

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

□ 1715

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to address the House once again. We would like to thank the Democratic leadership, Leader PELOSI, and also Mr. STENY HOYER, Democratic whip, Mr. JAMES CLYBURN, who is our chairman, and our vice chairman and also our steering committee that is working towards making sure that we head in the right direction as Americans.

Working in a bipartisan way, I think, is very, very important for the development of our country; and I had an opportunity to talk to our vice chair, Mr. LARSON, a little earlier today, and he was very excited about hopefully, maybe in this second stage of the 109th Congress, Mr. Speaker, we can work in a bipartisan way on behalf of the American people.

As you know, the 30-something Working Group comes to the floor every time we get an opportunity to come to the floor to talk about issues that are facing everyday Americans and projects that we should be working on in a bipartisan way. We also share not only with the Members but with the American people our efforts on this side, being in the minority here in this body, being a few numbers behind the Republican numbers here that are Members of this House, of how we would govern, how we would stand on behalf of the American people, how we would make sure that those individuals that punch in every day to go to work and know what it means to take a 15-minute break in the morning and one in the afternoon and a solid 30 minutes of lunch, if they get that; and to give voice to those seniors and those veterans that have served our country.

We said we would uphold the commitment to them of lifelong health care and making sure that we are there for them, because they have allowed us to salute one flag today, Mr. Speaker. Those individuals that are getting sand in their teeth right now, our men and women in uniform right now in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world, the Horn of Africa, as we start working this effort against terrorism, I think it is important we give voice to them; the families that are looking for how they are going to make ends meet on their health care needs.

On this side of the aisle we have many proposals that are stuck in committee, Mr. Speaker, and also proposals that will never see the light of day on this floor. Not because there is not a great effort on this side, not only in the area of ideas, but forward-leaning, hard facts of how we can provide health care for not only small businesses to offer to their employees, but also for individuals that would like to make sure their children can grow up healthy.

So I feel very good, Mr. Speaker, about the position of the Democratic Caucus within the House. The American people feel very good about it, and I think it is important that we allow the American people to see an opportunity for us to work in a bipartisan way.

Last time I was on the floor, Mr. Speaker, along with Mr. RYAN and Mr. DELAHUNT, we talked about the House Democrats innovation agenda. And in that agenda we talk about broadband access for all Americans, not just for some Americans. We talk about the fact that we need more scientists and math teachers in our classrooms, and that is going to be accomplished within a short period of time.

We also gave quotes from private sector company presidents and CEOs that are literally begging this Congress to move forward as it relates to our agenda and innovation. We talk about innovation. We are talking about preparing not only this generation, but the next generation to not compete against the next county, not compete against the next state, not even competing with one another as it relates to Americans, but to make sure that America stays ahead of or parallel to other countries and what they are doing.

There is a great deal of frustration out there, Mr. Speaker, of many Americans that are concerned about the fact that they cannot get a job. They try to train themselves. They try to educate themselves, but they cannot get a job because we are bringing individuals over from other countries to be able to fill those jobs because we have not stepped up to the plate to incentivize economically many of the citizens of the United States of America to be able to afford the education they need to rise to the occasion that many of these companies call for.

Competition is fierce, and the last thing that we should be doing, especially in this budget as we look at it and, Mr. Speaker, we are going to talk a little bit about the budget too today. But as we start looking at the decisions that are made here in Washington, D.C., it brings about a great deal of frustration on behalf of many of us here, especially on the Democratic side of the aisle.

I could say some of my colleagues on the Republican side, just a few of them, are very concerned with the direction that the Republican majority is taking us.

Now, we talk a lot about "leadering up," making sure that we do what our constituents sent us up here to do. They did not send us up here to create a K Street project. They did not send us up here to be able to have the President's back as it relates to special port deals. They sent us up here to represent them. And I think it is important that they get their votes' worth.

And I think it is also important for the American people to pay very close attention, and I do mean very close at-

tention, because if the 30-something Working Group has anything to do with it, Mr. Speaker, I mean we want to reveal all of the secrets that may be held in the dark halls of Congress that may have a reverse effect on what the American people have asked for out of its government.

And I think it is important also that we give light to the democratic ideas, which should be bipartisan ideas, but we know that the majority party has not accepted a bipartisan spirit on many efforts that we are pushing for as it relates to health care, many efforts that we push for as it relates to the budget, the direction this country is going to go financially. Many of the issues as it relates to education and, in some instances, as it relates to foreign policy, as it relates to our troops, as it relates to those families that are here, also as it relates to veterans. So there are a number of issues that we should be coming together on that we are prepared to work on.

We have legislation on this side of the aisle to increase transparency as it relates to the legislative process and how we function ethically here within this House. But there is not a bipartisan spirit at this time to be able to genuinely move forward in a way that we can give the American people what they need.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I hold up almost, I would call, an executive copy of the Democratic side Innovation Plan. This is not a plan that, the ink is pretty dry on this plan. It has been around for 3, 4 months, and it has been in the works for a very long time now. It is not just Democratic ideas. They are American ideas to move us forward.

We ask and we challenge the Republican majority to do what we want to do. We wish that we could have this on the floor right now, and if we had anything to do with it as it relates to being in the majority of this House, we would perform just like we performed on the budget.

I would say that the Members can pick up a copy of this, if they want to get a copy of it, the American people too, at www.HouseDemocrats.gov. You can download it. It is on a PDF file. You can feel free to take a look at it, and we look forward to hearing from many of you as it relates to how we can work together.

The President talked about innovation, but we have to do more than talk about innovation; we have to do something with it. The President's budget does not speak towards innovation.

Have you ever heard the saying, Mr. Speaker, You put your money where your mouth is? Well, in this case we are not putting our money where our mouth is. We are putting rhetoric where our mouth is. The Republican majority is in charge. They are also going to go through a long budget process. They say trust me, trust me, trust me.

Well, I think as it relates to how we iron out the facts here, Mr. Speaker in

the remaining time that we have, and I must say, Mr. RYAN will be back here claiming another hour in between for us to have an opportunity to really be able to drive this issue home.

Trust us: When you start talking about special port deals, until it was revealed to the American people, it was going to be business as usual here in Washington, D.C. And I can tell you that being from a city that one of these ports were going to be handed over to a foreign nation that has a checkered past it is working on and trying to improve its accountability in the effort against terrorism, I think it is important for us to remind ourselves that the ports, our ports especially, here in the United States, have a lot to do with our economic outcome. And I think it is also important to even reflect on how easy it is to allow foreign governments and foreign companies to have free rein in our country.

And I think it is important and it is disturbing to me as an American, let alone a Member of Congress, to see time after time, example after example of special deals, back-room talks, things that individuals would not even come out under the lights here on the floor to talk about until they have to. And the American people have spoken. They are concerned.

But what I am disturbed about, Mr. Speaker, Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. RYAN, I am concerned about the fact that the President is saying, Well, I have not changed my mind. I know there will be a 45-day review. The White House did release a statement saying that we agree that there should be a 45-day review.

Hello, Mr. Speaker. That is the law. And I think it is important for everyone to understand that making laws and carrying out what is on U.S. Code statutes, that it is important that we abide by it. I mean, oh, well, goodness, you mean to tell me we have to follow the law this time?

Mr. RYAN, I have been talking, maybe for the last 10 minutes about "trust us." We can run this government, we know how to run this government; that is what the majority is saying. But time after time, again, not just quietly here within the halls of Congress, but it is revealed to the American people. I am concerned about what else is going on that we do not know about right now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, that has really been the problem here. And I thank the gentleman, and I want to congratulate you, as your partner down here at the 30-somethings, for your recent election to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation as their chairman; and I want to congratulate you, only in your second term to receive that distinguished honor. But I agree with you 100 percent.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman would yield for a moment.

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. I just also want to concur and extend my congratulations

to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK). That is a high honor and one that the gentleman is very worthy of; and those of us who belong to the 30-something group want to express our pride. Great job. We expect big things.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thanks to you both for your kind remarks.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Wait a minute. He did not yield to you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, we are not going to focus on this right now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. He did not yield to you.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I did not yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, let me just say this, because I do not want you to get too far off on that. I want to thank the board members of the foundation for seeing fit to allow me to do it. And we are going to continue to do the good things we have been doing.

We provide internship opportunities for African American kids to come to Capitol Hill, be exposed to something that, for generations, they were not exposed to. We provide fellowships to many of the folks in research, desperately needed research on health and a number of other issues. So there will be things that we will continue to do as we move on.

But thank you so much, gentlemen. I appreciate it. And I thank the board members and also the Members. Thank you.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, you are our guy.

But back to the reason we are here, the issue of "trust us." And all we have to do, really is look at the facts. And I really believe that the Republican majority, they may believe that they are actually doing the right thing. I do not think there is any malice. I do not think they hate people. I do not think they are bad people. Many of them on the other side are our friends.

