

I just think CAFTA is a bad deal. I think we should learn from the past. And agricultural America knows it is a bad deal. The only people who are supporting this are some of the brokering companies. Whether they get their product in China or whether they get it in Argentina or in the United States, these transnationals, they really do not care. They just want to trade on the backs of those who are actually doing the work.

We should care about the American people. We should care about the farmers in our fields. We should care about those people who are working in our processing companies and keep that production here.

Mr. FARR. The gentlewoman and I are both on the Subcommittee on Agriculture of the Committee on Appropriations, and I cannot think of two people that fight more for small farms and the ability of rural America to have a successful economic development.

I am wondering if the gentlewoman is finding in Ohio, in the people the gentlewoman has run across, most of the agricultural trade associations are supporting CAFTA. As I run into the members of those associations, they are not so keen on it. They are very concerned. They think that these are agrarian countries, and so what is going to happen is the products that they grow and can get into the school lunch program, can get into the organic program, can get into essentially the multi-billion dollars that America spends on food for the military and food for food stamps and things like that, that these products will be produced not at the local farmers market and additional farmers markets; but these products will come from Central America, at the expense of small farmers in our country, particularly of specialty crops.

Ms. KAPTUR. I think the gentleman has raised an excellent point. I think the Washington trade groups are totally out of touch with their members at the local level.

I have had farmers say to me when we were debating the NAFTA agreement, why should we let bell peppers come in from countries that do not have environmental regulations like we do? Bell peppers coming in with DDT, when DDT was being banned in Ohio. They were not competing on a level playing field. They were on a different field. They would go down to these towns. You cannot even call them towns. Little dusty villages in Mexico where these bell peppers were grown. And the farmers would say, I have been going down there for 20, 30 years. They do not even have an asphalt road yet.

So the whole system of life was different, and they were being asked to compete with a country that really did not allow its farmers to earn more by virtue of the hard work that they did. They respect the people of Mexico, but they knew the system was rigged against them. They said, just give us a level playing field.

Mr. FARR. I think the difficult is, and we all agree on this, that you cannot just have these trade agreements which are private business contracts and expect the social responsibility of both sides of the agreement are going to raise those opportunities for people who are less educated, for people who are below living standards.

It has got to be a totality. If we are going to trade ideas and products, we have also got to trade in education. We have got to trade in social responsibility and minimum standards, minimum wages, minimum protection for labor, minimum protection for environment. The whole quality of life has to improve.

This is the most giant business deal that the United States will ever make. And it is tragic that in this giant business deal we are not dealing with all of these other issues that we came here to Congress to try and solve.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentleman for his comments on that. I think the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) is exactly right and he understands how one has to have integrated policies.

I wanted to say as I am looking at the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) who has fought so hard for people to build a real middle class in this country and to help other nations help their people create a middle class, what is really sad about these trade agreements is it pits the poor against the more poor. It draws our living standards down. But one farmer that I met in Mexico said to me, what is really upsetting is that we feel like crabs in a bucket.

□ 2115

Every time we try to get up a little bit, somebody else pulls us down, and they were fighting this rush to the bottom, which is the expression that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) uses so well. One poor person pulling another person down, rather than having the standards that the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) is talking about, where we all agree to a minimum standard. We bring people up, not pull them down.

Ms. WATERS. I think you are so right, and I thank you so very much for the leadership you have provided on these issues. I thank you for opening up opportunities for women to go down to Mexico and take a look at what is going on there. It is because of you that a lot of people in this Congress have become interested in this issue, and I appreciate the work you have done.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for saying that. Also, 60 percent of those people who are employed in these Central American countries are women. They are working in banana companies trying to pack these crates, 40, 50, 60 crates an hour. They are being forced to make men's trousers, 400 to 600 pairs an hour, and they have to work 2 weeks to afford 2 pairs of slacks down there, which costs \$39.40, and yet, they are making 400 to 600 pairs of trousers an hour.

What kind of a continent, what kind of a world are we creating when we pay so little heed to those who work so hard for so little and then we put our workers out, largely women workers in the textile industry in this country, where we farmed out those jobs in places like North Carolina, South Carolina, are hollowing out of this production? At least they were in the middle class. They had finally made it to the middle class. What are we doing in this country?

Ms. WATERS. It could not have been better stated.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues. Our time is about up. Thank you very much for your passionate remarks in closing.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

This Congress will likely vote on this agreement soon. It is pretty clear that the most powerful people in all seven countries, the Dominican Republic, the Central American countries and the United States, support this agreement but overwhelming opposition among the public, small business owners and family farmers and ranchers and workers and people who care about the environment.

If this Congress does its job, it is clear we will defeat this CAFTA and then renegotiate one that lifts up workers in all seven countries. I thank all of my colleagues for joining us this evening.

