicts have what is known as crank bugs. They have the feeling that there is something crawling under their skin, and so they try to pick them out. We could have shown you some very graphic pictures tonight of people who have tremendous lesions on their skin. Maybe the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) has some of those.

Methamphetamine abuse always causes brain damage. Every time it destroys brain cells. A young person, maybe 18, 19 years old, who has been on meth for a year, will have a brain scan that will look almost identical to an 80-year-old Alzheimer's patient. You cannot distinguish the two. There are so many brain lesions, so much damage to the brain. It is very common, obviously, in rural areas because if you are going to manufacture methamphetamine, the odor is very distinct and so people seek out abandoned farmsteads. Sometimes they have mobile labs where they make it in the back of a van or something like that, but they usually like to stay out away from people.

□ 2200

The ingredients in methamphetamine are somewhat startling and a little bit bizarre. Pseudophedrine is, of course, the one ingredient that they have to have. In addition, oftentimes they use lithium batteries, drain cleaner, starter fluid, anhydrous ammonia, and iodine. So it is a tremendously toxic brew that is developed; and as a result, it costs about \$5,000 or \$6,000 to clean up a meth lab. It is very expensive. In some parts of the central United States, I believe Iowa had about 1,500 meth labs year; Missouri, around 2,000. So that is about \$10 million just to clean up the meth labs alone. And, of course, most of those funds come from the Byrne grants and the HIDTA grants that we were talking about.

If we think about the cost of methamphetamine abuse, in our area most of the child abuse, most of the child neglect, most of the infant death, young people death, foster care are caused by methamphetamine today. So it is a very difficult situation and very costly.

The gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) has already mentioned the Federal prison cells and the jail cells. So the last comment I will have today is simply this, that we are not saving money by cutting the Byrne grants. We are not saving money by cutting HIDTA because the average meth addict in Nebraska commits 60 crimes a year. So if we have 10 meth addicts in a community, that is 600 crimes.

The line of first defense is those law enforcement officers that the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY)