

House, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the American people that if we were not doing that, if we were not doing that, we would be irresponsible.

Well, the Members on the other side of the aisle certainly got that information at home. Because this past Sunday on Meet the Press Mr. Russert had the sitting ranking member of the House of Representatives on the Intelligence Committee, Representative HARMAN, and former Senator Daschle, who was the minority leader in the Senate when this program began, and asked them some very specific questions.

One of the questions he asked was, Senator Daschle, were you briefed? He was talking about this program. Senator Daschle's response, it goes into long details, but, yes, we were briefed. We were briefed.

As the President said, if he wanted to break the law, why did he come to Congress and tell him what he was doing? So the truth is that this is an appropriate program. The truth is Congress knew about it in the appropriate ways.

Representative HARMAN was asked, do you support the program? And she says, I still support the program. This is the thing they are arguing so much about and complaining so much about.

Senator Daschle, should the President stop this program? Senator Daschle replies, no, absolutely not.

Mr. Russert asked Representative HARMAN, do you think the program should be stopped? Representative HARMAN, no, I think the program should go on.

So, Mr. Speaker, truth is an important thing to talk about when we are discussing about matters of public policy.

As Congressman GOHMERT and others have mentioned, I am a physician. I am an orthopedic surgeon. I practiced for nearly 20 years in the Atlanta area, and I know if you do not listen to the right results of tests, if you do not investigate, if you do not get the right information, if you do not get the truth, you cannot make the right diagnosis. And the same is true in public policy. If you are not talking about things in a truthful manner, if you are not putting out information that is accurate, then there is no way that you can reach the right solution.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the leadership that the Speaker is providing. I am proud of the leadership the Republican leadership is providing about the area and the issue of national security. Because this is not a Republican issue, it is not a Democrat issue, it is an American issue, and it may be the most important thing that we have to do as Members of the House of Representatives.

So my hope and prayer truly is that all Members of the House and the Senate will work together in this most solemn, solemn of challenges and tasks that we have and ensure the protection of our Nation.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Effective today, February 15th, I resign my seat on the Committee on Science pending my appointment to the Committee on International Relations.

Sincerely,

RUSS CARNAHAN,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the opportunity once again to come to the floor of the House of Representatives as the 30-Something Working Group. Myself along with KENDRICK MEEK, Mr. MEEK from Florida, and also Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida, we have been coming here now, Mr. Speaker, for a couple of years talking about the condition of the United States, our fiscal situation, Mr. Speaker, our investment situation or lack of investment in the United States of America, and also what we believe is the Democratic Caucus and Leader PELOSI and STENY HOYER and the issues that we are trying to put forward.

It has been a very interesting week here for the Democratic Caucus, Mr. Speaker. We had a wonderful guest, George Lucas, the famous writer, director, producer of the great Star Wars movies; and he was here to talk about the innovation agenda that the Democratic party is beginning to put forward. And we have, Mr. Speaker, an innovation agenda to keep America competitive in the 21st century.

As we look at what has been happening here in the United States, this kind of breaks down into two or three separate categories. One, if we want to be a strong country, we have got to start here at home; and we got to start making the investments here in the United States. Research and development, education, health care, alternative energy technologies must start here; and we must begin to grow our economy here, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be of any good to anyone else here in the world.

Unfortunately, our friends across the aisle on the Republican side have failed miserably in their attempt to try to balance the budget here in the United

States of America. We have, as citizens of this country, regardless of what political party you belong to, we have as a country an \$8.2 trillion national debt, \$8.2 trillion dollars. Each citizen in this country owes \$27,000 to our national debt. If a baby is born today, that baby owes \$27,000 to the United States government to help us pay our debt. If you are a senior citizen, you owe \$27,000 to the United States Government. And if we keep going down the path that we have been on, and here it is, \$8.2 trillion as of Valentine's Day, 2006, and your share of the national debt is \$27,500.

Mr. Speaker, we have a real situation in the United States of America. So not only do we owe this, not only does each person owe that, what do we do? So if we are running a \$400 billion annual deficit or \$300 billion, what do we do to fund business in the United States of America? We have got to go out and borrow the money. And this President in the first 4 years of his term borrowed more money from foreign interests than every single administration prior to his in the last 224 years. This President borrowed \$1.05 trillion from foreign interests in 4 years, more than every other president before him.

Is that making America stronger, Mr. Speaker? I do not think it is. I think it weakens our country. And here it is. This President in a Republican House and a Republican Senate has borrowed \$1.05 trillion from 2001 to 2005. And all of these Presidents did not borrow as much from foreign interests as this one has.

And that puts us, Mr. Speaker, that puts us at a position of weakness because guess who we are borrowing the money from to pay the bills. We borrow some from U.S. interests, but this is a chart that outlines who else we are borrowing this money from. \$682 billion we have borrowed from Japan; \$249 billion we have borrowed from China; \$67.8 billion from OPEC.

□ 1500

Are you kidding me? We are borrowing money from OPEC to help fund and plug the hole in our annual deficits here? Meanwhile, they are making money hand over fist. This is a very dangerous situation that we are in, Mr. Speaker, because here is the end result. Here is where the rubber meets the road.