30 SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ING-LIS of South Carolina). 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, once again, it is an honor to address the House for another week. The 30 Something Working Group has come to the floor to talk about issues that are not only facing young people but also facing Americans in general, and I think one of the greatest values we have in this country is caring about future generations and caring about those that cannot represent themselves.

It is important that we come to this House and in this great democracy that we celebrate every day and recognize the contributions of those individuals that go to work every day. Those individuals know what it means to punch in and punch out every day. Those individuals know what it means to not have health care; those individuals that are going to have to pay down this \$7.8 trillion deficit; those individuals that are running small businesses that would like to have assistance from this Federal Government to be able to carry

out their everyday needs, not only for their employees, but to make sure that we have a fair tax policy for the backbone of our economy.

So we meet weekly to talk about these issues and then we come to the floor. We would like to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader; and also in our leadership, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), as Democratic whip; the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), who is our chairman; and also, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), who is our vice chairman, for providing the kind of leadership within the Democratic Caucus that is needed not only for the caucus but for America.

We come here as young members of the Democratic Caucus in this Congress to shed light and bring clarification to statements and actions or inactions by this Congress.

I am pleased to announce, as I announced last week, that a number of the individuals in the White House and in the majority have now taken another look at Social Security. Once again, we come back to the floor to talk about that issue, Social Security. As they start to look at this issue, they are finding that Americans are just not with them on the privatization of Social Security.

I am far from receiving from Social Security as it relates to retirement, but let us just think of hypotheticals of how important Social Security is. Someone my age could receive survivor benefits from a parent who wants to leave survivor benefits, not my age but younger, or receive disability.

So when we start talking about Social Security on this side of the aisle, the Democratic Caucus, we are talking about strengthening Social Security. Even some of my friends over on the majority side, Republicans, are talking about strengthening Social Security, not weakening Social Security through schemes and privatization plans.

So we continue to fight and also let the leaders on the majority side know that we are willing to work together once again, like we did in 1983 with Speaker of this House Tip O'Neill and Ronald Reagan in the White House, of working out a way that we can strengthen Social Security, make sure that it is here beyond the 47 years that it will be here, providing 100 percent of the benefits that we are providing right now, and even 80 percent of the benefits after that period, of making sure that people can count on the fact that if they pay into Social Security, that it will be there for them when they need it.

It is important. Some 48 million Americans receive Social Security right now. A number of those Americans are retired, but many of them are receiving disability benefits due to an injury on the job, and they cannot work or individuals that their parents have paid into the Social Security and now their children are able to not only

educate themselves but help them make it through college with extra money to be able to help them to become productive citizens here in the United States.

So that is the reason why this debate is so important. Are there other issues that are important? Of course, there are. Is the environment important? You bet it is. Is education important? That is our future; of course, it is. Is health care important? Health care puts the backbone into education, into workforce, into making sure that we have a healthy economy and that we are able to compete against other countries as it relates to making our country strong.

So those are very, very important issues, but Social Security is in the halls of Congress now. It is important, Mr. Speaker, that we break down this debate to the point that individuals, everyone, can understand, every Member can understand, every American could understand, everyone that will be affected, and that is all Americans, from young to old.

It is important that we no longer allow the majority side to raid the Social Security trust fund, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is on his way to the floor, and we are going to talk about a proposal that was just introduced this week of saying that it is different than what the President is proposing. Well, another proposal that is supposed to be different than what the President is proposing.

As you know, the Social Security trust fund has been raided to some \$670 billion. So when we see proposals of individuals saying, well, we just take this from the trust fund and we will take that from the trust fund, the trust fund is there to make sure that individuals that are expecting their benefits out of Social Security, when they need it, Social Security when they need it, that it is there for them. It is not time to experiment. It is not time to say we want private accounts and this is just the way it is going to be.

Paper is paper, and if you go get a yellow sheet of paper and say that, well, it is yellow, it is different; well, if it has private accounts in it, we already know and the American people know that that means fewer benefits for those individuals that are enrolled in the private accounts or not enrolled in the private accounts. So it is important that we pay very close attention in what is going on and what is being said.

Now, there are a number of individuals that are very, very concerned, and I will tell you that for young people, and I do mean young people in America, and for parents that have young people that are in college or young people that are trying to make their way, you may have a son or daughter that is living in an apartment just trying to be independent, trying to get on their feet, trying to do what you have done, trying to build the kind of values that you placed in them, you try to place in

them as you were rearing them and as you were trying to develop them as men and women. They are trying to stand up, and it is imperative that this Congress does everything that it has to do to make sure that their government does not gamble on their retirement.