What I do argue, Mr. Speaker, is that the Republican Party is void of any knowledge about how to execute government. And I believe they do not have the ideals necessary to advance this government and this country in the 21st century. They just do not have them. They are just stuck, I think, in an era that no longer exists. Their old phrases no longer apply to how society is today. And so all they have, quite frankly, Mr. MEEK, is to say, "Trust us."

But when we look at Katrina and the fact that there are 11,000 trailers sitting in Hope, Arkansas, worth \$300 million that are now in the mud because they did not know how to deliver them or they did not know where they went, or they did not know where they should go, meanwhile people are still homeless down there. That means you do not know how to administer government.

When you start a \$700 billion prescription drug program and you do not allow for any kind of negotiation down of the drug prices, that means you do not know how to execute government.

When you lose \$9 billion in Iraq and you get a Three Stooges routine that, you got it, I mean you got it, I mean Curly got it, no one knows where \$9 billion is, it is just example after example after example that this outfit does not know how to execute government.

And when you have spent, as the Republican majority has, the last 10 or 15 or quite frankly, since President Reagan, running down government, it does not work. Government is the problem. And then you actually need it, and the outfit who hates government doesn't know how to execute it in a way that is meaningful.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If my friend would yield.

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is, I think, such a valid point. There was a recent interview by Brian Williams of ABC News with the former head of FEMA. Do you remember Mike Brown, also known as "Brownie" to President Bush?

Well, during the course of that interview, for the first time, I would suggest, there was much new information revealed by Mr. Brown. Do you remember when there was confusion as to when the President was first informed about the potential destruction of Hurricane Katrina? And the President claimed that, Well, he saw it for the first time on TV? Well, Mr. Brown has a totally different version of that particular scenario.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Sure.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Maybe that version is different now since he is no longer on the payroll of the Department of Homeland Security. I do not know. Maybe.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I think we have to obviously factor into the account that he was kept as a consultant after he was fired from the payroll, and he is now no longer on the payroll of the American taxpayer. So maybe that is part of the basis for his new-found candor.

But he claims that he had a conference call with President Bush and a variety of officials, both at the Federal, the State and the local level where he articulated his grave concern that in his gut this was going to be one of the most devastating natural disasters ever to be experienced in our history. And clearly, his gut was right on that particular occasion.

Let me just, if I may, for several minutes, just read excerpts of that particular interview. This is Brian Williams. I want to ask you, Why didn't you shout it from the mountain tops? Or do you feel that you did?

I told everybody in that conference, and this is Mr. Brown's response, the President, Chertoff, the State, New Orleans, my gut tells me this is the big one. I want to push everything forward as far as we can. I want to jam up supply lines. I want to cut bureaucratic red tape. I want to do everything that we can.

So what date did the President first hear your voice?

The first time was probably on Saturday before landfall, August 27. But the alarm bells were being sounded on Sunday, prior to landfall, because not only was I having conferences with the President on the telephone, but he was also on the videoconference with all of the State emergency managers, all of the Federal departments and agencies, and listened in to the entire conversation, including the Director of the National Hurricane Centers' warnings.

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And so when we see trailers in Hope, Arkansas, and you made that allusion, Mr. RYAN, that some of them may not be fit for families anymore because of the rot that the weather has caused, whom do we get angry at?

First of all, you can get mad at me, said Mr. Brown, if you want, but I think we ought to get mad at Congress, we ought to get mad at the President, we ought to get mad at Secretary Chertoff. "I raised the flag, Mr. President, and I told you that FEMA was being marginalized."

Mr. RYAN, this absolutely segues into your observation that they have brought government agencies down to the point where they are now ineffective. They are practically incapable of delivering basic services in times of emergency.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I just want to say to the gentleman, one, how much I agree with you. And two is we are not saying that government is the only answer in many situations. It is not. In many situations it needs to get out of the way. Maybe it does need to be a bit smaller. But it has responsibilities, and certain responsibilities are not being met under this administration because of an utter and total disrespect for government in general, and this outfit comes with the same old ideas that are not applicable today, and this is the kind of execution of government that you get. You get 11,000 trailers in Hope, Arkansas, with nowhere to put them.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But you asked, Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK, about the reaction of the White House to issues that ought to be part of our public discourse. And the response is "trust me."

How can we trust the executive branch when we have a former director that stands up now and says, Mr. President, on at least a couple of occasions and on numerous occasions to your staff, I raised the flag and told you that FEMA was being marginalized and was not going to be able to respond and, in fact, was on a path to failure. I told you so, Mr. President.