As we all take out loans to pay for our homes or our cars or our kids' education, unfortunately you cannot just borrow the money at zero percent interest. You have got to pay interest on the money you borrow. So the interest on \$8.2 trillion is a lot of money. So what does that mean for our annual payments that we have to make just on the interest?

This chart is the 2007 budget in billions of dollars. This big red bar that gets up to \$230 billion is what we are going to pay in the 2007 budget projected on interest on the debt, just the

interest. We are not paying it down. We are just paying the interest on it, and this nice lavender bar that barely gets up over \$50 billion is what we are going to spend on education and then homeland security and then veterans.

The irresponsible policies of this administration put our fiscal house in disorder because we are spending so much money on just paying the interest on the money we owe the Chinese and the Japanese and the OPEC countries. That is a great deal for those countries, great deal for them, but what about us?

A stronger America starts here at home. So until we fix this problem, there is no issue we can go on addressing because it straps our hands behind our back, Mr. Speaker, because we want to make investments in education, research and development, Pell grants to lower the cost of college tuition, put research money into figuring out an alternative energy source so we are not dependent on some of these OPEC countries.

But check this out: this is the interest on the debt that I just showed. This is what we could spend every day in this country if we did not have to pay all this interest on the debt. We could invest \$1 million a day into every congressional district.

I represent a district in northeast Ohio, Youngstown, Ohio; Akron, Ohio; Niles, Ohio; Warren, Ohio; Portage County. Kent State University is in my district. This is an older area in the northeast of the great State of Ohio, the great Buckeye State. \$365 million I could have to go back to this area and invest in the schools, Head Start, all kinds of other different things just from my district; and every other Member in here, Mr. Speaker, would get \$365 million, a tremendous difference. Give it to the Chinese banks, the Chinese Government; give it to the Japanese banks, the Japanese Government; give it to OPEC or give it to the kids who are trying to go to school in Youngstown, Ohio, of which 80 percent live in poverty that go to Youngstown city schools. I know what I would like to choose.

Some other things here. We could provide health care to 79,925 more veterans if we would not have to pay the interest on the debt like in the late 1990s when we made the very difficult decision here, and I am glad the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is joining us for this point.

A very difficult decision in 1993 when President Clinton got into office. We were running budget deficit after budget deficit every year, and our Democratic House and a Democratic Senate, with a Democratic President, balanced the budget in 1993 without one Republican vote. I am not saying some Republicans would not vote for it now, but at that time, when the heat was on, without one Republican vote, and it led to balanced budgets, surpluses as far as the eye could see, investments into education, Hope scholarship, the whole

nine yards and the greatest economic expansion in the history of this country.

More important, the private sector, because interest rates were low, the private sector was able to go out and create over 20 million new jobs. We cannot create jobs here in government. That is not our duty. That is not our responsibility. This is the chart, Reagan, Reagan, Reagan, Bush, Bush, Bush, all in the red; and Clinton in the late 1990s, after the 1993 budget was implemented, we started having surpluses in the late 1990s, projected out as far as the eye could see because of fiscal discipline.

That is what our job is here, balance the budget, keep interest rates low, invest in the education and research, like this country has always done, and the private sector will join and take over.

Some other things. If we did not have to pay the interest on the debt, we could enroll 60,000 kids into Head Start. You want to talk about being compassionate, you want to talk about if you practice the Christian faith, being a Christian, I think somewhere that means making sure we can invest into those poor districts, those poor children, and I am so glad that Mr. MEEK is joining us because we started out here, and that "we" being me, talking about the impact of the budget deficit and the fiscal situation that we are in right now and the damage that it is causing to the American economy and the lack of investment because we are paying the interest on the debt to many of these countries overseas.

So thank you very much for joining us. I know you were busy in a Homeland Security Committee hearing, and I appreciate you coming up to support the 30-somethings.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, anytime we get the opportunity to share with the Members of this House and the American people what the truth is all about, and sometimes the truth hurts, as we share with America and also the majority our positive message for change and putting this country on the right track, because we know that working together with the American people that we are going to put this country on the right track.

I mentioned once before, just as late as last night, on some of the last hours of our Innovation Agenda that we have, the Innovation Agenda that we would like to carry out, Mr. Speaker, but the bottom line is the difference between the Republican message on innovation and investment in our young people and our message is the fact that the Republican majority has everything at their fingertips to bring about true innovation here in the United States. They have control of the House of Representatives, have control of the U.S. Senate, have control of the executive branch. We are stopping the Republican majority from moving forward. We have made some very strong statements, and I encourage the Members to go to housedemocrats.gov, and you can download our agenda for innovation.

The real issue is that we want to create an educated, skilled workforce for the future; and the bottom line is that we want to make sure that we can move forward in the math and sciences and engineering. We cannot get there by just saying it, Mr. Speaker. We have to put the investment in.

But guess what, guess what, the President's budget does not speak to what he said here in the Chamber during the State of the Union, that he is committed to innovation. If you are committed to innovation, you do not cut off the very lifeblood that young people need to be able to pursue an undergraduate degree or a graduate degree. You do not say that we are going to slash student assistance. We are no longer going to assist you in a way of being able to achieve the American Dream in educating yourself.

I think it is also important that we have made a commitment on this side of the aisle to guarantee access to broadband in every home.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In 5 years.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. In 5 years. We do not want some neighborhoods to have access to broadband and other neighborhoods, they do not have access. If we are going to move together as a people and society, people in rural America, folks in urban America, individuals that are living from paycheck to paycheck, we have got to level the playing field.