On average, young people are staying on jobs 3 to 4 years, on average. They need to make sure that Social Security is going to be there for them because a pension plan may never really develop in the way that it is supposed to. There are a number of Americans that are in pension plans right now that have failed them, and it is very, very unfortunate that is the case, but one thing that they can bank on literally is that Social Security will be there for them.

So when we have individuals running around here talking about private accounts, thinking that it sounds good or cool or something new to present to the Social Security debate, I must remind them that we will continue to rise up, and it is a one-sided debate thus far on the private account end. It is only the majority side, the Republican side, and the leadership who is talking about private accounts and now want to act on private accounts but call it something else.

It is not a tomato or tomato issue. It is an issue of being clear with the American people, and so it is important that we remember that 44 percent of young people are living in poverty, and that means people within our family. I know that I have individuals in my family that are living in poverty, whether it be a cousin or uncle or even a neighbor, and it is important that we recognize that.

Approximately 2 million young adults are without health care insurance for the entire year. That means young people are going to drugstores, trying to medicate themselves or trying to make themselves healthy when they should have health care, and this is important.

It is also important to understand that young people in America call on their parents and grandparents and family members to help them when they are running into hard types. So, when we start talking about taking anything away, either benefits or a right they may have as it relates to Social Security, saying that they are trying to help them, it is not going to help them, and it is important that we fight against that.

Now, as it relates to what the Democrats are talking about on this side of the aisle and what we are trying to do, and I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that not only do I share with and remind the Members and those that expect Members on this side to be able to carry the ball in leadership, that by the rules, and I hate to be repetitive, but I think it is important that everyone understands, the rules of the House, the majority runs the operation here in the House. On the minority side, we cannot agenda a bill. We cannot agenda a bill in committee. We

cannot place a bill through the Committee on Rules here on the floor of the House. We can only recommend.

□ 2130

So when you see private accounts and when you see lack of health care, when you see as a small business person unfair tax policies, to be able to allow your business to prosper, when you see environmental laws falling short of what they should be, then you must understand that on this side of the aisle we try to do all we can. And I will give credit to some of my Republicans colleagues that think in the same way and that are trying to do better as it relates to addressing those issues.

As to veterans, and I am from Florida and have many veterans in my district, and they come to me. Congressman, I cannot understand, it seems like the list is getting longer and longer every time I go to the VA. Well, that is because we are not standing by our veterans. We march up and down the street on Veterans Day and Memorial Day and recognize those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice. But on that Tuesday after recognizing the veterans, it will be business as usual and as it relates to VA hospitals and copayments that veterans have to pay more and more for.

We talk about individuals in Iraq, and 70 percent of those who are losing their life in Iraq are under 30 years old. So these are patriots. These are individuals that are going out there even before they are able to start their own family, in many cases even before they have an opportunity to be able to buy their first home. So it is important when we start saying we are doing something in light of our young people, it is important that we pay very, very close attention to this.

I am going to show one of these charts here. This is the President's priorities as it relates to tax cuts. It is greater than the funding that is available for veterans in this country. I will tell Members, I have a veteran in my family. My uncle is a veteran. He served in the Korean War. He is a soldier from the Army. He did what he had to do on behalf of this country because this country asked him to do it. We have \$1.8 trillion in permanent tax cuts. We also have tax cuts for the top 1 percent which is \$0.8 trillion, and then there is \$0.3 trillion as it relates to veteran budget authority.

I think it is important that Members understand that the way we work here in Congress, we talk a lot about veterans and what we should be doing for them, and we talk a lot about their contributions. And many of us walk and march and wave in parades. And, ho-hum, we salute the same flag. But better yet, when it comes down to where we put our dollars, where we put our priorities, how we take action as it relates to veterans, you can see where it falls short.

I will tell you once again, giving credit to some of my Republican col-

leagues, some of them have a real problem with this. The past chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs was removed, removed from the chairmanship of the committee, because he did not pass the legislation that the leadership on the majority side wanted to see passed.

Mr. Speaker, he did the right thing and he paid. He paid with his chairmanship. So that is why it is important that I remind Members of the majority and the minority, and we will continue to bring factual, accurate debate on the issues that are either happening in this Congress or not happening in this Congress. When we are able to come together on issues that are facing America, fine. We can talk about that and we can be very proud of those accomplishments. But when our priorities differ, it is important for us to pay very close attention.

I have another chart here. Those of us in the 30-Something Working Group, we have a constant watch on this number. These are our recent numbers. As Members can see, we are close to \$1.8 trillion. This is as of June 20. Below that we have the share of the national debt for every American: Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green Party, you name it. Reform Party, just born 10 minutes ago, they already owe the Federal Government \$26,255.76. This has to be paid off. This is not monopoly money, this is not funny money. This is not the Meek Report or the 30-Something Working Group Report. This is from the U.S. Department of Treasury. We will give our Web site out a little later where you can look at it.

Mr. Speaker, once again, to back up, I think it is important that we go through the fundamentals and talk about the difference. When this House was run by Democrats, we balanced the budget without one Republican vote. That is a fact. That is *prima facie* evidence, as they say in the courtroom. That is not a fabrication. That is not exaggeration. That is not something that some Democrat said on the floor and it is not true. We balanced the budget.

The number we have here was balanced and was going into surplus. As a matter of fact, it was not as high because this is the highest the national debt has been in the history of the Republic. Since we have been a country, the deficit has not been this high. Some may say well, it is the war in Iraq. That is not true.

Well, we ran into a hard time; 9/11 happened and we had to create a new department. That is not true. That is not why it is so high. The debt is where it is now because we have decided to give tax cuts to billionaires. That is a big part of it. And then we turned around and made it permanent. Now, middle-class tax cuts, I do not have a problem with that because that grows the economy.

But when we start talking about a fundamental difference in how we do business on this side of the aisle and

how the majority does business on that side of the aisle, there is a big difference.

Like I said, I am not a generalist because I do not like to generalize, but when I say some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have problems with some of the decisions being made by the leadership, that is true. So I think it is important that we focus on the things that we can continue to focus on as it relates to the priorities and how we work to make things better.

I am going to start talking a little bit about the plan that the President has put out and that some Republican Members of Congress have put on the table. The President has said that he wants to bring privatization to young people. Young Americans will be able to have private Social Security accounts; that they will be able to use their own money and have options and invest it in a way that they want to invest it.

The President has come to this Chamber and addressed this Congress in the last State of the Union and said if you are over 55, do not worry about it, it will not affect you. The President has also said he will fight to the end, making sure we have private accounts. Regardless of the fact that not only news reports but nonprofit and government entities have found, and the White House has admitted the fact that if you are in a private account, if you decide to take a private account or not, you will lose benefits.

So it really fights against logic to say well, I know I will lose benefits, but it is important that we go the private account route, even though Social Security is not in a crisis at this particular time, not an imminent crisis.

There have been words out of the White House that it is a crisis and it is about to go bankrupt, using words such as that. And media, along with some Americans who are informed on the issue of Social Security, have said, yes, we have to strengthen Social Security. Yes, we have concerns with the trust fund, but we are not about to go bankrupt.

So after the 60- or 90-day tour of burning Federal jet fuel, your tax dollars, the President went around the country speaking to Americans. And some were not allowed to come into the talks, or what have you, and still after all of that Federal money spent, Americans still came back and said no, we are not with you on this one. And so it is important that everyone understands.

So if you feel oh, well, and we are talking about what the majority is doing now. Until the American people say different, that is what the situation is going to be. We are going to bring balance to this debate. It is important. And I ask the Republican leadership to work in a bipartisan way not only with our leadership but with every Member of this House, making sure that we strengthen Social Security and not privatize Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, there have been hundreds of town hall meetings throughout the country, talking about this issue of Social Security, and young and old have said we want Social Security. It is the best government program that we have in many cases, and we want it to be strengthened, we do not want it to be privatized. We know that when you privatize something, you have to meet the bottom line. And the people that are in the business of so-called making you money, they have to make their bottom line. If they have to make their bottom line, I guarantee if they are in business and making their bottom line, they are going to take care of that business first and then maybe your investments may make some profit.

Mr. Speaker, I was about to go into the new plan or philosophy that has been brought to this House in the way of a press conference about private accounts, but since the gentleman just got here, and I have been talking about Social Security and privatization, going through the minority and majority issues. It would not be a discussion, if we were in the majority, that we would strengthen Social Security in a bipartisan way like we did in 1983, and that we would be dealing with issues such as health care and other issues that are facing us. We are going to talk about that, too.

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back. I am sorry I am late, but I agree wholeheartedly with the portion I heard that the gentleman was saying.

I think the focus that the 30-Something Group has zoned in on is the issue of this borrowing, this raiding the trust fund, this taking away from investments that can be made in the next generation.

The President came out with a plan that said \$5 trillion would have to be borrowed over the next 20 years, 1.5 to \$2 trillion over the next 10 years. So imagine \$5 trillion being borrowed, taken out of the economy, borrowing it from the Japanese and Chinese in order to fund this scheme that the President was pushing.

Now, all of a sudden, we have a new privatization plan that is a little bit different, and we will get into the details in a minute. I think the principle is the same: We are taking money out of the trust fund. I think any time we do that, we are putting ourselves in a very, very difficult position.

The key principle for the Democrats is to make sure that we maintain the benefit we have now, make sure that we maintain the guaranteed benefit that our parents and grandparents have, and then make the system more solvent.

There are very few details. Unless there is new information, there are very few details to this plan.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are giving it too much credit by calling it a plan. It is a philosophy. The

proponents are saying, and they have now come up with a new approach, it is different than the privatization proposal, but it is just like the privatization proposal.

□ 2145

It would take a portion of the Social Security trust fund revenues and put them into private accounts. That is privatization. It does not matter whether the total size of the account is limited to an amount each year as it relates to the Social Security trust fund rather than a percentage for the participants' payroll taxes. The gentleman from Ohio and I are very familiar with the Potomac two-step. We know what it means to say, Look over here but we're going over there. And so it is important that we not only come to this floor and let the Members know and say it out loud, A portion of what? How much? What is a portion? I can guarantee you it is in the trillions.

And if we start talking about, well, it is not necessarily the President's private account plan, but it is dealing with private accounts, that is privatization. I am sorry, any way you cut it, it is privatization. As we learn more about and as we start to unmask this GOP leadership vision, which is based upon theory, not fact, we will start to understand as it relates to the privatization scheme and how they are trying to get there.

I know as long as we have air in our body and God provides us another day to live, that as we see this old, Well, it's not private accounts, or we're going to take a portion, we are going to translate that not only for the Members but also for the American people, Mr. Speaker, and it is important that we do that, and we are going to continue to follow it. But the gentleman from Ohio is 100 percent right, we do have some additional information; but the bottom line is that they are going to go into the Social Security trust fund to be able to, I guess, secure these private accounts.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is so eerily familiar to what has been going on with all these other different programs. I do not know if you got a chance to talk at all about this, but remember the Medicare program? Remember how they had this great program that was going to move the country forward and, God almighty, it was only \$400 billion.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am sorry, can I correct the gentleman? It was \$350 billion.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. \$350 billion, it started, at the very beginning. Then it became \$400 billion. Then you and I sat in this Chamber until 3 in the morning and watched the arms get twisted, the eyes start to bulge, the chicken wings were coming in, they had the arms behind people's backs. A \$400 billion Medicare prescription drug bill passed this Chamber by just a few votes, with a lot of arm twisting.

Then we find out a couple of months later that the \$400 billion prescription

drug bill that was \$350 billion became \$700 billion. And then we found out that the \$700 billion prescription drug bill that was a \$400 billion prescription drug bill that was actually a \$350 billion prescription drug bill became over \$1 trillion when you start factoring in some of the out-years with absolutely no cost containment through re-importation or giving the Secretary the power to negotiate down the drug prices.

So now all of a sudden we go with the Social Security program, and let us not even talk about the war and all the nonsense that was given to us prior to the war and what ended up playing out, we will keep it on domestic programs, now we are in the Social Security and now they are telling us that, well, we had these private accounts and they were going to not cost too much and they were going to save us money in the long run; and we started the crunching the numbers, and we got to the fact that it was going to be \$2 trillion over 10 years, \$5 trillion over 20 years. Our national debt now is \$7.8 trillion, and we are going to add an additional 5 over the next 20 years.

But now that did not work so now we are going to go back to the drawing board, and we are going to start playing a shell game with the Treasury bonds, but the bottom line in this is that they are still taking surplus money that is being used right now going into domestic programs, going to reduce the amount of the debt. They are going to put this in some kind of private account somewhere that nobody really seems to know what it is and have no way of balancing the budget or making investments for the American people.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is like walking down the hall and you never get to the end as it relates to the deficit. Let me just tell you a little bit more about this plan, because I had an opportunity to jot some things down. Let me just further break this down and water it down a little bit more so that we can all understand, every Member of Congress can understand exactly what we are doing or what some individuals would like to do.

Under this new plan that they have put forth, Members of Congress, a Member in the House and another Member in the other body, they basically said under the current annual surpluses would shift to private accounts, so they are saying that what we have now as it relates to the surpluses in the Social Security trust fund would now be shifted to private accounts. The sponsors even admit the fact that this plan would do nothing to restore solvency to Social Security. This will not solve the Social Security issue.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Say it one more time.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. This will not. By the sponsors. This is not someone walking down the street.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is not the Kendrick Meek-Tim Ryan quote.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There you go. It is not. This is by their own admission. No, it will not solve it. Furthermore, when you start looking at it, it really has three serious flaws. When you are talking about Social Security, there is no time to play around and start talking about, well, I am smarter than the next person. I believe this will work. We cannot go on belief. We have to know for sure. One flaw. The plan would worsen the Social Security solvency issue in the long run and in the short run. This is not something that will be kind of off into the future.

