

cut for community health centers in the United States of America.

Student loans. We are building 2,700 schools that have been rehabbed in Iraq; 36,000 teachers and administrators trained in Iraq. We are cutting student loans in the United States. Iraq is a welfare state. So if you are sitting on the couch listening to the 30-something Group right now, and these are all third-party validators, this is not us making this stuff up.

Cal Thomas, the conservative Republican columnist, agrees with us. You see a Republican-controlled government, one-party government spending your tax dollars, giving your tax dollars to the oil companies, to the pharmaceutical companies, to the billionaires in the world, and/or in the United States, and creating a welfare state in Iraq while you are cutting health care in education and research and development. Even the Centers for Disease Control, our conservative friends on the other side want to cut the Centers for Disease Control at a time when we have this bird flu epidemic waiting in the wings.

We can do a better job. The Democratic Party has proposals. We want to create a million new engineers and scientists in the next 10 years. We want to build magnetic levitation trains in the United States and connect the United States of America. We want to invest in the research and development and create alternative energy sources so we no longer have to worry about being dependent on foreign oil.

And that is part of the magnetic levitation trains. We want arts and sports in all of our schools for all of our kids because we recognize in the 21st century that learning a musical instrument helps you with math. And when you are good at math, you become an engineer or a scientist, and you will go out and generate wealth. We make good investments. The Democratic Party makes good investments.

We balanced the budget in 1993 with not one Republican vote. And President Clinton made a lot of tough decisions, and the Democratic Congress made a lot of tough decisions. And, quite frankly, some Members lost their seat over it. But it led to the greatest economic expansion in the history of this country. And I do not think there is an American out there that would not say, boy, I would love to go back to the late 1990s. Boy would that not be great. Portfolio was up. Everything was up that should have been up. Everything was down that should have been down.

But meanwhile, our Republican friends keep this culture of corporate welfare and corruption and keep propping up the Republican Party, instead of propping up the United States of America, and being more concerned about shaking down the lobbyists on K Street, instead of propping up the United States.

The Democrats want to take this country in a new direction. We want to

provide new leadership. We want to change the direction of the country, and we want to get rid of this culture of corruption and cronyism, and we want to prop up the country, not any one political party, and use the government to enhance opportunity for people in the United States of America.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. With that, there is nothing more that I can possibly say about where we stand, what we are trying to do in the minority right now, what we would like to do if we had the majority. So with that, sir, will you give the closing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Our Web site is www.housedemocrats.gov/katrina. Become a citizen cosponsor to the independent commission so we can reform government the way it needs to be done.

And 30-somethingdems@mail.house.gov. We have been getting a ton of e-mails lately and a lot of support, over 40,000 citizen cosponsors for the independent commission for Katrina.

Help us change this government. Help us help the Democratic Party take this country in a new direction, a better direction, and help us get rid of this Republican-controlled government that does nothing but corporate welfare and create a welfare state in Iraq at the expense of the American worker and the American taxpayer.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. With that, Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to come here in the first Democratic hour. And like I say, it was an honor to address the House.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come before the body and also to talk with the American people a little bit this evening about what we as a House majority are doing.

You know, I have been sitting here for the last few minutes listening to my colleagues talk about their plan and talk about what they were doing. And one of my colleagues was talking about we want this, we want that. I was beginning to think I was listening to one of my children name the Christmas list, got the we-wants.

And I will remind the American people that the we-wants are going to take a lot of your money. And I did not hear one single word mentioned about fiscal responsibility and spending less.

And I would encourage my colleagues to come and work with us, really to work with us on this issue, because we would appreciate having them choose to propose some spending cuts. They

have been going through this process of trying to come up with a slogan for 2006.

And it has been interesting to watch them talk about this slogan. I think they are going with something like We Can Do Better, Together We Can Do Better, or something of that nature.

There again, we are not hearing anything about controlling spending and reining in government. I did a cable news show last week with a Member of the Democratic Party. He said, well, you know, they had not been invited to join in working on submitting spending reductions.

Mr. Speaker, if they are waiting for an invitation, I hope they consider this the invitation. It is in that spirit that I wanted to come down to the floor tonight and talk a little bit about the Republican security agenda and invite the Democrats to join us, because we are living in uncertain times. We are facing significant challenges, and the Republican majority has a clear plan on how we move forward on this.

We are focused on our national security, our economic security, our moral security, our retirement security. And we are going to talk a lot. We have been working already, the 108th, 109th Congress, and putting quite a bit of time and energy into continued tax relief, lowering energy costs, working toward affordable health care, and talking about preserving access to health care for all Americans.

You know, I am just going to have to correct one of things that one of my colleagues said. They were talking about Medicaid spending and how we were going to cut Medicaid spending. And I was kind of scratching my head. We have been sitting in the Committee on Energy and Commerce since 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon now working on many of these issues.

And all we are talking about doing is slowing the rate of growth of Medicaid from 7.3 percent a year to 7 percent a year.

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I think a lot of my constituents in Tennessee have, they have kind of wised up to a lot of this Washington talk, and they know that any time you talk about reining in growth, any time you talk about bureaucrats and having to learn to live with less so that families in houses in communities can keep their money, that you are going to hear talk of a cut. You are going to hear talk of a cut. My people know and understand that.

They also were saying a little bit about energy over there. I have got to make a comment there, too, and they were talking about how glorious the '90s were. We probably would not be talking so much about energy right now if President Clinton had not vetoed drilling in ANWR in 1995. He had the opportunity to do something bold and visionary, and he chose not to. Democrats chose not to. And I think we need to remember that as we talk about energy costs.

