

\$1.4 billion a day, the party of fiscal responsibility and small government.

In the meantime, they are cutting programs important to the middle class. Student financial aid. Hey, those kids have got to pay higher interest on their loans and their parents, too, because we're in trouble financially. At the same time, this week they are going to pass a \$70 billion extension of tax cuts which favor investors over workers.

Why do the Republicans hate people who work for wages and salaries so much? That is a question that begs answering around here. Because investors who can clip coupons off their stocks pay a lower rate of taxes to the Federal Government than a policeman, a fireman or a teacher. And that is the way the Republicans say it should be. Those who are lucky enough to inherit or otherwise able to invest for a living, they shouldn't pay taxes like those suckers who work for salary and wages.

What contempt they are showing for the people of America. They are not only cutting the programs essential to them, borrowing in their name, handing them the bill, now they are borrowing money to give to rich investors which the middle class will have to pay for, because in the Republicans' world only the middle class pays taxes.

The tax cuts they are proposing this week to extend will give an average cut of \$20 to the middle fifth of taxpayers, those who average \$36,000 a year. But for the lucky winners, the top 1 percent, average income \$5.3 million, they will save \$82,415. Or if you could put it another way, the person who earns \$36,000 will be obligated and their kids will be obligated to borrow \$82,415 to give to that wealthy investor because we don't have a surplus to give taxes away to those folks. They say, Oh, don't worry. These tax cuts pay for themselves.

Oh, okay. If that is true, why on page 121, buried almost indecipherably in their budget, 151 pages long, page 121, the Republicans for the fifth time in 5 years are increasing the debt limit of the United States without discussion on the floor of the House or a vote? They are going to increase it by \$653 billion.

Let's see. If the tax cuts pay for themselves, why would they have to increase the debt limit of the United States for the fifth time in 5 years in a stealth fashion like this? That is underhanded.

When President Bush took office, we had a borrowing limit of \$5.95 trillion, \$6 trillion. When their budget passes this week, it is going to be \$9.62 trillion. Not bad. Up 60 percent in 5 years. The party of small government and fiscal responsibility has indebted the United States, increased the debt by more than 60 percent in 5 short years. They have amassed more foreign debt than all of the administrations that preceded them since the beginning of the Republic. So we are not only borrowing against our future, borrowing

against Social Security, handing a bill to the middle class, we are also indebting the country to foreign holders of debt, particularly China, Japan and others.

What a great vision they have for America. The wealthy will live on their estates behind big walls with private security. They will send their kids to private schools in private limousines, they will ride their private jets to private resorts, and then the rest of us can mow their lawns and carry their golf clubs and wait on their tables. And there won't be much left for the rest of us.

They can't afford a decent bill for homeland security. They can't afford money for cops, police, fire, public education, but we can afford more tax cuts for the wealthiest among us because the investors are the important people to the Republicans. They are also their big contributors.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, we invite the Nation to pray for the Members of Congress today with heartfelt compassion. They are in need of Your wisdom and our understanding.

The making of law is never an easy task. It requires dedicated attention, artful skills of language, personal integrity and responsibility to be truly effective. Because of the multiple issues facing the Nation and the complexity of every problem, intelligent minds and enlightened convictions are necessary for each Member of this legislative body to supply answers, to seek healing and build peaceful unity.

In a democracy as ours, laws can be crafted by diverse minds representing a variety of interests. But in the end, every law and every policy of government must seek the consent of the governed and ultimately Your almighty judgment of justice.

In You alone, Lord God, do we find the fulfillment of the law both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4939. An act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4939) "An Act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, thereon, and appoints Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BOND, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BURNS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BYRD, Mr. INOUE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REID, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DORGAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JOHNSON, and Ms. LANDREIU, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLANS

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the Senate to help small business people with the skyrocketing costs of health insurance by passing Association Health Plans.

Of the 45 million Americans without health insurance, 60 percent are small business employees and their families. By joining together, small businesses in central Florida will have the same bargaining power to negotiate lower health insurance rates as big companies, like Disney World and Darden. This will help lower their health insurance premiums by up to 30 percent, and expand access to millions of people without health insurance.

On April 27, 2005, the House of Representatives passed my Small Business Bill of Rights which created a blueprint for this Congress to follow to help

small business create additional jobs. On the top of the list was passage of Association Health Plans.

Three months later, on July 26, 2005, the House passed Association Health Plans with a wide margin of 263-153.

I applaud the Senate for taking up this important debate today, and I urge them to act now to pass Association Health Plans.

MEDICARE PART D ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, the May 15 Medicare part D enrollment deadline is now 6 days away; but a significant number of eligible beneficiaries do not even know that. The enrollment deadline is 6 days away, and eligible beneficiaries don't know about the penalty fee they would incur for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the enrollment deadline is 6 days away, but call centers are still giving eligible beneficiaries inaccurate or incomplete information. This Sunday, sons and daughters should be spending time with their mothers taking them to brunch or showering them with gifts, not trying to navigate a complex Web site or holding onto the phone.

The administration's insistence on this deadline is offensive to millions of Medicare beneficiaries. Many of them are telling me just that, and many are the most vulnerable in our society.

I urge my colleagues to press for extending the deadline for part D enrollment. We owe it to the unenrolled seniors and seniors who are disabled, who need more time to figure out this complex program. We owe it to all beneficiaries so that we can continue fixing the many flaws of the Medicare prescription drug plan.

THE HERO ACT

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1499, the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunities Act. I introduced this bill after learning our current Tax Code prohibits many of our men and women serving in combat zones from taking advantage of individual retirement accounts.

Most of our troops serving in these combat zones are paid in wages designated as military hazard pay. These wages are not taxed, nor should they be. However, since this compensation is nontaxable, the wages are not eligible for IRA contributions. IRAs are an excellent tool for responsible retirement savings.

Our troops defending America in harm's way should not be excluded from full participation in this impor-

tant investment opportunity because of a glitch in our Tax Code.

The HERO Act will correct this glitch by designating combat hazard pay earned by members of the Armed Forces as eligible for contribution to retirement accounts. This bill has been endorsed by the Reserve Officers Association and the MOAA.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important bill this afternoon and give our troops the opportunity they deserve to save for their future.

MEDICARE PART D DEADLINE

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to call attention to the May 15 deadline for seniors to enroll in the Medicare part D prescription drug plan. The fact is, seniors who are eligible for Medicare part D who do not sign up by May 15 will face a higher monthly premium if they enroll at a later time. This puts a lot of pressure on the seniors.

I had a town hall meeting and lots of seniors came. Most of them knew nothing about how to do it or did not understand it.

But, seniors, as hard as we have tried, we cannot extend this deadline beyond May 15. There are nearly 48,000 residents aged 65 and older in Dallas, Texas. Not that many came to the town hall, but quite a few. I am concerned that they are not getting the message.

Missing May 15 may have expensive consequences. We would like to have a bit more compassion. America's health is about more than just numbers on an insurance company's roll book.

SIX DAYS AWAY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, 6 days. In just 6 days, that is when the deadline for the Medicare prescription drug program is: May 15.

Thirty million Americans have already signed up. However, there remain other seniors who would benefit from this voluntary program, and they should take these next few days to see if Medicare part D is right for them.

To help facilitate the enrollment process in my district, I have held Medicare seminars to educate seniors on the options available, including two just last Friday. Many have said they are happy with the choices they have, and they are grateful for the time we took to sit down and explain this new program.

Yesterday I also had the chance to visit two pharmacies in my district and speak with the pharmacists and their staffs. This offered a great, behind-the-scenes look at the process these phar-

macists have used to help local seniors understand and utilize this new prescription drug plan.

The general sense is that the kinks have been worked out and most seniors are truly gaining great benefit, better health.

Over the next 6 days, I urge all of my colleagues in Congress to do all that we can to provide seniors whatever assistance they may require to sign up for and navigate their new plan.

MEDICARE PART D AND THE LATINO COMMUNITY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Medicare part D plan, as written, in my opinion is bad for Latino seniors. Latinos are less likely to have worked at firms with employer-provided pension plans, tend to work at a lower-paying job resulting in less accumulated savings and smaller Social Security checks. And 62 percent have incomes below 150 percent of the Federal poverty level.

Yet more than 1 million Latino seniors have not yet even enrolled in this program because of cultural, language and economic barriers. That is more than 30 percent of all eligible Latino seniors who lack coverage.

The lack of detailed, easy-to-understand culturally competent information makes it even more difficult for community organizations to focus resources on this vulnerable population. Our Latino seniors and all seniors need our help.

I urge my colleagues to pass legislation to extend the enrollment deadline, take away the fear of penalty, and give Medicare beneficiaries more time to check their facts, know their options, and make informed decisions about part D.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL RESTRAINT

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Webster's dictionary defines emergencies as serious situations or occurrences that happen unexpectedly and demand immediate attention.

As Congress considers this year's emergency supplemental spending bill, I hope all of my colleagues will remember the definition of an emergency and support Majority Leader BOEHNER's strong efforts to ensure that we spend taxpayer money on America's most urgent needs.

Last week I was proud when he clearly articulated that the House will not take up an emergency supplemental bill that spends \$1 more than the President's budget request. By declaring that Congress will use this funding for