The plan would also drain \$600 billion from the Social Security trust fund in the first 10 years, \$600 billion. This is what they are saying right now. You just talked about the prescription drug, quote-unquote, plan starting off at \$350 billion and now \$724 billion as we stand here today, and counting. This is what they are starting off with within the first 10 years. The third issue, the plan will cause Social Security to become insolvent 2 years sooner, in 2039 instead of 2041. This is not only saying, well, ladies and gentlemen, put your head down, we are going in for a crash landing; but we are going to hit the ground before we actually hit the ground. As a matter of fact, we are going to move the ground closer, or we are going to make the plane go faster to be able to hit the ground.

I will tell you this right now, it is important and it goes to show you how the Republican leadership is willing to stop at nothing to deal with this private account issue. Furthermore, let me just say that some of my friends on the Republican side have great issues not only with the President's plan but with this plan. I appreciate my colleagues who are trying to figure out a way, but there is a better way without private accounts. There is a way to strengthen Social Security. Better yet, a total Democratic plan is not the best plan. A bipartisan plan is the best plan. That is what we are saying.

Mr. Speaker, the people that I run into, they say, Well, goodness, can you guys and gals, can the Members, can you work together? Can you just get along? Can you just come together on this issue on Social Security? If we can come together on making sure our men and women in uniform overseas, thousands of miles away and three or four different time zones away from here, if we can try to do our best and make sure that they get what they are supposed to get in a bipartisan way, then we have to make sure that the individuals that are here and the families that are here and the individuals that have paid into this, even those that have died and left survivor benefits for their children, that they get a fair shake. It is our responsibility to make sure that happens.

We talked about the fact that we are in the minority, we would like to be in the majority, but in the minority we can fight, too. And we will make sure that the American people know exactly what is going on.

One other point. We have to give credit where credit is due. There are some individuals that are not in the leadership on the Republican side that are not with this private account thing. I am asking my friends, and I see them in the hall, we bump into each other here on the floor, they say, I saw your 30-something Working Group, you were talking about this, I am glad you said some Republicans are not with this privatization thing. I am one of them.

Do you remember the movie "Jerry McGuire" when they took Jerry McGuire out to fire him? The guy went out to fire him. He said, man, I'm sorry, but they sent me and I'm here to fire you. He is staring at this glass of water, and he is not saying anything. The guy said, You should say something. That is what I am saying to my friends on the opposite side of the aisle: you should say something. You should rise up and say, Enough with the private accounts. Maybe yes; oh, I think it's okay; let's try to find another plan. That is it. Let us strengthen Social Security, and let us just put this private account thing out the door so that we can get on with the business of the Congress in a bipartisan way. That is what we are saying.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is a great point. Because here we are today, we are passing an amendment to the Constitution today that has not gone anywhere for 12 years, never goes anywhere. At the same time we are cutting benefits for our veterans, and here we go. All of a sudden we have got another Social Security plan. Let us fight about this one for 6 months. Let us have the 30-something Working Group come here and fight about this one and pick this one apart for 6 months.

When is this administration and this Congress going to start addressing the real problems in the country? That is the real issue. You go back to your district and you are in south Florida. No one is worried about their Social Security check coming to their mailbox. Look at this thing. We are good until 2047, 100 percent of your benefits, if we do not do a stinking thing here. Then for the next 20 years, you still get 80 percent of the benefits if we do not do a thing in this Chamber.

And we consistently have this debate on this plan and that plan, and we do not have a problem. We have got a challenge, but we do not have a big problem with the Social Security plan. I go back home and young kids have lead poisoning, thousands of kids in thousands of school districts around this country have lead poisoning. Kids do not have enough money to eat. Eighty-five percent of students in some of these school districts qualify for free and reduced lunch, and we are talking about 2047.

We are running a \$600 billion-plus deficit that is offset by the Social Security surplus. It is irresponsible to sit here and try to pretend that 2047 is somehow a crisis in the country. It is

irresponsible that we are going to consistently come up with new plans that we are going to argue over. Where is the new plan to make sure young kids have enough food? Where is the new plan to make sure we build new schools? Where is the new plan to make sure everybody in the country has health care?

This is a farce. This whole debate has become a farce and we are ignoring the real problems of the people in the country. All you have to do is check one of the polls that come out. This body here has a 30 percent approval rating in the whole United States of America. What are we doing? It is obvious that we are not addressing the needs of the problems. This is my third year, this is your third year, this is the President's fifth year, sixth year. The Congress has been in control of one party since 1994. Come on. We have not addressed the health care issue in the country. Forty-some million Americans do not have health care. I get calls from General Motors, Goodyear, small mom-and-pop businesses, food chains. No one can afford health care for their workers anymore.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The States cannot even afford Medicaid. They are saying Medicaid reform. You know why? Because businesses are saying, when folks are signing up and filling out their employment information, they are saying, well, I think you are eligible for Medicaid. I think you need to apply there because you will get more benefits under the Federal program versus what we can provide you.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Look at Wal-Mart. They have gamed the system. They pay their employees just enough for them to qualify for Medicaid, so they do not pay them any more. They do not give them health care benefits and they qualify for Medicaid. That is corporate welfare. Everyone is worried about cutting welfare checks for poor people. How about the rich people that get at the public trough and pig out?

