

How do they make good news become bad news? Under Bush, reporters presented good economic data as bad news stories by minimizing positive achievements and emphasizing people who might be out of work or regions of the United States that were still "struggling." The opposite approach was taken under President Clinton. Then, reporters explained away a 2/10ths of 1 percent rise in unemployment as minor.

The media's slanted scorecard is presented in a chart in Brent Bozell's report on this. In 1996, they did a list of the stories for Mr. Clinton. Positive stories: On ABC, 4; CBS, 6; CNN, 3; NBC 4; New York Times, 12; Washington Post, 6. These are positive stories. Negative stories: ABC, 1; CBS, 0; CNN, 3; NBC 0; New York Times, 1; Washington Post, 1. A total of 35 positive stories, 6 negative ones.

Now, President Bush in 2004, positive stories: ABC, 1; CBS, 0; CNN, 1; NBC, 1; New York Times, 1; Washington Post, 2. Six positive stories. Negative stories about President Bush and the economy: ABC, 6; CBS, 7; CNN, 4; NBC, 4; New York Times, 10; Washington Post, 7. A total of 38, a flip-flop. Actually, more negative stories in 2004 when the economy is actually better off than it was in 1996. Thirty-eight negatives for President Bush, six positives. Thirty-five positives for President Clinton, six negatives.

I am a former college professor and president and sort of teacher all my life. So I always like to look for the data when you can get it. Again, my gut was telling me this, and I think the American people see this, but it is always great when you have got the data to back up what you are thinking about.

While the business press reflected the strong economy, much of mainstream media coverage of employment did not. The reporting under Clinton was overwhelmingly positive. For Bush, it was overwhelmingly negative. Eighty-five percent of the stories portrayed the economy under Clinton in a good light. Only 13 percent of the stories gave the employment situation under Bush the same treatment.

Many in the media commenting about employment and job growth during the Bush reelection campaign tell the whole story. They used terms like "poor," "stalled," "struggling," or "lackluster."

Comments during the similar time period during the Clinton presidency were the exact opposite. Many in the media instead used terms like "showing its muscle," "encouraging," "surprisingly strong" and "impressive, but not excessive."

I have come to the floor many times and talked about, again, the importance of language in our country. To everybody, actually, language is very important, and in many ways, we are not as precise with our language in this country as some other languages are, but I think it is important that we

point out the bias that occurs in much of our media about what is happening in the economy.

It is one of the reasons why the Truth Squad has been so concerned about getting out the truth. We realized that we have challenges presented to us. Not only do our colleagues misrepresent the facts, but we have many in the media where a lot of Americans get their information about the economy and form their opinions are being presented negative kind of information.

Now, I want to give a couple of more charts to show some other positive things that are occurring in the economy that have been put together by members of the Truth Squad.

Since the President signed the Jobs and Growth Act in May 2003, this is an example of how the GDP has gone up. Again, that is a result of our having cut taxes, letting people keep more of their money. It works to cut taxes. Again, if you listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you would think that cutting taxes is the beginning of Armageddon, but cutting taxes is what helps make this economy grow. If the government has your money to spend, it is not investing it. It is spending the money. It is not an investment. People do the investments in the private sector, not in the government.

Again, this chart shows when the President signed the Jobs and Growth Act and what happened with unemployment. We see unemployment going down. We see job growth going up and going up significantly. This is not a small little line going up here. This is major in terms of what we have seen, the job growth, in this country since we cut taxes, and I am really proud that Republicans have understood that and voted this week to extend many of those tax cuts.

What we need to do now is to work to get the death tax made permanent. We heard a lot from businesspeople this week about that. They can then plan their lives, plan for investments, plan to know what they are going to be able to do, so that businesses can stay in the families. That is one of the biggest challenges still facing us, and if we can get the Senate to understand more about economics and what that means to us, then hopefully we will make that permanent.

Now, let me give you a couple of other charts. Again, we can tie this very directly to the Jobs and Growth Act, and you can see how that spurred business investment and how that went up. This is before President Bush came into office. You can see that the economy was beginning to slow down, and then, of course, we had 9/11 and we saw investments go down. Once we got the tax cuts made, we see investment going up, and that is what we needed to do in this country to get the economy growing.

The last one shows revenue growth and what we project revenue growth to

be in the next 5 years. We expect it to grow at the rate of 5.3 percent in the next 5 years. The President has promised that he would cut the deficit in half by 2009, and we think we can do even better than that, especially with the revenue that came in last month, the second highest amount in the history of this country.

So cutting taxes spurs growth in the economy. That is the economic lesson here, and it is the facts. We can point to it. We can see it, and I think it is, again, very, very unfortunate that it is so difficult to get that message out to the American people, but I can promise you that there is a group of us that is going to continue to do that, despite the fact that our colleagues are always shouting gloom and doom and the fact that many in the media do not want you to know that there are a lot of positive things happening in this country and many of them are related to the tax cuts that the Republicans have put into place.

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30 SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGALLS 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, it is an honor once again being before the House. We would like to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us to have the time on the floor here, NANCY PELOSI; and Mr. STENY HOYER, who is our Democratic whip; Mr. JAMES CLYBURN; Mr. JOHN LARSON, Mr. JAMES CLYBURN, the chairman of our caucus; Mr. LARSON, who is our vice chair. Once again to come to the floor to share not only Democratic ideas but American ideas, to help push this country forward. Also, to point out some of the issues that are being thrown upon the American people by the Republican majority and their lack of working with the Democratic side of the aisle to bring about good policies for our country.

