

about our veterans, and there are so many things to talk about with the program. I would like to encourage everyone, if there is a workshop in their area, to please attend because it is amazing the questions and the answers and the much better understanding and that you realize this is a good product for seniors. The price is so much lower, and it gives them so many choices.

Mr. GINGREY. Well, I thank the gentlewoman, and I know she is looking forward to going back into the 2nd District of Virginia tomorrow, and I am sure she is one of the many Republican Members who have got those town hall meetings scheduled to get those remaining 6 or 8 million signed up, and I thank her.

At the outset, I said do not just take our word for it, and I have been expounding a little bit for the last 50 minutes, but I did want to give some anecdotal stories, and let us do that for a moment, Mr. Speaker.

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Barbara W. From El Mirage, Arizona, had no prescription drug coverage. She spent more than \$2,600 a year on medication just this past year. She wanted an inexpensive plan with a low premium, so she did enroll in the part D plan, and it only had a \$6.14 monthly premium. In 2006, she will save \$1,800, nearly \$200 a month, the lady from Arizona. God bless her.

Here is another, Mr. Speaker. Sandra S. from Woodland Hills, California. In 2005, she spent \$4,600 per year on prescription drugs. She read about Medicare part D in the Los Angeles Times. I am sure they weren't praising it, but thank goodness she read about it. She called 1-800-MEDICARE for help. She wanted a plan with no donut hole. We just talked about that a minute ago. Her plan has a \$50 monthly premium, no deductible, no gap in coverage and, of course as all those plans, it has that catastrophic coverage. So that if you really get into a year where you have out-of-pocket expenses of \$3,600, out of your own pocket, then after that, the insurance pays 95 percent and you only pay 5 percent. What a godsend. Total savings for Sandra, \$2,400 a year.

I think we have a couple more that I wanted to show. Barbara L. from Kemp, Texas. In 2005, spent \$2,100 on prescription drugs. She enrolled in an AARP part D plan. They have a very good plan. So in 2006 she expects to pay \$360. Barbara saved \$1,740.

Well, I could go on and on, but let me just say one other thing, because I mentioned AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons. I am proudly one of them. I am not retired, but I was eligible and got my card at age 50, so I have had it a while. Thirty-seven million seniors are members. And AARP is not typically a conservative organization, supportive of Republican ideas. More typically, they are supportive of the Democrat line of thought, and yet they have supported this program.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle came down to the well, Member after Member after Member, telling members of AARP to tear up their cards and throw them out the window. Thank God for AARP.

In fact, we had a press conference today, Mr. Speaker, talking about the plan and what the Republican Members are going to do when we go back to our districts, and we have 76, count them, 76 organizations that are supporting this program. The AIDS Institute, Alzheimer's Association, American Geriatric Society, American Pharmacists Association, Association of Black Cardiologists, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Alliance For the Mentally Ill, National Alliance for Hispanic Health, the Generic Pharmaceutical Association, and Easter Seals. I could go on and on, but there are 76.

Let me talk briefly as we close about groups misleading seniors about Medicare part D. In fact, they were out there protesting our press conference on the terrace of the Cannon Building this afternoon. Guess who was there chanting against seniors? MoveOn.org and far left shadow groups.

So let's see. Doctors, pharmacists, hospitals, health care providers and AARP, versus MoveOn.org, NANCY PELOSI, and other far-left groups. Who do you trust with senior health? I think the answer is pretty obvious, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I want to yield very quickly to the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, my chairman, and I am talking about the gentleman from California, Representative DUNCAN HUNTER. I gladly yield to the chairman.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank my friend for yielding, Mr. Speaker, and I would just take a minute. I have been watching my friend and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE), and I just wanted to tell you how proud I am of the job that you do representing your districts and representing those great contingencies of American veterans and active duty service people in your district.

I wanted to say, and I know you have been talking about health care, but I wanted to talk about another type of security just for one second, and that is national security. And I know my friend has been to Iraq, and I think he is going again soon, and many other Members of this body, Democrat and Republican, are going. Now is the time when America should take heart.

