

that we could increase the Pell grant by some \$500. We could take care of low and middle-income students who fall short in being able to finance their education. We would lower the cost of that debt to those students. We would make the repayment easier.

But the Republicans did not do that. They chose to take now what is almost \$16 billion when they are done next week out of the student loan program, to raid this student aid and take that and transfer that to the wealthiest people in this country through the tax cuts that they have already enacted.

It is a shameful day, and it is a sad day, when we are being told that it is more important now than ever that students in America complete a college education for the sake of their economic well-being and for the sake of the competitiveness of our economy, and the Republicans have decided to make it more and more expensive for millions of American students and their families. It is a tragic day for these students and their families.

#### CONGRESS GOES HOME WITHOUT COMPLETING ITS WORK

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the American people might wonder why we have gone home today at 1 o'clock on a Thursday. Are there no problems facing this country? Have we rebuilt the gulf coast? Have we dealt with the problems in Iraq? Have we dealt with everything that is troubling in this society? You have to ask yourself, where did the Congress go? Why did they go home? Why does the Republican leadership declare that no, we are not going to be here, we are not going to be here on Monday. I think this Congress is pretty much having trouble here doing their job.

□ 1300

The reason we are not here on the floor dealing with the issues today is that the issues are tough. And the Republicans do not want to go into Thanksgiving with everybody saying, well, they did it again. They took more from the needy and they gave it to the greedy.

But that is what the debate was about this week. It is about what kind of amendments, what kind of cuts. Amendments is a fancy congressional word for the fact that we are going to cut the budget.

Now, where are those cuts coming from and why can the Republicans not make up their minds what they want to cut? Well, they are looking at the Medicaid program. They want to cut \$10 billion there. They want to just raise it; now, just 1 more billion would not be very much. Just a nick out of some people.

Student loans. You just heard the gentleman from California (Mr.

GEORGE MILLER) give the facts about that issue. You are talking about a \$7 or \$8 billion cut in student loans. You know, those sick people, what can they do for themselves? Right. Take it away from them. What about the students? Take it away from them.

How about agriculture? Now you say, well, rich farmers. No. No. No. Half of the money spent in the agriculture budget is spent on the food stamp program. Buying the surpluses of our farmers and giving them to the poor of this country.

Now, why would we talk about cutting another \$4 or \$5 billion? No, they only want \$1.5 billion. Excuse me. \$1.5 billion out of food stamps. So we are taking away health care and food and ability to go to college, and then they come to the Ways and Means Committee that I sit on. Those are not even mandatory. Those are just things that that Congress said that we would do.

But when you get to the Ways and Means Committee, you come to things that are written in law, and they are called entitlements. If you are an American, you are entitled. It does not make any difference where you live, how much you have; you are entitled. And they are now going to go after those entitlements.

Now, I spoke a little bit before about a couple of them. One of the things they want to do is go after people who have had unemployment payments, unemployment insurance overpayments. They figure that they can get that back out of their taxes. That is at a very time when we have rising unemployment in this country. We are going to try and save \$1 billion going back and squeezing workers that have been out of work for 3 months or 6 months or whatever.

Anybody who is at the bottom of the pile should watch out for these guys, because they are coming after them with a sharp stick. They are going to take it away, and why are they taking it away? I mean, you have got to ask yourself, why would they cut food stamps? Why would they cut health care? Why would they cut school loans? Why would they go after the unemployed? Why would they go after grandparents who are taking care of foster kids? Why would they do that?

Did you know that we had to give tax cuts to the rich? If we do not give tax cuts to the rich, why, the rich will not be rich. Well, they will be less rich, I mean. If we do not finish those tax cuts that are before this Congress, somehow they are not going to get that \$100,000 tax cut if they make more than \$1 million.

Now, think about the tears. Think about the tears up in those apartments and those houses where those people have been expecting that \$100,000 tax cut that they were going to get. Who knows what they are going to do with it. I am sure that they are going to run out and give it to the poor.

But these decisions that are being made in this body are being made by

people who stand out here and beat their chests and talk about how much they care about family values. Is it a family values budget that cuts food and medical care and student aid? I do not think so. And they are going to find out at the next election.

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

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

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

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

There was no objection.

#### CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE EQUITABLE COMPENSATION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Equitable Compensation Act of 2005.

Over 50 years ago, the Pick-Sloan Act initiated a major flood control and reclamation project along the Missouri River Basin. The construction of dams and reservoirs flooded hundreds of thousands of acres in South Dakota, dramatically altering the basin's landscape and the river's flow.

The American Indian communities in South Dakota were some of the most severely affected by this project. Five of the nine, Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota reservations in South Dakota, border the Missouri River.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation is in north central South Dakota and among the largest reservations in terms of land base. For generations the Lakota bands which comprised the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe camped in the river valley and shaped their way of life to match the contours of the land and the flow of the river.

This was no less true after the Plains Indians were confined to the reservations in the late 19th century. The fertile river bottomlands remained at the center of their society, providing the tribe's best crop land, pastures and wildlife habitat, as well as an important source of timber.