Where was the executive branch? Where was this Republican majority in terms of exercising its responsibility to oversee and to hold accountable executive agency performance? It was not there because this Republican majority, in its management of this Congress, has done nothing more than simply to rubber-stamp the administration's proposals.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, I can guarantee you this: on some given Tuesday morning about a year and a couple of months ago, I guarantee you that every last one of our constituents, if we had a sign out saying that we will rubber-stamp bad ideas, we would not be in Congress. We just would not be here. And time after time the Republican majority does it.

I mean, let us just get a rubber stamp. Staff, can we get a rubber stamp? I want to get a rubber stamp and the ink should be red, and it should say: We have the President's back no matter what. No matter what. If it puts our country in debt to other countries, no matter what. If it comes down to a lack of intelligence and putting our men and women in harm's way, no matter what, we are with the President. The American people, we will tell them something when it comes down to election time through marketing commercials, but we are here to serve the President.

I mean, that is what I am hearing from the majority side. Imagine, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, before I yield to you, if there was a Democratic President in the White House right now? Imagine. For far less this Congress, Mr. President, moved to impeach the President of the United States, for far less.

So, Mr. DELAHUNT, I am so glad that you took us through memory lane about what people have said, especially when it comes down to Mr. Brownie, whom we do not necessarily hold high up as a person that we take a great deal of input from, Mr. Brownie; but I think it is important that we understand exactly and spell out to the Members and the American people what they have said, what they are doing. And our purpose for being here is to say that, listen, a lot of this would not be going on if the oversight were there.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If we did not have a rubber-stamp attitude towards this administration in this Congress, believe me, we would be delivering a service to the American people that all of us could embrace.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am a little out of practice with my word-in-edgewise with you guys.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have missed you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is good to be back with my 30-something friends and to engage in this dialogue.

What we have been asking for months is, where is the outrage? Where was the outrage about issue after issue that has come to light since Hurricane Katrina wreaked the devastation that it did?

I mean, just by way of example, in the Davis committee report that was just issued, where were the top White House officials on the day Katrina struck? Now, we knew in advance of Katrina, and I live in south Florida, where the hurricane center is. We had days of watching Katrina approach the gulf coast. So it is not like we did not

know a category five hurricane was approaching the gulf coast. On the day Katrina struck, President Bush, we know, was on vacation in Crawford, Texas. Vice President CHENEY, a little known fact, was fly fishing at his ranch in Wyoming. This was on the day Katrina struck. Chief of Staff Andrew Card was vacationing at his lakefront summer home in Maine, and Homeland Security adviser Francis Townsend was also vacationing in Maine.

Now, why would they leave a relatively junior official in charge of the situation room in the White House when you have a cat five hurricane bearing down on probably what they knew, they knew, was the most vulnerable region in the country when it came to hurricane preparedness and what they knew would likely be the aftermath?

Why did President Bush and other top administration officials insist that the levees did not break until Tuesday when now we know, with the Davis report and with Mr. Brown's revelation, that he told them the day Katrina struck, the night that Katrina struck?

Mr. DELAHUNT. The day before, Debbie.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. They knew.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In his own words.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I know what the House rules are, and I know what they constrain us from doing, but they knew. And that is what Michael Brown testified. They knew. He told them. And now he is free from the constraints from working for the administration, and let us acknowledge that the four of us have been fairly critical of Mr. Brown. We meted out our own share of criticism of his performance. But now that he has been freed of his ties to the administration, and we all acknowledge that when you work for an administration, unfortunately, sadly, with this administration in particular, loyalty to your dying day is supposed to be the most valuable, particularly if they are continuing to sign your paycheck.

He made it clear when they were no longer signing his paycheck, 60 days after he was supposedly no longer with the Department, that he issued warning after warning to Secretary Chertoff, to the President. He indicated that he personally spoke with the President and told him that there was a levee break, that there was significant damage and he sounded the alarm bells. And the President was on vacation in Crawford, Texas. The Vice President was fly fishing in Wyoming. Homeland Security adviser Francis Townsend was in Maine, and his chief of staff was at home in Maine.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And they want us to trust them.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Trust them. They have got our back.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And a lot of what they were trying to say, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, was how were we to know. We found out they did know.