Tonight I am joined by my good friend from Ohio, Mr. TIM RYAN, who is a great American. That is just not by my standards but by the people in his district and many people throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to be able to identify or point out the fact that once again this week the Republican majority tried to pass an unjust budget on the backs of the American people. Well, due to the fact that we, those of us on this side of the aisle and hopefully a couple of the Republicans on the majority side is saying no, saying no to the fact that we are here every day at the highest level that we can be without Members being absent from the floor to make sure that we vote en bloc against this Republican budget, that we will set America back versus moving it forward.

I think also there are some Members on the majority side that understand by casting a positive vote for this unjust budget that was supposed to have been passed by April 15, they know that if they vote in the affirmative for that budget that they may very well be making a career decision. The American people are watching this process daily and they have been made aware of what is going on here under the Capitol dome due to the fact of the lack of governance on their behalf. I encourage the American people to continue to pay attention.

Tonight, Mr. RYAN and I will attempt to share with the American people and with Members of Congress, mainly Members of Congress, of their responsibility to have the backing of the American people and not the special interests. This budget that the Republican Congress passed long ago to bring to the floor out of committee, if it was so great, it would have been passed by now. It is very, very important that we share this with the Members, if we had the opportunity or were given the opportunity to have some positive input into this budget, that maybe, just maybe, we would have passed the budget and we wouldn't have appropriation bills moving through the process without a budget.

Right now, appropriation bills are being heard in committee and will be heard in committee for the next 3 weeks, but without a passed budget. I think it is important that Members and the American people pay very close attention to how the Republican-controlled 109th Congress, be it House, Senate or White House, continues, even under the light of a 22 percent approval rating by the American people, and, in the White House, a 31 percent approval rating by the American people based on the White House and 22 percent here in Congress. Still, Republican leaders are trying to shove this budget down the throats of the American people.

I yield to my friend from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just to clarify and add on to what you said, the process down in Washington is that we pass a budget, broad outlines with specific numbers to say, Department of Defense can spend this much, Health and Human Services this much, Education this much. It is all broken down, just like a family budget. And then after you get the budget, then you start divvying up the money as to where it is going to go and which program based on the revenue that you take in.

What is happening now is that the Republican majority has not passed a budget, but yet next week they are going to come and start writing the checks. Checks for what? They are going to start the process of spending the money without a budget. I know there are many families at home and this Republican Congress that came in in 1994 talked a lot about, it is like a family budget. And what does the family do? Well, the family needs a budget and they need to live within their

means. This Republican Congress, the bobblehead Congress that says "yes" to everything President Bush wants, continues to go down the road of undisciplined spending.

Some people, Mr. Speaker, may say, well, TIM RYAN from Ohio and KENDRICK MEEK from Florida are just talking again. This isn't us. It is not just us talking about it. It is not just the Democrats. I want to get our third-party validators up and running early here tonight.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Why not?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. This is Pat Toomey, President of Club for Growth, a conservative advocacy group. He was one of the most conservative Members of Congress for many years here, I believe, all through the nineties.

Here is Pat Toomey in the Philadelphia Inquirer last Monday:

"Republicans have abandoned the principles of limited government and fiscal discipline that historically have united Republicans and energized the Republican base. Too many Republicans have gotten too comfortable in office."

That is Pat Toomey. That is not TIM RYAN. That is not KENDRICK MEEK.

Mr. Toomey went on to say:

"There is a very high level of frustration and disappointment among rank-and-file Republicans when they see a Republican-controlled Congress engaging in an obscene level of wasteful spending."

We see it day in and day out: \$9 billion in Iraq, nobody knows where it is; \$16.3 billion, corporate subsidies to the oil companies; \$16.3 billion of public tax money that hardworking citizens sent down here, the Republican Congress took that money and gave \$16.3 billion of it to the energy companies. Wasteful spending, corporate welfare, time and time and time and time again. The family budget would not allow for money just to be spent. You ask yourselves, where did it go?

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, another third-party validator, talking about the Republicans. This was at the end of March:

"They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function."

That is not me. That is Newt Gingrich, the father who gave birth to the Republican revolution. When Newt Gingrich is saying this, when Pat Toomey is saying this, we have a real problem in our country.

What Democrats have tried to do, Mr. Speaker, time and time and time again is implement rules of the House that will constrain spending by saying, if you want to spend money, you either need to cut it from a program that we currently have or you need to raise the revenue somewhere, but it has got to be budget neutral. It is called PAYGO, pay-as-you-go. We have tried to do this.

Mr. SPRATT, the ranking member on the Budget Committee, tried to offer an amendment, rollcall number 87, on

March 17, 2005. Not one Republican voted for it. Again, this is rules that we can put in place here that won't allow you to spend more money than you have. Or if you are going to spend it, you have got to get it from somewhere. Democrats offered an amendment here. Mr. SPRATT offered a substitute amendment again on March 25, 2004. Republicans shot it down. Charlie Stenholm when he was here tried to do it. DENNIS MOORE of Kansas tried to do it. Time and time and time again, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats want to put these fiscal restraints in place. So it doesn't matter if there is a Republican Congress or a Democratic Congress, the rules are in place. These rules were in place all throughout the nineties. That is why we had surplus money. That is why we made the targeted investments, focused in certain areas that yield results, that yield tax money.