This thing of two Americas is not going to get us past other countries in this world that are competing against us. U.S. companies, what I want you to do before we leave this hour, if you would, just read off the comments of the CEOs again. You know, someone might have heard it once before, but they need to hear it again.

American technology companies are saying, please, please come together in a bipartisan way, please move in the direction of innovation so we can be competitive; but we cannot complain, Mr. Speaker, when they have to go overseas and hire individuals from other countries to fill jobs that can be provided to Americans right here. So that is the difference between us and the majority.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let me share a statistic that is Americans' ranking with broadband penetration as of January of 2005. Korea has almost a 25 percent penetration; China, 20 percent; Iceland, 15 percent; the U.S., 11 percent. This is one area where we are falling behind in a big way.

Another area that you touched upon, this is the number of engineers, people with engineering degrees this year: China, 600,000; India, 350,000; U.S., 70,000. We cannot compete in a brutal, brutal global economy if we are not making the kinds of investments that are going to increase this number. Now, I understand that the Chinese and India, they have more people than we do, all the more reason that we need every single citizen in our country on the field with the opportunity to play

and to help make investments in the United States and create wealth in the United States.

That is what this Innovation Agenda does, broadband penetration, next 5 years in every household as Mr. MEEK said, increasing the number of engineers and scientists by 100,000 in the next 4 years. That is in the Democratic Innovation Agenda, and let me just share with you who assisted the Leader PELOSI and the Democratic Caucus with putting this together.

John Chambers, president and CEO of Cisco Systems, Incorporated, said that, "The Innovation Agenda focuses on the right issues for building our Nation's competitiveness, from investing in basic R&D, expanding science and math education and broadband infrastructure, to creating a globally competitive business environment . . . I look forward to working with both sides . . . to implement these laudable goals."

That is not TIM RYAN; that is not KENDRICK MEEK; that is not NANCY PELOSI. That is the CEO of Cisco saying get our act together and make the proper investments that need to be made.

Also, the Federal Government affairs person at Microsoft says that "we ask Congress to give these issues serious consideration and support." And he says, "At Microsoft, we are committed to changing the world through innovative technology and, in order to fulfill that commitment, we need a pool of well-educated, skilled workers."

This is not just one party. These are CEOs, probably even Republicans; and if you go to our Web site, we have all of the quotes from a lot of people, from the American Corn Growers Association, TechNet.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We need the corn growers, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We need corn, I love corn; but these are folks that are not just aligned with us philosophically. This is a very pragmatic approach to how to keep America competitive, and I think our plan is much better than the plan or lack of plan that the other side has. They have been in charge of this House since 1994 and have not been able to make strides in this area, and the numbers bear that out. These are facts. This is not something that we have made up.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The reality of the situation is the fact that the Republican side will come to this floor, if not within minutes, in another couple of hours or when we come back off of the break that we are taking for a week to go back to our districts and work and what have you, they will come and say, oh, we have an innovation agenda. They will come and say, we want to cut the budget, we want to cut the deficit in half, and we believe in the things that the President believes in, we believe in veterans affairs, we believe that veterans should have health care, we believe that American families should have health care. They

will say all of these great things; but guess what, the evidence does not reflect the action that they have taken.

The President comes here and says that he believes in innovation, he believes in investing in America's future, and in so many words, he believes in the good old American spirit of saying that we will be first, that we will leap forward, that we will lead the world in the areas of education and in sciences and engineering, all of those things.

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All of those things, but his budget doesn't reflect that, Mr. RYAN. One may say, well, why do you have to identify the negative part of this argument? I have to identify it, Mr. RYAN, because it is the reality of the legislative process, because the President sets the tone on what the budget will look like.

You have our Republican majority here, and we have these partisan votes all the time. They vote in the spirit of the President's budget. Now, one says trust us with the money, Mr. RYAN. Every time we come to the floor, I have to identify what is going on as it relates to trust us with the money.

Here is our friend, Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Snow. He is a good guy. He is a good guy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Good guy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But I want to make sure we understand that he has a responsibility to make sure that this government doesn't run out of money. He is paying attention to what is going on, Mr. Speaker. By him paying attention, all he can do is react to the bad policies that come out of this Chamber, right here. He didn't do it by himself. He doesn't have the checkbook to write checks that he is not authorized to write.

He is almost what you might call, Mr. RYAN, the accountant for the United States of America, the individual that makes sure we get a warning when we are heading down the wrong track. Here is a letter to Senator MCCONNELL by Secretary Snow, dated the 29th of last year. This is almost on New Year's Eve, Members. This is like on New Year's Eve. This is during the high holy time. This is during the time that folks are with family and all and the Congress is out of session.

But the last act of the Secretary, probably in 2005, was to write this letter, to write this letter so that hopefully maybe one day someone will pick it up and say, oh, wow.

In this letter he is saying that we project that the debt limit, which is currently at \$8.1 trillion, will be reached by mid-February, 2006, which is now, ladies and gentlemen.

At that time, unless the debt limit is raised, or the Department of Treasury authorized extraordinary actions, we will be unable to continue financing government operations. It is not that we are not going to be able to keep the snack room open over at the Depart-

ment of the Treasury. We will not be able, Mr. Speaker, to continue government operations.