When we talk about economic policies and the economic expansion, I think that my young colleague over there might do well to realize Ronald Reagan and his economic policies led to that economic expansion, and we fondly remember that President.

As I said, we are talking about the security agenda. We are focused tonight on the economic security agenda and some of the things that we have been able to accomplish. As I said, spending reductions, we are working on across-the-board cuts, tax relief and tax reform, it has been a big, big part of that. The death tax repeal, marriage penalty relief, reducing marginal rates, all of those things; the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief, our colleagues want to talk all of the time and just say, oh, corporations are not paying their fair share. We need to tax corporations more. And that is all Republicans talk about in tax reform and tax relief. And they are just so wrong.

They are just so wrong on that because thousands of families in my district appreciate having sales tax deductibility. They appreciate having the child tax credit. They appreciate having marriage penalty relief. And so many who have, they are trying to save family farms and small business that they have started, they want to make the death tax repeal permanent.

We are going to continue talking about these as we move forward, and we are going to be continuing to work on these spending issues, because when government is taxing too much and spending too much, you stifle economic activity, and that does affect economic security of this Nation. Republicans are not willing to let government stifle economic activities.

Jobs growth and jobs creation is something that needs to be happening. We have seen 3 million new jobs created. That has happened because of the correct economic steps. It has happened because of a push to reform government. We have 98 programs that are targeted for potential elimination, a good first step there.

Our leadership is to be commended by taking these steps, and this is going to yield \$4.3 billion in savings, the budget that we passed. And I will remind my colleagues across the aisle did not get a single Democratic vote on this budget. It reduced \$35 billion in savings; \$35 billion dollars in that fiscal year 2006 budget, and now we are working to expand that. Not a single Democrat wanted to vote for that, but they wanted to spend more. And when they spend more, that is more money coming out of our taxpayers' pockets.

And, Mr. Speaker, our majority believes that we can do better, and I would certainly hope that our colleagues across the aisle will start to work with us on these spending reductions. We have got a great group of Members who are sick of having the liberals in this body tell us that there is no room to cut, and not a single Democrat has agreed to support even a

1 percent reduction. And they do not believe there is 1 percent of waste, fraud and abuse in government.

In fact, they have opposed our effort to get to that \$35 billion in savings. And I think that the people in my district know that you can find 1 percent of waste, fraud and abuse; and they are encouraging us to move forward and go maybe even more, find even greater savings.

I have said many times that I think that government needs to be streamlined, and that it could stop behaving and spending like the overgrown, unproductive behemoth that it has become over 40 years of Democrat control with growing program after program after program, and it could start functioning a lot more like some of our Tennessee companies, maybe FedEx or Comdata or the Tractor Supply Company or any of the hundreds and thousands of small businesses and small business manufacturers that are located across our wonderful Seventh Congressional District.

We have got agencies that spend without results and then do not want to tell us how they spend. We have got program after program that was created during the Great Society, and those programs put very little stock in achieving results. The Republicans in this House are working to reshape that, and we are going to continue putting our focus on spending reduction, reducing a little bit more and a little bit more every single year. And we hope that our Democrat colleagues across the aisle are going to join us and assist us with this.

I am pleased to note also, Mr. Speaker, I will have to note this even though the Democrats do not want to join us with across-the-board spending and reducing even 1 percent out of spending, I am pleased to note that today the President expressed support for taking a look at across-the-board cuts.

I was joined by two of my colleagues, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), in filing three bills, a 1 percent, a 2 percent, and a 5 percent across-the-board cuts. And also I will have to note that in our work to reduce what the Federal Government spends, Citizens Against Government Waste has sent a letter encouraging Members of Congress to support our across-the-board cuts because they know that as we work toward fiscal responsibility, as we work to achieve and continue economic security in this Nation, a big important part of this is looking at what the Federal Government spends.

Mr. Speaker, I am joined by some of my colleagues tonight. And at this time I would like to recognize one of our colleagues from Texas who is our vice chairman of the Republican Study Committee and has been a leader in looking at the fiscal responsibility of this body and of the Federal Government. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) has taken a lead on this. He helped with our freshman class as

waste, fraud and abuse became our class project. He came forward and helped found the Washington Waste Watchers so that we could begin to get inside these programs to target and look at specifically what was going on in these Federal programs, where the Federal Government spends its money, how it achieves its results.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) has worked on this issue for 3 years. And at this time I would like to yield to him for his comment about spending control and budget control and operations offset, having the Federal Government be accountable to the constituents.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, well, I certainly thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I certainly appreciate her leadership in this body and truly being one of the great leaders in trying to reform government, bring about accountability, and to help protect the family budget from the Federal budget.

Obviously, many good points were made about fiscal responsibility and the fact that somehow the Democrats, those on the other side of the aisle that we tried to work with, tell us there is no room for reform in the Federal budget, no room whatsoever; that somehow we have to spend even more and more money. Mr. Speaker, it begs the question how much is enough?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I mentioned that we were working on finding some appropriate levels of spending reduction in our Committee on Energy and Commerce, and I have been called back to this committee.

So at this point I am going to briefly yield the time to the Chair, who will yield it to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) to control our hour of time.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy, the balance of the majority leader's hour is reallocated to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, again it is obvious that those on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats that we are trying to work with, somehow believe that we do not have enough government, that somehow there is no room for reform in the Federal budget.

Again, this chart shows that beginning in 1990 up to the present, that Washington is now spending over \$22,000 per household. This is for only the fourth time in the entire history of the United States of America that the Federal Government has spent this much money. It is the first time since World War II, yet the Democrats say there is no room for reform in the Federal budget; that instead we need to increase taxes on hard-working American