They were warned. And then not only were they warned, but they were spread out all over the country saying our responsibility is to execute this particular agency at this particular time and we should all be here. That is a level of incompetence that I think is unsurpassed.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Indifference, incompetence, corruption, cronyism, it is all a consistent pattern. One would think when they got hit hard in the face with the criticism and the visceral reaction of the American people in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the response to their indifference that they would learn. But now, no. They were not just surprised, but astonished at the American people's reaction to their indifference on this port deal. I mean, you go from one thing to the other. The indifference and the callous disregard for what the American people's needs are in terms of security in a natural disaster or a potential man-made disaster. Their indifference and insensitivity is just astonishing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. How many times do we hear from our friends on the Republican side that government needs to run like a business, it needs to be flexible and this and that? This is an atrocity. This business would be bankrupt if you ran it the way we are running FEMA. If that was a business, it would be bankrupt. The war in Iraq, in that execution, the administration of that war, after we conquered Baghdad, that business would be bankrupt. It would go belly up.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And the execution of the Medicare prescription drug benefit, the so-called part D, what has occurred, let me suggest, is that the Republican Party in both this branch as well as in the White House, but particularly in the White House, has developed a habit, a habit of incompetence and a habit that could have been, in my judgment, interrupted and dealt with if we had aggressive oversight and accountability by Members of the House and Members of the United States Senate.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. No doubt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But rather than doing that, when you speak to Democrats who are ranking members of full committees and subcommittees about conducting investigations, whether it be into energy, whether it be into the reconstruction of Iraq and the magnitude of corruption that is part and parcel of that reconstruction, the list goes on and on and on, and they say no. And that is why we are being embarrassed today. That is why someone like Michael Brown, the former head of FEMA, stands up and says, Mr. President, you have marginalized FEMA. We do not have the capacity to do it. I told you so. And yet not a word, not an agreement to work in a bipartisan fashion with Democrats to ensure that the mistakes that have been made are not replicated, are not continually being made to the detriment of the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And for our friends in the business community, it is like having a board of directors or having shareholders. If the people running the business are not doing the job, Mr. MEEK, then the board of directors may have to make a decision. Well, the United States Congress, Mr. MEEK, is the board of directors.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is us.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is our responsibility, to say if the executive branch is not executing their responsibilities the way they should, then we have to intervene and make some big-time decisions.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And, Mr. RYAN, those decisions would be made if we had NANCY PELOSI as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, if we had the Democrat leadership team.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. But what do we have?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We have the Republican Congress, the Republican majority. We have the rubber stamp Republican Congress.

The staff is trying to find some red ink for me. They brought some black ink, but I need some red ink. We need to stamp this bigger. So I think we will get that by the end of the week.

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But I think it is important, Mr. RYAN, that we point out to the American people and also to the majority that enough is enough. It is not their country, it is our country, it is all of our country. And the bottom line is we cannot sit idly by and let historians say some Members of Congress did not participate in trying to stop what is happening right now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is a great point. We will get criticism levied at us from the majority, saying how dare the 30-Somethings go out there night after night, sometimes 2 hours a night, and all they are is critical.

Wait a minute. Are you asking us to just sit by and let all this happen, and no one is providing a little sunlight on this? I hate to tell them, but Article I, Section 1 of the Constitution creates this body, Mr. MEEK, this body, and the problem I think with the majority in the House and in the Senate, the Republican majority in the House and in the Senate, is they are too coachable. They are too coachable, because the President coaches them, and he basically says "We need X, Y and Z," and it goes out and happens. They are too coachable.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They have the desire and the will to be coached by this administration into a fiscal nightmare, and that is what has happened, and that is what is happening throughout.

Mr. RYAN, would you please get that chart, because I think it is time for us to really get into the nitty-gritty, because folks do not understand, Mr. Speaker, they just think, Mr. DELAHUNT, that the 30-Somethings, we

just kind of get together over a hot dog and a Diet Coke and say, Well, what are we going to say today? What are we going to share with Members today?

But, guess what, Mr. Speaker? We have third-party validators, and we have the facts here and we want to share that at this time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The execution of government includes a lot of different things, including how administrative agencies are run and Medicare and the prescription drug program are run. But the one issue that highlights the incompetence of the Republican majority and the Republican President is what we have been doing as far as our national debt and our annual deficits.

Now, this chart, and this is really one of the great charts, it is good, shows increases in the Federal debt in foreign borrowing. So way out here in the blue is the increase in the national debt from 2001 to 2005. Over \$1 trillion, \$1.18 trillion was the increase in the national debt just in the past 4 years. Of that debt, of that increase, \$1.16 trillion was borrowed from foreign sources, Mr. DELAHUNT. Right here.

You want to know how much we borrowed from U.S. interests, from domestic borrowing? Right here. \$0.02 trillion. I mean, we are mortgaging our future to foreign interests, the Japanese Government, the Chinese Government.