What is government operations? Government operations is making sure that we have enough dollars to be able to fulfill what the American people want us to fulfill, make sure that we have adequate education dollars, and make sure that we can run the government and that we have agencies that are performing services for the people, make sure that the troops have what they need that are in harm's way right now, all of these very, very important things, to make sure that the veteran hospitals are open, to make sure that children with free and reduced lunch are able to get what they need. They are saying unless the debt ceiling is raised, we will not be able to do any of that.

Now, Mr. Snow, I can tell you, who is appointed by the President of these United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, is not a member of the Democratic Caucus. As a matter of fact, he can be an independent, because he is just an accountant for the United States of America, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is, it is not his fault, but he wrote that letter 2 days before the end of 2005. While the rest of us are thinking about New Year's resolutions, he is back here in reality, because the Congress left here trying to pass a budget.

He knows that he is going to have to write another letter. There are five other letters that have been written like this by this Republican majority because of their actions. Now, this is letter number six, Mr. RYAN?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think so.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is letter number six, letter number seven, letter number eight is coming. The reason we have to do it is because we have to pay on the debt, and it is irresponsible policy by saying that we want to make tax cuts permanent for billionaires.

Meanwhile, Mr. RYAN, we cannot carry out an innovation agenda, we can't carry out a true health care agenda. The President comes here and says, hey, let's talk about health care. Okay, let's talk about health care. No, it is not really a discussion. I just want to expand a program that only those that have disposable income to put on the side for a rainy day for when they get sick, but the folks that are living from paycheck to paycheck, I want to tell you something, many of those individuals are making good money. Many of those individuals are trying to pay for college loans and tuition, many of them are trying to do that. Many of them have sick family members. They don't have \$1,000 or \$2,000 to put to one side for the rainy day fund for when they get sick. That is not a health care policy. That is a health care policy for a couple of folks that can afford to do it.

I think it is important that we engage, Mr. RYAN, as we do, we come to this floor in this 30-something Working

Group, we engage the majority, not in the political sense, but in the sense of saying that the American people deserve better. In the same breath, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we identify, not only to the Members but to the American people, the only way we will be able to get on track to be able to deal with the issue of health care, to deal with the issue of innovation, to be able to make sure that we do away with the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence and do away with the corruption tax that the American people are paying because of the incompetence and the cronyism and the corruption that is going on right now in Washington D.C.

This is not my report. This is you pick up the paper, you turn on the television. It is going on, Mr. RYAN. We talked about the K Street Project. Folks are saying, well, that is not news. We know it exists. We have Members on the majority side boasting about the K Street Project: Yes, we created it. What's the problem?

Now, after a certain lobbyist here in this town gets indicted, does he go to trial? No. Was there a jury pool call? No. He said, guess what, I am guilty, and I am willing to help.

Then all of a sudden, 3 days later, oh, well, the K Street Project, we are doing away with that, as though it was right in the first place. I use that example, Mr. RYAN, so that the Members and the American people understand that what we are talking about now is not fiction; it is fact.

I said that last night, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to say it every time we come to the floor. We are not promoting fiction. We are promoting facts. That is where we are right now. Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We talked about raising the debt limit. If you go back and review what happened during the Clinton administration, two times President Clinton had to raise the debt ceiling. Twice. Those were early on. They passed the balanced budget in 1993 without one Republican vote. Democratic House, Democratic Senate, Democratic White House, balanced the budget, helped the private sector create and provided the environment for the private sector to create over 20 million new jobs.

We need to provide that environment again for the private sector to go out and do its work. We are not going to create the jobs here. We cannot create any jobs. It is not our job to create jobs.

Our job is to create an environment in which people can go out and seize the opportunity that we helped create. So Clinton did it twice. This President has done it five times already, and he has only been in office 5 years. President Clinton was in office 8 years.

Democrats know how to balance budgets and make proper investments. If you look at the execution of government, from this President, this Republican House, the Republican Senate.

Katrina, a disaster, the way FEMA reacted, an absolute disaster. The way the American people in that region were treated and are still being treated, and the money that is being wasted, because there are 11,000 trailers sitting in Hope, Arkansas, that cost \$300 million that are now sinking in the mud that no one is living in.

I mean, give me a break. You look at the war in Iraq. We just find out in the last few days, \$9 billion. Nobody knows where it is. Where is it? I don't know. Somebody find it. We don't know where it is. What would you do with it? I don't have it. I gave it to him. What did you do with it? He got it. It is like watching a Three Stooges episode. \$9 billion of public money wasted.

Halliburton, overcharging for food and all kinds of other stuff. Halliburton has already been fined \$2 million for wasting the taxpayers' money. Fraud. Come on. All we are saying here is there is a way to execute government, and we know how to do it. You could know better than anybody else, Mr. MEEK, living in south Florida, with how FEMA operates and how they don't always follow the proper procedure. We can compare that to FEMA as it was executed under President Clinton.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. As you know, I am the ranking member on the Management, Integration and Oversight Subcommittee in Homeland Security.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I know that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I will tell you the reason why I was a little delayed here, Mr. RYAN, is we had two individuals, one from General Services and another from the Department of Homeland Security. We are about to move into what we call this American Shield Initiative, which is along our borders using technology to protect America from illegal immigration.

We set out with an initial program, Mr. Speaker, similar to the one that is about to start now. In that program, there was a quarter of a billion dollars wasted because of incompetence. A quarter of a billion dollars. Now, let me tell you, a quarter of a billion dollars, Mr. RYAN, it is not even in some sort of program that was at some university and someone was to work on some sort of research project and it went south. This is protecting the borders of the United States of America, a quarter of a billion dollars. The four individuals that were involved, Mr. Speaker, only received a demotion. A demotion.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, I used to be a State trooper. If you have a trooper that damaged equipment, let us just say \$1 million, they are gone, period, dot. It is not anything to where you say, oh, well, Tom, I know it was rough and all, and you made a mistake. Guess what, it's just a quarter of a billion dollars, just the taxpayers' money. Don't worry about it. Forget about it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They will get over it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They will get over it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, we have to disabuse ourselves of that kind of attitude here in Washington D.C.

Let me tell you something. My constituents who can either be Republican, Democratic, Independent, or Green Party, would be highly disappointed, highly disappointed if we were in charge and this were going on. But we are not in charge. We are asking to be in charge of this Chamber.

What is happening right now, Mr. Speaker, and what is being printed in the press right now, Mr. Speaker, and what is being said in the Halls of Congress right now, Mr. Speaker, is unprecedented in the history of this Congress.

When we speak into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Mr. RYAN, here on this 30-something, I sleep well. I sleep well because I know that, hopefully, historians will look at this time and say, you know something, the minority side was saying that we could do better, and that we can do better, and that we will do better. We have the history on our side to the majority side. On the Democratic side, we have the history of balancing the budget. Do you? No.

We have the history of investing in education and making sure that children have what they need to learn and teachers have what they need to teach.

On your side? No. We have the history of putting together things as it relates to a bipartisan agenda on innovation and education, Leave No Child Behind, working with the Republican side, passing that piece of legislation, being there at the bill signing. Then when it came down to funding that bipartisan piece of legislation, it was the Democrats standing there all alone while on the Republican side we had desert tumbleweeds flying through saying, well, you know, we just don't have the money to do that. Meanwhile, on the other side, we have got to give this tax break to the top bracket of Americans who are millionaires. As a matter of fact, not only do we want to give it to them, we want to make it permanent.

Mr. RYAN, we start talking about the commitment to making sure that we carry on our constitutional responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear that we are prepared, and that we are ready. The President came here talking about innovation. He must have been walking down the hall and picked up a copy of the Democratic plan and said, oh, maybe we need to talk about this.

We have CEOs who are Independents and Republicans and are Democrats, who are now talking that they are supporting a Democratic initiative.

No, what they are supporting is an American initiative that we are committed to.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. An initiative endorsed by the CEO of Cisco Systems; the managing director of government affairs at Microsoft; and a laundry list,

American Corn Growers; CEO of AEA; I mean, come on, Information Technology Industry Council, vice president. This is not a Democratic-supported agenda. This was the Democrat's ideas, but this is supported by Democrats and Republicans because it is the right thing to do for the country.

□ 1530

Increase the research and development tax credit. Double the funding to the National Science Foundation. These are things that, these are smart business decisions. We are in the business of government. If you were in a business, you would not run yourself into debt and run annual deficits as far as the eye can see. You would not stop funding education or pull back or not make that kind of investment. You would not cut funding to research and development. That is your lifeline, that is how you keep yourself competitive, and that is all we want to do and try to give every kid an opportunity to get up in there.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, you showed this chart a little earlier, but you cannot show it enough.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I do not think you can.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just want to make sure, Mr. RYAN, that the American people understand what is happening in the present. We do not even have to go as far back as what happened 4 or 5 years ago or what happened 2 years ago. We just have to talk about what is happening right now.

Once again, this President could not do it by himself, Mr. Speaker, needed the partisan vote in this Chamber on the Republican side to accomplish \$1.05 trillion in borrowing from foreign nations. Knocking on the door of China, saying can you help us, because we are fiscally irresponsible.

That is what the debt ceiling letter comes from, Mr. Speaker. We did not write this letter. Democrats did not set this letter into motion. It was the Republican policies in this Republican House that set this policy into motion raising the debt ceiling, not paying as we go. This is not the responsibility of the minority on the Democratic side. It is the majority.

I want to make sure, because we need to break this thing down in 1, 2, 3, A, B, C, so that no one can go back home and tell their constituents, well, you know, you have got a point there, but I did not quite catch that, and I did not know that we have borrowed \$1.05 trillion more than 42 Presidents before this President, 42 other administrators before this President, \$1.05 trillion that other Presidents and administrations and Congresses have borrowed from foreign nations in 224 years.

Folks say, well, you all act like you are alarmed by this. We are alarmed, Mr. Speaker. The American people should be alarmed, Republicans and Democrats. It is almost like saying, Mr. Speaker, if you had your daughter or son that you gave a credit card to

and they went out and they just charged that credit card up, as a matter of fact, they charged it to the point that it is at the limit. Let us say they had a \$2,500 limit on it. What the Republican Congress is doing now, Mr. Speaker, is that they are going, even though they are maxed out, they are calling the credit card company that happens to be China, that happens to be Saudi Arabia, that happens to be other countries of interest, as it relates to the defense of this country, saying we have maxed out right now. We need your help to pay our bills.