□ 2200

We are subsidizing Wal-Mart while they are forcing their suppliers to go to China.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I wanted the gentleman to say that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. But on and on and on this goes, and we are sitting here having a debate, a curious intellectual debate, about whether the new Social Security plan is going to work or not. It diverts \$600 billion from the surplus. This is not working. The President's plan is not working. We really do not have a crisis for another 40 years, and meanwhile we are getting our clocks cleaned by the Chinese while they are taking the money and they are buying military equipment from the Russians. We are sitting here thinking who can come up with the next great Social Security plan.

I know the gentleman goes back to his district every weekend, and I do

too, and I know that people are not interested in our having intellectual debates about a problem that really does not even exist. That is left for the ivory towers. We are here to get the job done.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, getting back to talking about getting the job done, that is being shed light on, what the gentleman just shed light on as it relates to what is not happening and also what is happening to Americans versus for them.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), one of our colleagues, put forth a piece of legislation, and once again if Democrats were in the majority here in the House, which we fight for every day, of responding to the national health care crisis as it relates to young people, it is the Health Care for Young Americans Act that he has put forth that many of us are cosponsors of, which would allow States the option of extending health care insurance coverage to many uninsured young adults. States provide health care coverage to low-income uninsured children largely through two Federal/state programs, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program. However, these programs often reclassify children as adults when they turn 19, making them ineligible for coverage.

Mr. Speaker, we have to start on this health care issue somewhere, and we have solutions on this side of the aisle on how to deal with those issues. Just last week we talked about legislation that the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), ranking member, has put before the Committee on Education and the Workforce, introduced bills with other Members here in the House that we are both cosponsors of, that replenish the issue of the Pell grants, because the Bush administration has changed the formula that are cheating young people next year, the next fiscal year, out of \$300 million of dollars that should be in that Pell grant program that they have taken away. We want to put those dollars back because we know, just like the gentleman said as it relates to competing against China, competing against other countries that are competing against us, where we have a negative trade deficit as it relates to dealing in business with them, but they are having a great time doing business with us; and meanwhile here in America we have people that are trying to put themselves to work and businesses that want to put them to work, but cannot afford to put them to work and are putting them out of work because they can no longer afford to keep them in work because the jobs have moved overseas and they cannot compete with the prices that are there.

But the 30-Something Working Group is not only pointing out the issues but also talking about what we have on the table that would be on this floor or going through the committee process in a bipartisan way to find the solu-

tion, not for Americans that happen to be Democrats, but for Americans that want a fair share from their government and being able to make sure that they have not only adequate health care but to make sure that their children have it.

I am a father, Mr. Speaker, and I was married 14 years ago, going on 14 years, and I was a different person before I got married. But when I got married, it was a totally different relationship. And then when we start having children, we change as an individual, and then when our children start to get older, we continue to change. And then when our children, and I have not seen this yet, start to talk about leaving and going to college or getting into some kind of trade or getting out on their own, which some parents say that never happens, but when they start to develop themselves as young adults, we still parent. We still care about them.

So when we start talking about health care for young people, when we start talking about making sure that they get a Pell grant to educate themselves, it is our issue. When we start talking about Social Security and we have the administration and some members of the Republican leadership saying privatization is the way to go when the only guarantee is \$944 billion would go to Wall Street, that is our issue. We are here to watch out for future generations.

I agree with the President in saying we have got to watch out for future generations, but we do not watch out for them. And seeing that deficit, that almost \$7.8 trillion deficit that the gentleman has there behind him, there is not a real debate on the majority side or even legislation to provide health care or to make sure that every American is able to receive health care or making sure that small business is able to provide health care. There is not a real agenda, and if it is there, then why is it not happening? Why are we here saying what we are saying if it is happening? Because it is not happening.

So that is the difference. People are asking, What is the difference between us and them? One, we are all Americans. Two, we have a Republican side and we have a Democratic side. Three, the majority runs the House of Representatives. So if people want change, if they want to bring about opportunity, then we have to put the pressure on the majority side to make them do the right thing, and hopefully they will do the right thing and then maybe it will work, or the American people are going to have to rise up, Mr. Speaker, and say they want different.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will further yield, that is a beautiful point. It is a beautiful point. The Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House. So obviously some agenda is getting implemented. Their agenda is getting implemented because they control all three Chambers. And when we look at what it is, it is obviously not

an agenda that is helping Middle America, small businesses, addressing the health care issue, education issue, and all of the things we have talked about.