Investments in education, you get a good return on that. We had a study done at the University of Akron, Mr. Speaker, a few years back, this was on State tax money in Ohio, but when the State spent \$1 on tax money that went towards higher education, they got \$2 back in taxes. Education is a great investment. Let's make this investment. Let's invest and do it in a way that we can get a good return on our money down the line. But today the Republican Congress has just been tied up in knots with the special interests, the oil companies, the energy companies, the health care industry. Time and time again they are given public tax dollars in the form of corporate welfare. Stop the corporate welfare and let's move forward.

But I want to say that it is not me, Mr. Speaker. It is not me. It is Pat Toomey. It is Newt Gingrich. It is a lot of the conservatives, or some of the conservatives that are still left on the Republican side. All we want to do is get this country back together. Because where we are getting the money, because we are running deficits, how do you plug the hole? You got to go borrow it. The Republican Congress continues to borrow from the Chinese government, from the Japanese government, from OPEC countries.

This is really happening. This is one of the K Street fairy tales. This is like a K Street fairy tale. The Republican majority is borrowing money. As we run these deficits and they give millionaires tax cuts, \$42,000 they are going to give them more next year. As they do that and we run these huge budget deficits, we can't fill the gap, so this Republican Congress and this Republican President, they are going to OPEC to borrow money from OPEC to help plug the hole. Can you imagine? It is like you are making it up. It is another K Street fairy tale that we have here. Running huge deficits. Gas is \$3 a gallon. You not only give the oil companies \$16.3 billion in corporate subsidies, but you also borrow money from OPEC countries to help plug the deficit because you are giving tax cuts to millionaires.

Now, I am not opposed to giving middle class people a tax cut. I am not opposed to giving a small business a tax cut. But I am against giving a millionaire \$42,000 back when you are fighting two wars, your average people are struggling, tuition costs have doubled in the last 5 years, and you are giving Bill Gates another tax cut? That just doesn't make any sense. I don't care what your party affiliation is. That is irresponsible. That is irresponsible governing. And until we get the Republican Congress out and the Democratic Congress in, we are not going to be able to fix this thing, because we have tried. Mr. SPRATT has tried. Mr. SABO has tried. We have all tried.

But, Mr. MEEK, as you know, we are having a very difficult time doing it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. When we start talking about what Republicans are saying, prominent Republicans, the chart that you had up with Newt Gingrich saying they are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function, number one, Mr. Speaker, he is saying "they." "They" means he is separating himself and he no longer knows the Republican Congress that he gave birth to and that he was the Speaker of. I guess all along the game plan was when we get really in the majority, let's get some years down the road that people forget about the Contract with America, and we will start catering to the special interests. What is so unfortunate here is that the fiscal irresponsibility that has taken place in this Chamber, in the committee rooms down the hall, Mr. Speaker, across the hall, in the White House, has taken this country in a direction that it has never been in in the history of the Republic.

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I am not talking about in the 108th Congress or the 107th Congress or the 93rd Congress. I am saying in the history of the Republic, this Republican Congress and the President have taken us down the road.

Now, I just want to say this to my colleagues, those that are Republicans and the one Independent that we do have here. This is not a local, Democratic club. This is the U.S. Congress. And we are here to share fact and not fiction, because we believe that the American people should be leveled with. And we also believe that they deserve a government that is going to represent them, not represent the individuals on K Street.

Let me explain K Street. Mr. RYAN mentioned K Street fairy tales of what is actually happening. The Republican majority embraced a program called the K Street Project. And in this K Street Project, it was a system of individuals on K Street contributing to Republican campaigns. And it was a pay-to-play philosophy. And I still feel that it is a pay-to-play philosophy, because they are getting what they want. The oil companies are getting what they want out of this Congress, not the

American people. Other special interest groups are getting what they want out of this Congress and not the American people. If the American people were getting what they wanted out of this Congress, Mr. Speaker, Congress would not be rated and viewed by the American people with a 22 percent approval rating.

Members come to the floor and talk about the President of these United States at a 31 or 30 percent approval rating. We are here, we vote here every day; and the Republican Congress, this Congress that is led by Republicans are at a 22 percent approval rating. So that means that there is a super-majority of the Americans that are not agreeing with this majority. But, still, Members, the Republican majority is still going down the line of fiscal irresponsibility. They are irresponsible. Irresponsible.

Now, let me just say this. Some may say that is a heavy charge there, Mr. RYAN. Well, it is nothing like the printed word. This is not my stationery; this is the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Let me put up my Treasury Secretary's picture here, Mr. Snow, who I think is a decent man. He is just doing his job. He is the accountant for the United States of America. He lets us know pretty much when we are headed down a dark path. And at the end of the tunnel it is actually a train and it is not sunlight.

Here is a letter that he wrote December 29 of 2005. Now, let us think, on the 29th, Mr. RYAN, I was back in my district in Miami with family and friends. Actually, that was a couple of days, maybe 4 days, it was 4 days after Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, a very religious time for many religions. As a matter of fact, Kwanzaa is being celebrated during this time.

But Secretary Snow found himself in his office on this day. And he wrote a letter to the majority whip in the U.S. Senate saying that, in essence, he is saying that this letter is to inform you that we must raise the statutory debt limit, or we will be unable to continue to finance government operations.

Okay. When you get a letter on the 29th, the end of the year, saying hello, excuse me, I'm sorry, we don't have enough money to run the company. You have to raise the debt limit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure the Members understand what I am saying. Raising the debt limit means that you have not done a good job of being stewards of the taxpayer dollars.

That is not the only letter, Mr. RYAN. Just in case we didn't hear the Secretary, he turns around on February 16. Mr. SPRATT wants to know what's going on, who is the ranking member on the Budget Committee. I got this letter that you wrote on the 29th. I mean, we were on recess and all, and you were here in Washington writing this letter. Tell me more.