And then at the same time, Mr. Speaker, as I continue to go to C here, through the ABCs, they are saying this on one side, but, on the other side, they are saying, hey, make the tax cuts permanent. Make them permanent for the most well-financed Americans, for the top tier of the individuals that are making 2 and \$3 million a year. On this side of the debate, Mr. Speaker, they are saying it is okay to give not only royalties but other benefits and tax breaks to the oil industry while they are making record profits. They are saying that it is okay.

But then here in the middle are the American people; and the American people are having to suck it up, Mr. RYAN. The American people who want to educate themselves, parents who want to see their children educated. If you have a prepaid college program, you better revisit that program, because it will not assist your child or your son or your daughter in paying for their college because we will just yank the carpet out from under young people. And the Republican majority did.

We voted against it. The Democrats voted against it. So if we are going to have a paradigm shift, and I am hoping that we put the pressure on the Republican majority, that we are here to play. We mean business. We are very serious about having the opportunity to give this country what it deserves, and that means representation, representation for them and not the special interests.

Mr. Speaker, I speak all of the time about I do not have a picture of the special interests in my office, saying I really dislike the special interests. I really dislike individuals that are paid lobbyists. I really dislike them. No, no. It is not them. It is the individuals that allow the raw needs of those special interests to make it into statutory language. It is those individuals that appropriate in those areas where it gets into the appropriations act and into the budget just the way they wrote it, without saying, you know, I know you have a concern, I know you have an issue and you have needs, but we have to make sure that the American people are represented in this budget. We have to make sure that the American people are represented in this bill. We have to make sure that the future of this country as it relates to innovation plays a major role in what we do here, and that is where we are lacking, Mr. Speaker.

So, you know, Mr. RYAN, as we go on, and many Members will return back to their districts and speak to individuals that live there. We challenge those Americans to challenge your Member of Congress. It is almost too late for us to wait until Election Day for you to speak the way you want to speak. But you have the opportunity. I tell you, give the Republican majority the benefit of the doubt that they are going to take a paradigm shift. But I am going to let you know right now, the evidence does not speak to a paradigm shift or a change in thinking or their ways.

So I say, Mr. RYAN, that, yes, we do have a couple of friends over here on this side of the aisle that believe what we believe. And it will be those individuals, those very few, Mr. Speaker, that will join in with a Democratic leadership if the American people see fit to have it so that will allow us to move in a bipartisan way. And it will not be like it is now, and it will not be business as usual, and it will not be, well, I don't care if you do not like it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We cannot afford business as usual.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We cannot afford business as usual.

So Mr. RYAN, I think it is important as we are in, you know, the closing minutes of our time here of sharing with, I know it is, you know, 15, 20 minutes it is closing for us because we like to share the information.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Fourth quarter.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We are in the fourth quarter right now. We like to share the information, and we like to give it to folks the way it is. There is no icing on this, Mr. Speaker. Because there is no icing when a child is denied an opportunity to enroll in a free lunch.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. No gravy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There is no icing on the cake when it comes down to a family that is trying to figure out how they are going to pay a copayment or they need to keep running down to the drugstore to get children's Motrin or Tylenol. There is no icing on the reality of individuals having to wait at an HMO or at a clinic, that they are on a waiting list to be seen by a doctor. There is no icing on the reality of the American experience right now.

So I think it is important for children, if it is from, you know, from a double-wide to the west side, wherever they may live, who do not have the opportunity to broadband access so that they can be just as advanced as the next community or as the next family. That is what we are talking about. It is not a liberal agenda. It is a sound agenda to put this country back on the right track, and it is serious business, and anyone that feels that it is not serious business, we challenge them to say otherwise.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I agree with you 100 percent, Mr. MEEK; and I appreciate your passion. The \$9 billion, you talked about some of the irresponsible domestic fiscal problems, challenges that we

have here in the United States. They are unbelievable, the magnitude that they are at right now and the magnitude that our friends on the other side let it get so far out of hand. But not only here at home do they have problems governing and balancing budgets and trying to put our fiscal house in order here. \$9 billion lost in Iraq. Okay?

Third party validator. This is not TIM RYAN from Ohio. This is not KENDRICK MEEK from Florida. This is not NANCY PELOSI saying this. This is the Inspector General that said nearly \$9 billion of money spent on Iraq reconstruction is unaccounted for because of inefficiencies and bad management, according to a watchdog report published Sunday. And the IG says the same thing. Unable to account for the funds. \$8.8 billion was reported to have been spent on salaries, operating and capital expenditures and reconstruction projects between October of 2003 and 2004. The CPA, Coalition Provisional Authorities, have left auditors with no guarantee the money was properly used. Severe inefficiencies and poor management. What is going on over there? Haliburton is inflating their numbers to increase their profits at the expense of the United States taxpayer.

Back home with Katrina, we have—

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, it is okay. I am talking about, Mr. RYAN, for the majority. It is okay. No, it is fine.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. No, I understand what you are saying.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Oh, people make mistakes of wide application, you know.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And you may like this one because this totally reaffirms what you just said. It affirms it, but then it even reaffirms it. At the House Budget Committee hearing this morning, the committee hearing was on discretionary spending.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Just this morning, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just this morning, today, Thursday. One of the things OMB and the White House are emphasizing this year is this great new agency rating system that they have put together with ratings from effective to ineffective. Okay? And they looked at FEMA and the administration's self-performance, so this is the fox watching the hen house here. Mitigation programs were rated moderately effective. Disaster recovery, adequate. Disaster response, adequate.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Is that like a C, Mr. RYAN? Is that like a C minus?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I do not know what it is.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is not a B or an A, am I correct?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If anybody in America that watched what was going on during Katrina thinks that FEMA's response was adequate, then we have a total communication problem here, and we maybe need to come up with a couple new words, because the perform-

ance there was not adequate. Brownie's performance was not adequate. The Secretary of Homeland Security's performance was not adequate. Appointing an attorney to an equestrian society is not adequate. That is inadequate, and this country deserves better.

Government, you cannot, and this is the problem, what I really disagree with our friends on the other side. I do not believe that government is the answer. We cannot create jobs, and I do not believe that. The private sector creates jobs. We create a good environment.

Our friends on the other side for the past 12 to 20 years have just been saying government is the problem. Well, you know what? Government was the problem there because you do not have any respect for what is going on. Who else is going to come in in a disaster, other than FEMA? That is our responsibility. Who else is going to help with broadband access all over the country? The government.

Now, we do not want the government in everything; and I, quite frankly, think the government is too involved in too much right now. But there are targeted areas where the government can be effective. One of those is emergency response, and we are getting inadequate performance from this administration.

Another one is when you go to war. Who is going to go to war? Two private businesses? McDonalds against Burger King in the great grudge match? No. Countries go to war. Governments go to war. And \$9 billion just unaccounted for, inadequate, ineffective, inefficient, waste of the taxpayers' money and, quite frankly, a disgrace, Mr. MEEK. And this is why I think that we need some wholesale changes.

One final point before I yield to my friend.

Part of the problem is, we have a one-party government here. Republicans control the House, Republicans control the Senate, Republicans control the White House. Somebody should be getting kicked around if you cannot find \$9 billion that was supposed to be spent on a war in Iraq and it is not and no one can find it. Where are the oversight hearings from our friends on the other side? We are in the minority. We do not have subpoena power.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, there were hundreds of hearings for far less under the Clinton administration. Hundreds.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You know what? If this was a sexual escapade there would be hearings all over the place. But this is about \$9 billion in taxpayers' dollars that is gone, and no hearings. No one is getting there.

In fact, here comes the report. I don't even know what I just did with it. Here comes the report, the article about the \$9 billion. Paul Bremer says and the Pentagon disputes the Inspector General's report. Not, we better find out what happened because we do not want it to happen again and we are the

guardians of the public tax dollars. We have got to make sure what happened never happens again.

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That is not what we get from this outfit. We get: It was not us. It wasn't me. I don't know. What did you say? I cannot hear you. And these guys say, Inspector General, watchdog groups, \$9 billion unaccounted for. The Pentagon says, We disagree.

Well, then, where is it? Show it to us. We are not wiretapping you.

How do I know? How do I know? Because you told them? You are the same group that told me that the war was only going to cost the American taxpayer \$50 billion and now we are up to \$400 billion, and you said we would be greeted as liberators, and that never happened. And you said we would use the oil for reconstruction. That never happened, Mr. Speaker. Why should we believe anything that is coming out of this administration or the Republican Congress right now? It cannot be trusted.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, here is the bottom line: history does not speak straight talk to the American people about what is happening here under the Capitol dome. But I feel obligated to report it. I think it is important that in the last budget reconciliation bill that we had that passed this floor and the Senate that the Republican leadership did know 5 days before it came to the House for a vote, in the final conference report, that it was an inaccurate report and it was an identical bill between the House and the Senate.

It is so interesting that one of the issues, one of the areas where the language was wrong was regarding direct loan payments to parents of post-secondary students in one section. One of the other sections dealt with bankruptcy fees. We did not know it. The majority knew it and the White House knew it and they still signed it. And it is unconstitutional, but they are saying that that is okay.

I think, also, it is important to identify, Mr. RYAN, when we start talking about individuals being able to receive good information, I asked the Members, I challenged the Members to go on democraticleader.house.gov, pull up the statement that was put out on February 15, which was just yesterday, on Wednesday, talking about the partisan committee, Mr. Speaker, that was put together to look into Katrina, and basically you know what they are saying? No recommendations for changes or corrections, but they are saying what did we get out of the Department of Homeland Security? We did not get the answers that we deserve. What did we learn from the process that we are not prepared to take on a natural disaster?

All right. Let us talk about natural disaster versus terrorist attacks. A natural disaster is something that we see is coming in many cases, outside of an earthquake or what have you, but in

many cases we see it coming, nine times out of ten, whether it be a great rain, flood, what have you. What happens, as I am speaking here on the floor hypothetically, God forbid, if a terrorist attack takes place? How do we respond to it? We are not prepared, and we have to be prepared.

Mr. RYAN, I want to thank you for coming down and starting this hour. I look forward to working with you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and others on the 30-something Working Group as we try to improve this government.