The gentleman mentioned earlier business not being able to cover health care and all this, and forced to go to these other countries. And I even think the Democrats in many ways, Mr. Speaker, have not addressed this issue in the proper way. Small businesses and big businesses, they are not out to screw their employees. And sometimes many workers may feel that way, but they are not out to hurt people. If they could provide health care and they had the resources to do it, they would, especially the small businesses. Especially the small businesses.

So the question is, What have we done here? We cannot blame a big company for not providing health care to their workers if they are trying to compete with people coming and shipping goods in from China with low cost, with low overhead, because of all the situations that we have talked about here. The finger should be pointed at this Chamber. The finger should be pointed at the U.S. Senate and at the White House. We are the ones not addressing the health care issue in the country. We have not done anything.

I cannot tell the Members how many small business people I meet on a daily basis when I go back home that talk to me about health care, and they run a business of 100 to 200 people. They care about their workers. When someone in a worker's family gets sick, they know about it. When a worker gets sick, they know about it. They know the name of everybody on the floor in the machine shop. And to say that somehow they do not care, I think is wrong. I think it misrepresents what is going on.

And my point here, as scattered as it may be, is that the finger should be pointed to us. We swear an oath to the Constitution, and part of that means helping people, coming together in a democratic fashion to move society forward. And we are not doing it. We are leaving people behind left and right, whether it is health care or whether it is education or anything else.

So I know we are wrapping up here and we are running out of time, but I wanted to make that final point and let the gentleman make a point, and we will get our little chart up here and wrap things up.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman gets a chance, I would like him to be able to share the Web site information and e-mail information not only with the Members, Mr. Speaker, but making sure that everyone knows exactly what we are talking about here. And I think it is important that we couch this 30-Something Working Group hour in saying that we have a number of issues that have to be addressed in America. We have issues that are facing people that punch in and punch out every day, or once did; individuals that ran a small business,

put their kids through college, now having to really work hard to help their children or grandchildren make it in this America. And so it is important that we bring issue to that.

It is also important to let people know that we have ideas, not only concerns but ideas. And we present that every week, at least two proposals that our colleagues have put forth or we have put forth to be able to strengthen America. So it is important that we continue on this track. I want to thank the gentleman and other members of the 30-Something Working Group for doing what they do.

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I think he is exactly right. We have got to step up and pose the vision, an alternative to what is going on here. Give us an e-mail: 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. Send us an e-mail and we will possibly read it here. We have brought in a lot of e-mail the last few weeks. We have been swamped with e-mail the last few weeks.

So I thank the gentleman for yielding, and we will be back again next week.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) for his comments, and, like I said, everyone in the 30-Something Working Group, we would like to thank not only the Democratic leader but the Democratic leadership for allowing us to be here once again. And it was an honor to address the House, Mr. Speaker.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BOYD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of medical reasons.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 4:00 p.m.

Mr. KUCINICH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 3:00 p.m. in order to save jobs at NASA Glenn and DFAS.

Mr. POMEROY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and June 23 on account of official business.

Mr. RANGEL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending the memorial service for the late Hon. Jake J.J. Pickle of Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending the funeral of the late Hon. Jake Pickle of Texas.

Mr. BONNER (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of business in his district.

Mr. LATOURETTE (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today from 4:00 p.m. until approximately 1:00 p.m. on June 23 on account of a BRAC hearing.

Mr. NEY (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of a death in the family.

Mr. OXLEY (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of business in Ohio.

Mr. SMITH of Texas (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of attending the funeral of the Hon. J.J. "Jake" Pickle.

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. McDERMOTT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. REYES, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. McDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. NORWOOD, for 5 minutes, June 23.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, June 29.

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TERRY, for 5 minutes, June 23.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, June 23.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, 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 10 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 23, 2005, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

2429. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2430. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Energy, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2431. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2432. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2433. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the

Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2434. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

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2438. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2439. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2440. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2441. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2442. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

2443. A letter from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the semiannual report on the activities of the Office of Inspector General for the period of October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 8G(h)(2); to the Committee on Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. LEWIS of California: Committee on Appropriations. Report on the Revised Sub-allocation of Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2006 (Rept. 109-145). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. NEY: Committee on House Administration. H.R. 1316. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to repeal the limit on the aggregate amount of campaign contributions that may be made by individuals during an election cycle, to repeal the limit on the amount of expenditures political parties may make on behalf of their candidates in general elections for Federal office, to allow State and local parties to make certain expenditures using nonfederal funds, to restore certain rights to exempt organizations under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 109-146). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.