He goes on. On December 29 I wrote to Congress regarding the need to in-

crease the statutory debt limit. Because the debt limit has not been raised, I must inform the Congress, pursuant to 5 U.S. Code, that, in my determination, that by the reason the public debt limit is not raised, I will be unable to fully invest in the government security investment fund that is called the G fund of the Federal Employee Retirement System in a special interest-bearing account.

Now, let me just say this. Again, a letter by Secretary Snow, appointed by the President of the United States, confirmed by the U.S. Senate, wrote a letter saying we are in trouble. Mr. Speaker, I wish that was the only letter, but it is not. Here's another letter on the 6th of March. Again, I am notifying you, and he gives his reason why he is notifying, that I have determined that the debt insurance suspension period will be on March 6 and last until March 26. During this debt insurance suspension period, the Treasury Department will suspend additional investment of the amount credited to what we call the G fund again. But he is saying that we are not in fiscal good standing at this point. He is saying that he is going to have to suspend.

Mr. RYAN, he is saying that he will suspend it on March 6 of 2006, and he wrote the letter on March 6, 2006.

So the Secretary, Mr. Speaker, waited till the last day to inform the Congress, you know, I have already written you two letters. You are embarrassed to raise the debt limit because it will let the American people know that you are not governing.

Now, if we worked in a bipartisan way, Mr. Speaker, maybe, just maybe I wouldn't be able to come to the floor and say that this is a product from the Republican majority, but it is.

Bipartisanship can only be allowed if the leadership allows it. The Republican leadership has shut out the Democratic voices in this Congress and shut out the one Independent voice we have here in this Congress. So now, for Members that come to the floor and start saying, well the Democrats this, that and the other, we are not in the majority. We cannot bring a bill to the floor. We cannot stop this Republican majority and this out-of-control spending.

One other point, Mr. RYAN. I will take Secretary Snow down for now. Again, Mr. Speaker, you all have seen this chart before. 224 years of 42 Presidents, prior to President Bush, borrowed from foreign countries \$1.01 trillion. That is 224 years. That is a long time; 224 years? That is at least four or five generations, if not more of my family personally. Was only able to borrow \$1.01 trillion. The President, and the Republican Congress that we have a picture here of, in 4 years, from 2001 to 2005, and this chart will be updated, from 2001 to 2005, have borrowed from foreign nations \$1.055 trillion. They have beat out 224 years of history, Great Depression, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea, you

name it, bad economic times, good economic times, they have beat out natural disasters. They have beat out 42 Presidents, Democrat and Republican, Mr. RYAN, \$1.01 trillion, 42 Presidents. That is all they could muster up. But we give this Republican Congress and President Bush the gavel, \$1.05 trillion in 4 years, just 4 years. How does that shake out? Well, who is investing in America now? Who is owning a part of the American apple pie? Who will continue to own, if this Republican budget, Mr. Speaker, is passed, who will get even more of the American apple pie?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As you are going into that, it is very important, just a day ago, we passed, the Republican Congress, passed another tax cut that will give a millionaire \$42,000 back, okay? Money that we don't have we are going to go out and we are going to borrow it and you will tell us from who, to pay for the tax cut. And in 2003, Mr. MEEK, if you made \$10 million a year, you got \$1 million back in taxes. You made \$10 million, you got \$1 million back. We don't have it to give you.

We are political people. I mean, we are Members of Congress and we are public servants, okay? I would love to go to my constituents and say, I am going to give all of you a tax cut. And the really rich ones who may donate to my campaign, I am going to give you a big tax cut, real big. You made \$10 million last year. I am going to give you \$1 million back. I would love to do that. Everybody would love to do that, Mr. Speaker. We can't afford to do that. We can't afford to go borrow money from a foreign country and give it to someone who made \$10 million last year so they could have a tax cut. And the old argument that they are going to take that money and invest it in the United States, that doesn't exist. They are going to get the money and invest it in Asia. They are going to invest it in funds, invest it in other countries. I yield back to my good friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you for yielding back, Mr. RYAN. Let me just point out real quickly: we will start out with the big one here. People look at Japan; they look at the United States. They say how could a country that size invest in the United States of America \$682.8 billion, Japan? American apple pie. They have a big piece of it. China, Red China, Mr. RYAN. Communist China, Mr. RYAN and Mr. Speaker: 249.8 billion of the American apple pie. I know that makes our World War II veterans feel pretty comfortable right about now. And I am saying that in a way that I know that they are highly upset at the point that Japan can come back and own so much of the American apple pie, and not because of their doing but because of the irresponsible spending on the Republican majority side. I am just calling it what it is, Mr. Speaker, because like some folks say, it is what it is, Mr. RYAN.

The U.K., \$223.2 billion of the American apple pie. Caribbean nations. Many of us go to vacation. I represent

a lot of folks from the Caribbean. But guess what, they own \$115.3 billion of the American apple pie, buying our debt. Our debt. Historic debt that we have given them in the last 4 years. And I am going to explain that a little further, Mr. RYAN, because I think people need to understand that prior to this Republican Congress and President Bush being elected, there were surpluses. That means that folks were projecting, not a deficit, but money left over for things that we need to tackle. Yes, we need a middle-class tax cut. Yes, we need to shore up Social Security. Yes, we need to have a health care plan so that businesses don't have to ask people to be on Medicaid to pay for their health care on the backs of the American people.