But I will tell you right now and I will share it with the Members and the American people that we must have a paradigm shift in this Chamber if you want the accountability that you deserve.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, as we wind down here, just to sum this all up, I think we have addressed an issue tonight. We found a theme, Mr. MEEK, about incompetence. And it is not personal. Democrats at one point many, many years ago maybe did not do right by the American people, who knows. But I am saying this is not personal. But there is a real trend going on here with Katrina, with the war, and this administration and the Republican House and the Republican Senate's inability to execute the responsibilities of government.

We are running huge annual budget deficits to the tune of \$400 billion next year. They are going to raise the debt limit for the fifth or sixth time in the Bush administration to over \$8.2 trillion. The fiscal house is a mess. We are borrowing money from China, Japan, and OPEC countries. Inability and an incompetence when it comes to governing in the United States of America.

And then we talk about corruption, and there is personal corruption and then there is stuff that affects the people, Mr. MEEK, and what is happening here is with the Medicare prescription drug plan, for example.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Corruption tax.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. There is a corruption tax that is being levied on the American people because you pay for the end result. The American people pay, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day. When a Medicare negotiator, the head of the Medicare program, is negotiating the Medicare prescription drug program that costs \$700 billion and at the same time is negotiating his lobbying job that he is going to go to when he is done working for the Federal Government and the Medicare prescription drug plan is a mess. When the oil industry gets \$12 billion in corporate welfare and they have the highest profits they have ever had, setting records, and who pays at the end of the day? The American consumer. And we cannot get enough money to people who are trying to get heating oil and lower gas costs.

So from the budget to the execution of Katrina and the war, failing to balance the budget, borrowing money

from China and Japan, giving away corporate welfare to the oil industry and the health care industry at the cost to the American taxpayers, two of the most profitable industries in the world, and at the same time when members of this administration are not only negotiating that bill but are negotiating personal contracts for themselves, there is something wrong here and we need to fix it.

And the Democrats have a plan because if it were not for their behavior, we would be able to implement our Innovation Agenda that would go on and create millions of jobs in this country. We would incentivize research and development with our R&D tax credit that we have in here. We would be able to double the funding for the National Science Foundation for more research and development that the private sector could come in and benefit from. We could do all these things, but we need to ask the American people politely but forcefully we want a chance to govern this country because we have the ideas and commitment to make this happen.

Mr. Speaker, other Members of this House can get a hold of our information and our charts that we have used today at www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

Mr. MEEK, do you have any closing remarks?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. No. Mr. RYAN, I just want to make sure that the Members know that they can get all the charts and information that we shared today off of that Web site starting tomorrow, sir. Thank you.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Wonderful.

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SODREL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, this Member appreciates the privilege to address you, Mr. Speaker, and to stand on the floor of the people's House, the United States House of Representatives, and convey some thoughts that I think need to be shared with you, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully picked up by the American people.

As I listen to the presentation and delivery that continually comes here on this floor night after night, Mr. Speaker, and as I analyze the tone and the attitude and the lament that flows continually from the other side of the aisle, I hear this constant strain, this constant strain of, and this is a quote, "It would be different if we were in charge, but we are not in charge," meaning the minority party.

But I am going to say this, that the members of the minority party have the same individual responsibilities as the members of the majority party. Each one of us is $\frac{1}{435}$ th of this task that we have here, $\frac{1}{435}$ th of the total voice of the American people, designed

by our Founding Fathers, written into our Constitution, drafted in such a way that we do redistricting in America and we do so every 10 years. We draw new lines. We make sure that each of us represents pretty close to the same number of people, approximately 600,000 people. And the voice when you hear me speak, Mr. Speaker, is the voice, hopefully, of the 600,000 people in western Iowa that I have the honor to represent. And I would like to think that when the voice of any of us steps down here and speaks, it is the voice of the collective opinions of their constituents within the districts of all the Members of this House of Representatives.

If one listened to this debate here on the floor night after night after night, one could easily, an uninformed person, come to the conclusion that if you are a member of the Democrat Party, if you are a member of the minority party, you are really powerless to do anything about this.

Take, for example, the case in point, the alleged \$9 billion that is wasted in construction in Iraq. And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that I came to the floor the night before last, and I spent perhaps 55 minutes outlining the effort in the Middle East, the effort in Iraq, and particularly the construction projects that have been initiated there. I led a CODEL over to the Middle East and particularly into Iraq for the very purpose to identify, follow through, observe the projects that had been initiated, those that had been constructed, to go in and probe and ask questions and get a sense of where those dollars, that \$18.5 billion that was part of an overall appropriations bill, where they went, how they were spent, under what conditions, and what are the projects that have been initiated and the projects that have been completed.

I did not bring the poster over here tonight that has that chart on it, Mr. Speaker, but I do bring it in my memory. And as I discussed this with the United States Army, who had a responsibility for somewhere in the neighborhood of \$13 billion in those projects, they have initiated over 3,300 projects with those dollars. They have completed over 2,200 projects with those dollars, and there remains another 1,100 projects that are either in the process of construction right now, soon to be completed, or they will soon be initiated, and the last projects will be completed some time after the first of next year. They will be the last pieces of that fallen place.

And I heard the statement on the floor the night before last that all of that money was wasted. All of it. So if it is not even going to be qualified that one single dollar out of \$18.5 billion went to something good, I wonder how much value one would put on the rest of the statements that are made by that side of the aisle and by that "informative" team, and I put that in quotes, Mr. Speaker.