Mr. DELAHUNT. OPEC.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you. We are no longer controlling our own destiny.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Isn't it ironic, if the gentleman would yield, that we speak about energy independence, and I think that there is a consensus that clearly it is in our national security to develop an energy program that weans us from being dependent on foreign sources of energy, with a particular focus on OPEC.

Well, I wonder if we can wean ourselves from borrowing tens of billions, hundreds of billions of dollars, from foreign sources like OPEC, like the Chinese, like the Japanese.

We have now created here in the United States, and I will utilize President Bush's phrase, an "ownership society." Well, the reality is that under his leadership, with the approval of this Congress, we have created an ownership society in the United States. Unfortunately, the owners are the Japanese, the Koreans, the Chinese and OPEC.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. OPEC.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. OPEC.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Because of the economic policies. So what do we gain? What do we gain from securing our independence in terms of energy and at the same time become increasingly reliant on other nations, including potential adversaries and competitors like China to provide subsidies for tax cuts?

To me, that makes no sense. We lose our political flexibility. We cede, I would suggest, some of our sovereignty when we allow ourselves to become borrowers from foreign nations.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. DELAHUNT, if you do not mind, I want to share another chart. This is the public debt held by China. One country, in 2000, they held \$62 billion. In 2005, they hold \$257 billion in public debt. This is when the President took office.

Now look at it. With the rubber stamp, Congress has just, time after time after time, continued to exacerbate this problem.

Now, look, in June of 2002, the Republicans increased the debt limit by \$450 billion. That means they are okaying the Treasury to go out and borrow more money. In May of 2003, they increased it again by another \$984 billion. In November of 2004, they did another \$800 billion. Now we have got a pending increase that we know is going to happen because this runaway train isn't getting stopped any time soon, another \$781 billion.

That is \$3 trillion in debt that the Republican House and Senate and Republican White House went out and borrowed from foreign countries.

Now, who is patriotic now? You want to call this patriotism, mortgaging the future of the country to the Japanese and Chinese Governments and—

Mr. MEEK of Florida. OPEC.

Again, Mr. RYAN, it is just amazing. I want to put my Secretary of Treasury's picture up, Mr. John W. Snow. Like I say, he is an accountant type of figure within our government. We appreciate his service to our country, appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate.

You know, you have seen this letter before about where Secretary Snow wrote one of our respected Senators on the other side basically saying, "I will be unable to continue to finance government operations if we don't raise the debt ceiling." It said, "Currently the limit is \$8.184 trillion, and we will breach that by February 2006."

Well, the month of February has passed, and, guess what? We got another letter right here dated February 16, 2006, to the Honorable Ranking Member JOHN SPRATT on the Democratic side on the Budget Committee. This is what it says. I am going to read it slowly.

On December 29, Mr. RYAN, that is this letter right here, I want to make sure the Members see it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This was last year.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. This was actually the 29th. Mr. Speaker, on the 29th of December, I was back in Miami with my family. We were finished polishing off what was left over from Christmas dinner, what have you, looking forward to New Year's. You all were doing the family thing.

But that letter was written saying we need to raise the debt ceiling, when no one was paying attention.

Now it comes down to, "On December 29, I wrote the Congress regarding the need to increase the statutory debt limit. Because the debt limit has not risen, I must inform the Congress, pur-

suant to 5 U.S.C. 8438(h)(2) that in my determination, by reason of the public debt limit, I will be unable to fully invest in the Government Security Investment Fund, called the G Fund, of the Federal Employees Retirement System in special interest-bearing Treasury securities beginning on February 16."

Mr. RYAN and Mr. DELAHUNT, this letter was written on February 16. So that means that the Secretary, Mr. Snow, had to suspend. He waited until the last day. He didn't say in 2 weeks I am going to have to suspend payments to the G Fund, which is the retirement system for Federal employees. He waited until the day he could no longer wait any longer to write this letter. He is informing the Congress on that day.

The statute governing the G Fund explicitly authorized the Secretary of Treasury to suspend the investment to the G Fund to avoid breaching the statutory debt limit.

Now, let me just tell you, he goes on and on and on. But the bottom line is, gentlemen, that the Secretary now has to exercise his statutory authority to freeze payments to the G Fund.

I want to just say to the Federal employees, because some of them work here in this building, within this Congress, he goes on in the second paragraph saying, "We can replenish it when you raise the debt ceiling."

I want to tell you something, and I want to let the Secretary know on behalf of the Republican Congress, even though I am a Democrat, if we were in charge, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't have to ink up this rubber stamp, and I am going to do it on behalf of the Republican majority and just go ahead and rubber-stamp it for him, because, guess what? That debt ceiling is going to be raised.