No, this Republican Congress and the President opted to give it to millionaires. I don't know how many times I can say that. Millionaires. It is not what I am saying. You can pick up the paper and find out what is happening up here. Taiwan, \$71.3 billion of the American apple pie that has been sold away because of irresponsible policies. Canada, \$53.8 billion. Korea, again, my veterans, \$66.5 billion.

Meanwhile, under the Republican budget, Mr. RYAN, veterans are going to be paying a higher copayment, thank you, a la the Republican majority, that is saying that we are for you. Germany, \$65.7 billion. Again, our veterans. OPEC nations. This is very interesting, Mr. RYAN, and it is actually covering my State of Florida and Georgia and South Carolina. OPEC nations. Who are they? I mean, these are the nations that are in charge of all the oil. Iraq is in that, owning some of our debt. Iraq. We are spending all kinds of money in Iraq, but guess what? They have enough time to own some of our debt. Iran. Iran. Oh, my goodness. Is this the country, Mr. RYAN, that we are concerned about, that Israel is concerned about and many of our friends in the Middle East that are trying to bring about democracy we are concerned about? You have a number of the United Arab Emirates, again, nations that we are concerned about as relates to Dubai, port deals. There are a number of countries that are here that we are bringing into question.

Let me just, Mr. Speaker, let the Members take a look at this map. Empty without the debt on it. I think it is important that Members understand that Democrats, we are the only party in this House that has actually balanced the budget.

□ 2100

People can talk about it. They can write great studies about it. But until you do it, you don't know what it takes. Obviously, based on those letters from Secretary Snow, and based on the fact that the Republican Congress has taken pride in endorsing everything that the President has said, we want to give millionaires a tax break and give middle class people a \$10 tax break or a \$50 tax break. Done.

We want to give oil companies, as a matter of fact, I read this last night, I think it is important and I am going to read it again, since I passed by a gas station today and it was \$3.07 right here in Washington, DC.

This is a Washington Post article dated November 16 of 2005. The White House documents show that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President CHENEY's energy task force in 2001, something long suspected by environmentalists but denied, as of November, 2005, last week, by industry officials testifying before Congress.

The document obtained by the Washington Post shows that officials from ExxonMobil, also from Phillips and Shell Oil Company and BP of America met in the White House complex with Vice President CHENEY's aides in developing a national energy policy, parts of which became law, parts of which are still debated in Congress.

I rest my case on that. Again, Republican Congress said, energy bill, Mr. President, so shall it be written, so shall it be done, without a question asked.

Do you want to go down to the whole issue of what is happening with our seniors now, prescription drugs? So shall it be written, so shall it be done; propane, from the Republican Congress, we will do it because you told us to do it. All this debt that I have right here, under this stamp. Mr. President, do you want to raise the debt limit, okay, fine, we are right with you. Let us raise the debt limit on the back of Americans.

Meanwhile, I must add, that when we look at raising the debt limit they are cutting student aid to students to be able to be our workforce in the future and to be able to afford a college education. I am glad to announce that this is actually a bill proposed by Democrats here in this House. This is not a Democratic proposal, this is an American proposal.

I believe that Americans are sick and tired of being sick and tired. This is legislation that is now filed by Representative MILLER here in this House and also from Senator DICK DURBIN in the Senate reversing the rate on student loans or student aid. The bill cuts interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent for students, with subsidized loans, which can go to students with the most financial need and move it from 8.5 percent to 4.25 percent for parents starting July of this year.

This is legislation that is filed now. Earlier this year, in the Republican budget earlier this year a Republican-led Congress cut \$12 billion out of the Federal student loan program in order to finance tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

Mr. RYAN, I am just going to go to this page, and I am going to yield to you, sir.

Yesterday, reading is fundamental. I blew it up because I thought it was important for me to come to the floor and share with Members because there are

to be some Members come this November that will say I don't know what was going on. Do you think they hoodwinked me on this? Here is a copy of the paper right here if you have it on their desk.

This is the way the cover looks, Republicans Reaches Deal on Tax Cuts. What does that mean, Mr. RYAN? I will tell you what that means. That means that for Americans that make between \$10,000 and \$20,000 a year, the average tax savings will be \$2. That means for those that are making \$20- to \$30,000 a year, that means that their average tax break will be \$9; \$30,000 to \$40,000, \$16; \$40,000 to \$50,000, \$46; \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year, household income, \$403; \$100,000 to \$200,000, \$1,388; \$200,000 to 500,000, \$4,599; \$500,000 to \$1 million, \$5,562; and those that are making more than \$1 million will receive \$41,977.

Who has whose back? People that I represent, I can tell you right now, very few, I can probably count on both hands and maybe one foot that are making more than \$1 million that will celebrate the \$41,977 tax break.

Meanwhile, guess what? We have men and women that are at war in Iraq. We have men and women that are in Afghanistan right now, and we have companies trying to figure out how they are going to provide health care for their employees. Meanwhile, we have the Republican Congress here saying everything is fine. What are you talking about?

I yield, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The thing is, my friend, we don't have the money to give a millionaire a tax cut. We have had 5.4 million people slip into poverty since President Bush took over. We have middle class families struggling with gas, fuel costs, energy costs, tuition costs, health care costs. We have got a lot of issues for middle class people, lower class people, people who are slipping into poverty, living paycheck to paycheck. It is so irresponsible to give someone who makes millions of dollars a year a tax cut, it just doesn't make any sense.

I said it before, Mr. Speaker, I would love to go to the folks that I know that make millions of dollars a year and say I am going to give you a tax cut. You could put a little more Italian marble in your home. But that is not just reality.