I have watched the newspapers and the mood of this House as of late, and I feel, especially coming from the Democrat side, the message is one that I have seen before. It is a message that we saw in the 1980s, when Ronald Reagan faced down the Soviet Union, and you had calls from the far left to the effect that President Reagan was

going to have a war with the Soviets, that he needed to acquiesce, he needed to engage, even as they ringed our allies in Europe with SS-20 missiles. And yet Ronald Reagan stood tough. He stood for a policy of peace through strength. And at one point the Soviets picked up the phone and said, can we talk? And when we talked, we talked about the disassembly of the Soviet empire.

Similarly he stood tough in Central America, and today those two nations in question, El Salvador and Nicaragua, have fragile democracies because of America. Today, we are providing that military shield in Iraq while we put this fragile government together, a government based on something new in that part of the world: Freedom and representative government.

You know, this has been done on the shoulders of the great American servicemen and women who serve us in that very troubled and difficult part of the world. And their job is dusty and dirty and sometimes bloody, but it is worthwhile. And what they are giving to us, if we can stabilize that country and that neighborhood and have a country that has a benign relationship towards the United States, will accrue to the benefit of generations of Americans.

So now is the time to take heart. Now is the time to not fail. Now is the time to stand firm, and I want to thank the gentlemen for his work on Armed Services and the Rules Committee, for the great work he does in that regard.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so much in these closing seconds. And of course we know of the work of the esteemed chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative DUNCAN HUNTER. What a wonderful way to close this hour.

What is more important than the defense of this Nation, as this great patriot just described, and providing health care for our precious seniors?

IN SUPPORT OF NOGORNO-KARABAKH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to lend my support to the Republic of Nogorno-Karabakh in its pursuit of independence and international recognition. I believe that U.S. recognition of the Republic of Nogorno-Karabakh would greatly contribute to stability and peace in the South Caucasus region.

Nogorno-Karabakh is a country of proud citizens committed to the values of freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. We as Americans cherish and defend these same values at home and internationally. The path to freedom has not been easy for the people of

Nogorno-Karabakh. Following a peaceful demand by Karabakh's legislative body to reunite the region with Armenia in 1988, Azerbaijan launched an ethnic cleansing campaign against individuals of Armenian descent in both Karabakh and Azerbaijan. As a result, thousands of ethnic Armenians were killed, while some 400,000 fled Azerbaijan to escape the killings.

Mr. Speaker, on September 2, 1991, the people of Nogorno-Karabakh, consistent with their status as an oblast, or autonomous region, under the Soviet constitution, declared their independence. The declaration of independence noted Azerbaijan's policies of discrimination against the Armenian people, the need to restore friendly relations between Armenia and Azerbaijani people, and respect for the universal declaration of human rights. In response, Azerbaijan launched an all-out war against Nogorno-Karabakh.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Nogorno-Karabakh have steadily progressed on the path of democracy and conducted regular elections for president and the legislature. I actually acted as an observer for the last presidential election, and those elections were praised by international observers, including the United States, as free, fair and transparent.

While strengthening its democratic institutions, Nogorno-Karabakh has also successfully transitioned from a Soviet-inherited centrally planned economy to a market economy. Despite significant setbacks, it has largely restored its infrastructure and introduced reforms to encourage private enterprise and foreign investments.

With its democratically elected government, capable armed forces, and an independent foreign policy, Nogorno-Karabakh clearly satisfies the international criteria for statehood. Throughout its 14-year history of independence, it has proven to be a reliable partner of the international community and has contributed meaningfully to peace and stability in the strategic south caucuses.

Mr. Speaker, the United States should formally recognize the Republic of Nogorno-Karabakh, basically expand its relationship with the democratically elected Republic of Nogorno-Karabakh, and provide increased U.S. humanitarian and development assistance. It is crucial for the U.S. to unequivocally support the right of the people of Nogorno-Karabakh to decide their own future.