I guarantee you, just like before, in the past, every Democrat will vote against raising that debt ceiling, because it will be giving our country away to other countries financially. That seems to not be a value of the Republican majority.

I just want to point something out. I have already read this letter.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if my friend would yield for just 1 minute. What if one day those nations that are purchasing and buying our bonds, our Treasury notes, Treasury bills, for some reason they decided, maybe because of some political reason, they decided not to purchase in the financial markets American debt instruments? What would happen to our economy? Does anybody have that answer? I mean, I have my own theories, but I am not sure. Could they come over and foreclose? I wonder what they would do.

Now, here is Red China. Red China. It is kind of ironic when you think of Red China, and here we are piling up this red ink, Red China piling up red ink and it is all American red ink. And in 5 years, we have gone from owing the Chinese, Mr. Speaker, \$84 billion, to over \$200 billion.

I listen to the debates on the floor of this House, I listen to them in committee, and when I hear my Republican colleagues and my friends on the other side speak about China, it is always with trepidation, it is concern about Taiwan, it is looking at China as a potential threat. And yet here we are, knocking on the door of Mao Zedong's China saying, you know what? Would you buy this instrument from us? Give us your dollars.

I am telling you, I think we are putting not only our economy at risk, but we are putting our national security at risk. It is like having a Middle East gulf state operating American ports without doing due diligence. That is exactly what it is, Mr. Speaker. We are giving the country away.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, if I may reclaim my time, I am going to tell you right now, you are talking about giving the country away. We are at the point where half of our debt is going to be owned by foreign nations.

□ 1800

If I may, I just want to, if I can, like you said, bear with me for a minute. I want to make sure that all of you can bear with me for a minute. You have seen this chart before.

The President and this Republican Congress. Well, let me just go ahead and put the Republican Congress on here. We want to make sure that they get good credit for this, because the President could not do it by himself. \$1.05 trillion has been borrowed by this administration within 4 years between 2001–2005.

Forty-two Presidents before President Bush and this Republican Congress were only able to borrow \$1.01 trillion: 224 years. World War I, Mr. Speaker, Vietnam, Korea, Great Depression. You name it. Hurricanes. You name it. Earthquakes. You name it. \$1.01 trillion, 224 years. \$1.05 trillion and counting, if the Republican Congress is not stopped.

What does this mean, Mr. RYAN? Well, this is a map of our great country, the United States of America. We even thought enough to make sure that everyone is in there, Florida Keys and Hawaii and the great State of Alaska. What does it mean? Well, in that \$1.16 trillion that Mr. RYAN talked about as it relates to the foreign investment, Korea owns a little bit of the American pie coming in at \$56.5 billion of our debt.

Well, we can go on down. Germany. Everybody has a piece of this thing thanks to this Republican Congress and the President of the United States. Germany comes in at \$65.7 billion. This bothers me putting these countries on this map, but I just want to make sure, because it is up to us to break this thing down so not only the Members know exactly what they are doing to the country, but not for the country, and they understand exactly what is going on here, because I do not want anyone to say on our watch that this

happened and we did not try to do something about it.

Now, the UK, quote unquote our friend and partner. They own a piece of the American pie at \$223.2 billion, buying our debt. Meanwhile, the President says, follow me. The Republican Congress says, we know exactly what we are doing. Taiwan. Taiwan. People laugh, oh, Taiwan this, Taiwan what. But guess what? They own \$71.3 billion of the American pie and our debt. That means that they own something.

The President says he wants an ownership society. Hello. It is going to other nations. Our neighbor, Canada. I am going to put them right here: \$53.8 billion that they own of our debt. That means that we owe them; financially we owe them.

Just got finished talking about Red China, Communist China. A lot of our jobs are in China. A lot of Americans have to train Chinese workers to take over their jobs, and then they are fired and they are put on some sort of government assistance.

China comes in at a whopping \$249.8 billion. A whopping \$249.8 billion, using a lot of our money because they have a positive trade with us, and we have negative trade with them. But better yet, you let the Republican majority tell you, and the President tells you, oh, we know exactly what we are doing, do not worry, we got you.

OPEC nations. Mr. DELAHUNT, I want you to talk further about this, including Saudi Arabia, comes in at \$67.8 billion of the American apple pie, the American apple pie.