We represent the public. We get paid by the taxpayer. We represent 700,000 people apiece. We need to start talking about the common good, decisions that could be made down here that benefit everybody. Ask everybody in the country to contribute. Wealthy, middle class, poor, everyone is going to have to contribute something, but everyone will benefit them. A rising tide does lift all boats.

Right now, this tide is not lifting everyone up. It is lifting a very small group of people that continue to make money and profits after profits after profits.

I think profits are great. I think they are super. But when the oil companies

are making \$113 billion, almost up \$80 billion from 2002 and everyone is struggling and the Republican Congress gifts the oil industry \$16.3 billion in public money, something is wrong there. I think the structure has broken down. I think you are absolutely right. We don't have the money to do this, not only don't have the money, we are neglecting our priorities in education, health care, reform. Let's think about this for a second.

Government is not working, and I showed the quote from Newt Gingrich, when he said the Republican Congress is perceived by the country as running a government that cannot function.

When you look at what happened with Katrina, and the inadequate response from FEMA, when you look at the war, losing \$9 billion, losing \$9 billion and nobody knows where it is. When you look at what is happening, all the struggles for body armor and up-armored Humvees, we fought for tooth and nail for years to make sure that the troops had that equipment that they didn't have out of the gate. The lack of preparation, the lack of an exit strategy, the lack of recognition of a long-term strategy in Iraq and in the region, these are colossal mistakes.

These aren't boo-boos, these are big-time mistakes that, quite frankly, I get frustrated because I think what have you dealt to my generation? This is kind of personal and may be a little bit selfish. But what are you leaving this next generation? We started this 30-Something group to talk about issues facing our generation and 20s and 30 somethings.

Look at what is being left to us to fix. I mean, I do not know how long I am going to be in government. I don't know how long you were going to be in government.

But we are going to spend the better part of our lives trying to fix the colossal mistakes that this President and this Republican Congress have made. Budgets, lack of fiscal discipline, the war, lack of investment in education.

When you look at what the Democrats want to do, when you look at what we want to do. One is balance the budget, put in these PAYGO rules to make sure that we can only spend money that we actually have and stop borrowing money from all these foreign interests, Democrats have been trying to do that for years. We did it in the 1990s and it worked.

We want to do it again and get the country back on the right path. We want to invest in innovation. Our innovation plan has every household getting broadband technology in the next 5 years so that everyone in our society can compete within this global economy against 1.3 billion Chinese workers, again over 1 billion workers from India, against Ireland, who is just going gangbusters. Their economy is just going gangbusters. We want to be able to compete against these people.

If we don't make the proper investments, we won't be able to do it. We

are going to have a plan that we will invest into the Pell Grant. We will cut student loans in half to try to relieve some of the pressure from middle America, from middle income families. This is something that we need to do. We have a responsibility to do it.

I want to make a point, because I believe if we unleash the potential of the American people, that we will be able to address some of these problems. I can't be convinced that we can't solve the energy problem. I just can't believe it.

I am so glad that this President and this Congress weren't around during World War II, weren't around when we were trying to go to the Moon, because there would never have been that challenge. We can do this. Let us unleash the potential of the American people.

The different philosophy here is that our Republican friends want to think that if they give a tax cut to millionaires that will trickle down and somehow help middle America. It is not working. It is not working.

Rich people keep getting richer, middle class people keep struggling and falling behind. More people keep slipping into poverty, 5.4 million more people have slipped into poverty since President Bush became president, 5.4 million people. That is a drain on Nation's resources. Invest in those people, get them broadband technology, make sure they have adequate health care, make sure they have an opportunity to go to college, and you will see the potential of this country unleashed.

It is just frustrating as we talk on the floor and off the floor about a lot of these issues about the challenges that our generation is going to face down the line. You can't tell me that we can't be a competitive country, because I just don't believe it. The Republican philosophy is saying we hope that maybe one day it works its way down, the tax cuts to millionaires work their way down to the middle class. We hope one day that happens.

What the Democratic plan is just to invest into the American people, everyone. We want businesses to do well. We want middle class to do well. We want rich people to do well, we want poor people to do well. This is America. This is the American family. This isn't just your family and your family and everyone separate and nothing ever connects. That is not what made America great.

What made America great is our policies coming out of World War II. Our policies in the 1960s, we are about the common good.

I know that we don't need those same policies. We know as Democrats that it needs to be different because it is a different world. It is not what would Johnson do, what would Kennedy do or what did Johnson do, what did Kennedy, what did Roosevelt do?

□ 2115

It is not about what they did, it is about what would those great leaders do today?

I believe that the Democrats have this plan, with our innovation agenda, with our real security agenda that reduces our dependence on foreign oil. We are just so entangled in this oil mess. Let's stop.

Let's invest in the American people, Mr. MEEK. We will come up with an alternative energy source, bio-diesel, hydrogen, ethanol, sugar. We'll figure this out. But unleash the potential of the American people. We will do this and create another great surge in the middle class of the United States of America, and everything then will take care of itself; pensions, wages, health care. Everything else will take care of itself, because we are going to unleash the potential of the country.

I believe it just takes leadership to do that, and we haven't been getting much leadership here. It is really a lack of leadership that has put the country in the position it is.

When times change, when circumstances change, you have to change. Unfortunately, this President and this Congress, no matter what the facts are, stay focused on tax cuts for millionaires and let's hope that that solves all the problems.