Mr. Speaker, the Nogorno-Karabakh Republic's democratic regime is in sharp contrast to its neighbor, Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has evolved since its succession from the Soviet Union into an autocratic dictatorship.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there should not be a double standard. Since its independence, the Republic of Nogorno-Karabakh has enjoyed all attributes and institutions of statehood. Currently, its de facto statehood fully satisfies the requirements of conventional

and customary international laws for de jure recognition.

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 half the time remaining before midnight.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honor to come before the House once again. And once again, the 30-something Working Group comes to the floor to share with the American people and to report what is happening here under the Capitol dome.

We look forward to continuing to do this in the future. We know we are going to be off for 2 weeks for the Easter break; all of next week, all of the week after, and we come back at the end of the month to try to do the business of the people of the United States of America.

I think it is important for us to understand what took place here, Mr. Speaker, in the Capitol just today. As you know, we have been working throughout the week and sharing with not only the American people but also with the Members of Congress the importance of what we do here under the Capitol dome. When I say under the Capitol dome, I am talking about the legislating that is supposed to be taking place on behalf of the American people.

I think it is important for us to not lose or miss the occurrence that did not take place here tonight or tomorrow. We were supposed to be in session tomorrow. We were supposed to vote on the budget that many Members on the majority side and the Republican side, Mr. Speaker, said was a good budget; that it is fiscally sound and we know what we are doing.

Well, we debated all day here on this floor. I was here a little earlier today, Mr. Speaker, maybe some 13 hours ago on this floor when we opened this Chamber at 10 a.m. this morning. And I pulled my chart out to talk about the borrowing that this Republican majority has done with the President of the United States, record-breaking borrowing from foreign nations and selling off the United States of America where foreign countries own our debt. And all day today I saw Members after that on the Republican side saying we are proud of this budget, this budget is going to put America back on track.

On this side, the Democratic side, we were talking about fiscal responsibility, we were talking about being reasonable with our spending and also making sure that we prioritize every day working Americans and not just the special interests and the super wealthy. I think that argument prevailed. Because I understood at the end of the day that there weren't enough Members on the majority side to pass President Bush's budget, because that is what it is.

This House has been just saying, yes, Mr. President, whatever you want. No matter what the Constitution says, no matter what our responsibility is to our constituents, we are going to do it the way you say you want it done.

□ 2300

That is what has gotten this House in a bad light with the American people.

Now, I am here tonight and the 30-something Working Group is here tonight to make sure that the American people and the Members of the majority side understand, we were united in voting for our budget which is a pay-as-you-go budget and that will balance the budget in 6 years. We were united. When I say "we," House Democrats are united. If they were from the west coast or South Or North, whichever way you cut it, you can go all of the way to Hawaii, House Democrats were united in bringing America back into a fiscal responsibility era when we balanced the budget. We are the only party in this House that can say, We balanced the budget.

Now, I used to play football for Florida A&M, and it was kind of hard for the coach to talk about the national championship if the coach has never been to the national championship or played in the national championship game. Might have read about it, but it is hard for someone to tell you how it feels if you have never been there.

We have been there on the Democratic side. We have balanced the budget. We come to this floor to say if you are going to spend, then you better show where the money is coming from and how you are going to replace it. You just cannot say I am going to take the credit card out and I am going to put it on the backs of Americans, and I am going to come to the floor, and I am talking about, say for instance, hypothetically if I was on the majority side being a Republican, and it bothers me just saying it because the Republican majority has made history in all of the wrong places and for all of the wrong reasons over the past years of borrowing and spending. Borrowing and spending. Borrowing from whom? Let me just take my little map out here.

The Republican majority and President Bush, \$1.05 trillion that foreign nations own that did not exist prior to this Republican majority having the opportunity to have their way along with following the President and bad policy. Japan, they own a part of the American pie. Did the American people do that? No. Did the Democrats do that? No. Remember, the Republican majority did it with the President of the United States. \$682.8 billion is what Japan owns of U.S. debt. That is not my doing. That is the President and the Republican majority.

Red China, and we have major, major problems with China. I am talking about China as it relates to Red China, Communist China. We have a number of our jobs, we have U.S. workers training to do their job in China. Ninety