And Japan, the island of Japan I must add, comes in big time, \$682.8 billion. \$682.8 billion. Mr. RYAN, it is not the Meek Report, the Delahunt Report or the Ryan Report. This is reality. And these numbers, Mr. Speaker, as you talk about third-party validators, are from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

And I guarantee you, Mr. Snow does not report to us or anyone that has a Democrat behind their name. And anyone, I challenge them on the Republican side to march out here and start talking about how they are going to explain this, how they are going to explain selling America to other countries.

How they are going to explain with a straight face, come in here and say, we should make tax cuts permanent for billionaires, meanwhile we are borrowing from other nations to pay for it. How do you explain that, Mr. DELAHUNT? So when you start talking about special deals on ports and folks come out and say, well, I did not know anything about that. Wow, that is not anything new.

I did not know anything about the fact that there were not any weapons of mass destruction. I am tired of folks saying they do not know and we were wrong. I am tired of that. That is not the American way, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We did not know anything about Katrina being a dev-

astating natural disaster. We did not know about FEMA not having the resources. We did not know about the lack of coordination. You know what? You know what? They know nothing. They do not know how to govern.

And that is what I would describe as a habit that has developed over time, a habit of incompetence.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. No doubt about it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, you know what OPEC means and what they owe? I just want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, in case someone may say, well, they pointed out the obvious. Some may say the negative, if you ask the Republican majority. Oh, they are so negative. Well, guess what? We believe in telling the American people the truth.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Find a positive way to explain that. Our friends on the other side who say we are always being negative. Figure out, if they can explain to us a positive way of saying that this country is being sold off to other countries piece by piece.

If they can find a positive way of explaining that, we are open to it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There you go. I do not how to do it.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am just thinking here. You know how the political pundits divide this country up into blue States and red States. Well, you know, if you would bring back that previous poster, you know, you ought to paint those numbers there in red, because here is what is happening to the United States. It is becoming all red. It is becoming all red while we sit here and whistle in the dark.

Because we are indebting ourselves and our future to foreign nations and that map says it all, Mr. MEEK, says it all.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, let me just real quickly, because our hour is coming to an end. We, the Democrats, Mr. SPRATT who is our Democratic leader on the Budget Committee, 2006 budget resolution failed 165-264.

Republicans 0-28. The bottom line, no Republicans voted for it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What is that?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. What this is saying is basically that we want to balance the budget, we want to pay as we go, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Before you can spend any money, you have got to find a way to pay for it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Not this borrow money from foreign countries stuff. Again, in Spratt substitute amendment to Resolution 393, 2005 budget, again, voted down 224, not one Republican voted to pay as we go, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I am going to do, Mr. RYAN, when we come back in an hour, I am going to read off other examples, at least five others within the last couple of years. We have tried to put this country on the right track. But guess what? The Republican majority has blocked us.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We heard from the President during the State of the Union address a bunch of fuzzy math, but we are going to balance the budget by 2009.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. No, they are saying that they are going to cut taxes. Only we have balanced the budget, the Democratic Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are going to cut the budget in half by 2009. That reminds me of the old Lou Rawls song, I will see you when I get there. Do you know what I mean?

This is just to put a bow on everything that we have been talking about. When we are paying the interest on all of this debt, you know, we are not borrowing the money from Sky Bank or Home Savings in downtown Warren, Ohio. We are borrowing it from these other countries, and we are paying them debt.

Look what we are doing just on the interest on the debt, Mr. MEEK, Mr. DELAHUNT. This is the net interest we pay in the 2007 budget, what we are going to have to pay, almost \$250 billion just on the interest on all of that money that Mr. MEEK showed you where we are borrowing it from.

But also look what we are not spending it on because of it. Here is education. Here is homeland security. Here is veterans. All of these programs are taking a hit because our friends on the other side do not know how to balance the budget. They waste spending. They lose \$9 billion in Iraq. They waste \$300 billion on 11,000 trailers sitting in the mud in Hope, Arkansas, and meanwhile Pell grants are going up, veterans are asked to pay more, and we cannot take care of our own ports.

We will be back in an hour. But if you want to get a hold of us, Members who are watching this in our offices, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something

Mr. MEEK of Florida. With that, thank you, Mr. RYAN, Mr. DELAHUNT. We would like to thank the Democratic leader for the time.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come before the House this evening with another edition of the Official Truth Squad to, as we have talked about, kind of set the record straight.

I want to thank the Republican leadership and the Republican Conference for allowing me and other Members of our conference to come and talk this evening.

The group that we have just heard, I was a little encouraged at the very beginning, because the tone was a little different, but then they just could not help themselves. They just could not help themselves. So we launched into