We are starting to see now with this increase in interest rates, 16 times, what a terrible problem this is going to be; higher credit card rates, higher mortgages, cars, everything else. You are going to pay more money. So even if you do get a little bit out of the tax cut, if you are a middle class American getting 30 bucks back, gone. That is gone, eaten up with higher interest rates.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. I think it is important for us to identify, you mentioned our real security plan, Democratic homeland security plan, balanced budget plan. We have actually done it. We know how to do it. We have experience there.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In 1993, my friend, not one Republican vote.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Not one Republican vote in passing the Democratic balanced budget plan. Mr. Speaker, that is fact, not fiction.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I am not saying that to brag. The Republicans could do it. They just don't. We have done it. And it is not being a braggart, but it was Clinton as President and it was a Democratic House and it was a Democratic Senate. And out of the House, not one Republican vote to balance that budget. It led to 20 million new jobs, Mr. MEEK, in the United States, the greatest economic expansion in the history of the country. So we have proof. As you said, we know how to do this stuff, and we are asking for a shot to try to do it again.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The energy plan, Mr. Speaker, it is ready to go. The bottom line is we offer these plans and amendments, we offer these plans here on the floor.

Mr. RYAN mentioned something, Mr. Speaker, that I want to just make sure that Members are clear on, crystal clear.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Clear?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Crystal clear, Mr. RYAN, that we don't just come to the floor, Mr. Speaker, to talk about Republicans, what they are not doing or what they are doing to the American people versus for the American people. We actually fight in the Rules Committee that is on the third floor of this Capitol to beg the committee, I think it is really heavily weighted, I think it is like 14 Republicans on that committee, or 14 or 12 Republicans, versus 7 Democrats. So that means that two or three Republicans can have a cold and they still prevail and are making sure they keep control of this House and what comes to this floor. So much for bipartisanship. The Rules Committee sets the rules, Members, on what comes to the floor and what doesn't come to the floor.

This is what we were able to muster up. Ranking Member JOHN SPRATT from South Carolina offered a substitute amendment to pay-as-you-go. Now, this means pay-as-you-go. That means that if you are going to spend, you have to identify where you are going to get the money from. Can I have that chart again.

I am not talking about any of this business of borrowing from Japan, from China, from OPEC nations or any of these countries that are out there. I don't blame these countries, don't get me wrong. I don't blame them for getting a piece of the American apple pie. I just wish more Americans could get a piece of the American apple pie.

JOHN SPRATT put forth an amendment on House Concurrent Resolution 95, the 2006 budget resolution. It failed with 165 voting for it, 264 voting against it. All Republicans voted against it. 228 Republicans voted against it. All Democrats voted for it. Again, that is Rollcall No. 87, and that happened on March 17, 2005.

The same Member, ranking member JOHN SPRATT from South Carolina, a Democrat, a good Member of this House, substitute amendment to House Concurrent Resolution 393, 2005 budget resolution. Republicans voted against this, not one Republican voted for pay-as-you-go, which was the responsible way to get us out of the pockets of these foreign nations. The vote was 224-0 from Republicans. Mr. RYAN, Mr. Speaker, not one Republican.

Mr. RYAN, I will yield to you in a minute. I want to get this chart again. I think it is important. I can't bring this chart up enough, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to make this so.

If a Member can e-mail us or bump into us in the hall or a staffer or someone from the majority budget office or the minority office can come to us and explain to us how we can break this down further. 224 years, \$1.01 trillion from foreign nations. Four years, 4 years, Mr. RYAN, \$1.05 trillion since President Bush has been President and the Republican Congress has been working with the President, 4 years from 2001 to 2005.

These are not my numbers, Mr. Speaker, this is the U.S. Department of Treasury numbers. These are not my numbers. So this means that the Republican Congress knows this. You know how I know they know it? Because we tell them night after night. You know how I know they know it? Because we were here last night with the same chart. They voted against this PAYGO resolution twice. I can even go further back to show committee votes on partisan lines of voting against it.

So this means only one thing, Mr. Speaker and Mr. RYAN, that the Republican Congress is wearing this stamp with pride, that they are willing to rubber stamp anything that the President of the United States sends into this Chamber. I am saying the Republican Congress on that side of the aisle, because the history and the facts are there. This is fact and not fiction, Mr. RYAN.

I am hoping. Some days I wake up and I say, you know, I wish the situation this country is in, and when I see my children, my 9-year-old and my 11-year-old and look at their burden, they are going to look back, Mr. Speaker, and say there are some people on this floor that fought for their future and the future of America.

White, black, Hispanic, Anglo, American Indian, whatever the situation may be, we are giving them a fixed debt. And if you are a Republican, you have to have a problem with this. If you are a Democrat, you have got to have a problem with this. If you are an independent, you have to have a problem with this. If you are an American, you must have a problem with this, because it is weakening the financial standing of this country.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch here in Congress, we have got folks telling the oil companies, don't worry about it. We have your back. As long as we have the K Street Project going on, as long as you keep what we need to stay in control, we have your back.

Mr. RYAN, I just want to say this, when I give it to you, sir, I want to make sure you have the last word before we close out, but I want to make sure your constituents, that you share with the Members of this House what happened in Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say it here on the floor, because I want to make sure my Republican colleagues when they come down to vote on a PAYGO amendment again, that they think about this.

There was a race in Ohio, Mr. RYAN, and I want you to talk about it, and I want you to tell the Members of the House what happened, what happened with the write-in candidate that got more votes and the number of candidates on the ballot.