Perhaps even more significantly, the fertile bottomlands remained central to many of the tribe's cultural and spiritual practices. At the outset of the Pick-Sloan Project, the United States Government used its eminent domain power to seize large tracts of the fertile

Indian bottomlands. Payment for these takings was typically haphazard and piecemeal. Time and again, the government failed to fairly compensate both tribal and individual land owners for the loss of their property.

One such landowner is Freddy LeBeau. Freddy was born and raised on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation. While serving 4 years in the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific during World War II, he arranged to purchase 200 acres of land along the Missouri River.

In Freddy's own words he explains, "We live in a poor county, and if I can pay taxes on that land and help the county in that small manner, I would be glad to do that. I thought I was an asset there fighting for my country, and I would remain an asset when I came home in a small way and pay taxes on my land."

Following his service, Freddy returned home and for a time he was able to work his land, raise horses and cattle and start a family. The Pick-Sloan Act changed all that.

The Ohio dam and reservoir flooded over 100,000 acres of Cheyenne River Sioux lands, including Freddy's home. He and many other tribal members were forced to move their families to higher ground and begin again. Like many others, he did not receive a fair price for his loss. And at 83 years old, this World War II veteran says, "I am still looking for a place as good as the place that I lost."

Congress has already acknowledged this injustice and only a few years ago passed legislation to provide just compensation by creating the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Recovery Trust Fund. While this action was commendable, it left one important group behind, tribal members who lost privately owned land, elders now, who owned deeded land at the time it was taken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Current law actually prohibits the tribe from using existing funds to compensate these individuals.

The tribe has recognized this shortcoming and has worked to craft a solution that requires no new expenditures, no new expenditures, and guarantees that the affected tribal elders and their families can be justly compensated for lands taken over a generation ago.

The leadership of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, a united South Dakota congressional delegation, and the moving testimony of private landowners like Freddy LeBeau have all contributed to the introduction of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Equitable Compensation Act. This bill would correct a historic wrong and compensate tribal members who have been left behind and treated unjustly for many years.

At 83 years old, Freddy and 33 other tribal elders are still waiting for just compensation. I urge this swift consideration and passage of this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

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

There was no objection.

#### THE PROBLEM WITH THE PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I stand to oppose the misguided budget amendments that are being presented to us. These amendments will not help a post-Katrina plan, but would only add to the deficit. It would require spending cuts and new tax cuts that would mount up to \$70 billion, cuts that mostly benefit the wealthiest Americans at the expense of the poorest Americans.

If these spending cuts were approved, they would probably do what I would consider to be Draconian cutting. They would cut Medicaid, food stamps, child care support, the earned income tax credit, and supplemental security income.

I have a problem in my City of Los Angeles, and it is a homeless problem. There are over 80,000 homeless individuals that are on our streets, mostly in the evenings. They have problems with alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and mental illness. Over 33 percent of the homeless are mentally ill. And they are homeless. And why?

Because we have cut out the programs that address this population; and not only did we do that, but under the Reagan administration we closed mental health hospitals. Money was to follow the patients into the community, and it never did.

So if we are trying to be fiscally responsible, that means we are being irresponsible to the poorest of Americans. As Americans we cannot allow this to happen. If we are spreading democracy around the world, then we must live up to the principles and the tenets of its provisions. And its provisions say that every American has a right to be a recipient of the social services programs.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept the amendments to the budget that are being proposed. They will weaken our homeland, its people, and our security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 address the House. I can tell you that this week has been quite eventful. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we come every day to the floor to share not only with the Members but the American people what is actually going on in this House, and what is not going on in this House and what should be going on in this House, and it is the House of Representatives.

And there has been a lot going on this week as it relates to the budget. As you know, many Members came to the floor to speak pro and con of this. I will not use the Washington language, but I will use it in a way that everyone can understand: our relooking at the budget and making more cuts from the budget that have already been made.

And when I have been coming to the floor recently, Mr. Speaker, I have been bringing the local publication, the Washington Post to the floor, just to serve as a third-party validator to the arguments that have been made here on the floor. I am proud that our leadership on this side of the aisle, the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), has stood against the winds of power in saying that there are certain things that we will not do. We who are Democrats on this side, we will not turn our backs on the American people.

We will not turn our backs on the survivors of hurricanes Katrina or Rita. We will not stand idly by and watch this country continue legislatively to go down the tubes because certain people and certain individuals in power would like to see their priorities and their projects and their special interest breaks or opportunities prevail on the backs of the American people.

□ 1315

I am proud that we have the leadership on this side of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and also the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) to say no. I am proud of the fact that we have men and women in this Congress that are willing to stand up and say no to the majority, I must add, on the majority side who want to see their goals and objectives carried out on behalf of individuals that have suffered.

Now, I have to commend some of my colleagues here and some of my colleagues even on the other side of the aisle for standing up to the leadership