So, Mr. RYAN, with that, I want to yield to you, sir, so you can close this out.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that. I think you made a lot of points. I

think one of the things that you mentioned is that we come down here every night. I have got to tell you, you know, you mentioned the race in which our Democratic write in candidate got more write-in votes than all of the Republicans combined, and the Democrat was in the three-way primary. It is unbelievable, because of the energy with which I think a lot of people in this country are willing to go to the polls and make some kind of changes.

But I am tired of coming down here and talking about this. I will be honest with you, Mr. Speaker. I want this fixed. I want an opportunity for us to put the PAYGO rules in place, to make the tough decisions. We get paid to make these tough decisions. Let's make them.

I mean, come on. You know what frustrates me? And it hit me as you pulled out the PAYGO chart. Zero Republicans voted for the PAYGO rules to be put in place. Of the millions of times we have actually tried to put them through, amendments and on the floor and motions to recommit and everything else, all of these different times that we have tried to do this, zero Republicans. But now they are having trouble passing the budget.

Well, maybe if they would have put these procedures in place, these constraints in place, we wouldn't have the problems. We don't even have a budget yet. It is May. It is the middle of May. The law says you are supposed to have it by April 15. So all of this is happening.

I think, Mr. MEEK, as we begin to wrap up here, that everything is happening in secrecy, under the dome, on Pennsylvania Avenue, with K Street. When you look at these K Street fairy tales that you just can't believe, it is the environmental meeting, everything is done in secret. A lot of the consumer groups and conservation groups are saying you are meeting with the oil companies and the oil companies are going to write this. They say no, no, no, no, and oil executives come before the Senate. Coincidentally, the Republican Senate does not swear them in to a hearing. Unbelievable.

They all say, "We weren't there. We don't know anything about it." Then we find out a few weeks ago they were all there. The White House memo comes out that they were there, all done in secrecy. Look at the energy policy we have. It is atrocious. Come on. Everyone knows it doesn't work. Go to the gas pump. We don't have to explain it.

Look at the war, all done in secrecy. Nobody is allowed in, not a lot of debate. The information, intelligence, everything is in secret, cherry-picking intelligence and all of this other stuff, all done in secret. Look at the end result. \$9 billion lost, no exit strategy. We are not greeted as liberators. We are not able to use the oil money for reconstruction. All the promises made haven't happened. Terrible.

Look at the Medicare bill. Same thing. All done in secret. The numbers

were wrong that they gave to the Congress about how much it was going to cost.

Then we find out today, Mr. MEEK, and I hate to end on this because we don't have a lot of time to talk about it, we find out now that the National Security Agency is secretly monitoring phone calls of the American people. This is the largest database ever assembled in the world, monitoring the phone calls of American citizens.

Now, give me a break. Enough of the secrecy, enough of the mismanagement, enough of the incompetence. Let's get the Democrats back in so we can implement some of these ideas that we have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing us to be here. I would also like to thank the staff who is here who stays late with us many nights.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Just very quickly, Mr. Speaker, I know we have a minute left, I just want to say this, that it is important that we thank the Democratic leader and the Democratic leadership for allowing us to be here tonight.

Mr. RYAN, the web site that you gave out, www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something, all of the charts you have seen here tonight and throughout the week, the Members can pull that down off of the website, Mr. Speaker.

TIME RUNNING OUT TO SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE PART D

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the 30-Something Group for their leadership.

□ 2130

I come to the floor to remind all of the seniors that Monday, May 15, is the drop-dead date for signing up for Medicare part D. I am very concerned that over 15 million Americans have not signed up.

Congressman MEEK, may I ask you a question? Do you know why Monday, May 15, is the drop-dead date to sign up?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, it is set by the legislation passed by the Republican majority. And after that, Americans will be penalized.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Americans are going to be penalized. I have been elected for 25 years. And this is the first time I have ever heard of being penalized until the day you die. I mean, it is ludicrous that we, the House of Representatives passed a bill that was so complicated and confusing, and gave you a time period of less than 5 months to sign up. And then if you do not sign up, you are going to be penalized until death.

I know in Florida we have 41 different plans. And it is very confusing.

Seniors should have an opportunity to take their time and to select a plan that best meets their needs.

Now, Mr. MEEK, do you know why in the law the Secretary does not have the authority to negotiate the price of drugs? Do you know why Americans pay 50 percent more than people in Canada?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, that was set forth by the Republican Congress. Many Democrats on this side, the super majority, voted against that measure.

Furthermore, this Government agency has found that even during this 5-month period that seniors were given the wrong information from the White House, the recommendation to go on those websites and call these numbers, the wrong information was given on the plan.

But better yet, they are still held responsible to this date. That is going to happen on Monday. And they will be penalized from this point on.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, you know in Florida, we have over 1 million people who have not signed up. And nationwide it is over 15 million people.

Now, I do not understand why the President with an executive order cannot be Presidential and extend the date or do away with the penalties.

People should not be held accountable for a program that is complicated and confusing. I have a cousin that is a Ph.D. graduate from the University of Miami, a principal for 30 years, and had to go to Social Security to get someone to help and assist to make the right decision because it is very, very complicated.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking seniors, please sign up—but there is no reason why this program, a program that is so needed, I voted against it because it was bloated, can you imagine, supposedly fiscally responsible Republicans coming up with a program that is billions of dollars, costing more than it needs to, and the money is going to the pharmaceutical companies.

The money is going to the industry, and not to the people that we need to be serving. It is a shame that in this people's House that we are not doing the work of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on the Members of this body and I am calling on the President so we can make it retroactive. Let us not punish seniors for our incompetence.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for the week of May 8.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to: