

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE ACQUISITION OF THE PAPERS OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I rise to inform the House of the happy news that the "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection," will be archived at Morehouse College, Dr. King's alma mater. The good news is that this collection, widely regarded by leading historians to be among the most important of the 20th century, will remain in Atlanta, Georgia, the city in which Dr. King was born and laid to his final rest.

Valued at over \$30 million, the King collection consists of more than 20,000 square feet of notes, speech drafts, notebooks, canceled cheques, index cards, sermons, and other items obtained by local Atlanta businesses and philanthropists during a last-minute fundraiser. These items, rather than disappearing into private collections, will instead be housed at Morehouse College, an African American liberal arts college and Dr. King's alma mater.

From a blue spiral notebook used in a prison cell to a very early draft of the "I have a Dream" speech, these papers reveal the voice, character, and spiritual tenacity that changed America and continues to inspire freedom-loving people around the world.

Although many, many people worked to make this possible, special thanks are due At-

lanta Mayor Shirley Franklin; Andrew Young, former U.N. Ambassador, Atlanta Mayor, and Member of Congress; and Mr. and Mrs. Kase and Eileen Laval of Houston, Texas. Each of them gave generously of their time and talent and resources to secure the benefits of the Dr. King Collection for the public benefit. I hope they realize the beneficial impact their actions, in preserving for generations to come, access to the thought and ideas of one of the world's most consequential human beings. This is only the most recent example of their commitment to the causes for which Dr. King lived and died.

I also wish to thank the children of Dr. King and Coretta Scott King: Martin III, Yolanda, Dexter, and Bernice. They shared their father and mother with the American people. They lost their father early. They have given the nation a lot. And now they have given the nation more: a treasure trove of history, consisting of more than 7,000 items that include theological writings, index cards with sketched sermon ideas, drafts of an address on being awarded the Nobel prize, and the draft of a eulogy Dr. King began upon learning of the assassination of John Kennedy. Additionally, this collection includes Dr. King's private library of books, most of which are annotated with extensive writing in the margins. The papers also include an early four-page draft of the most famous speech Dr. King delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963.

Dr. King, one of the giants of the last century, will be remembered for his tireless and ceaseless efforts to advance race relations, civil rights, social justice and human rights. We will always look to his words, and our memories, to renew our resolve to find justice and equality for all. Dr. King brought his vision and warmth into every room, and left it imprinted on our souls. His legacy requires us to continue in his stead, and pursue nothing less than true justice.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H. Con. Res. 426. Concurrent resolution recognizing the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Food and Drugs Act for the important service it provides the Nation.

H. Con. Res. 440. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills and a joint resolution of the following titles in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 811. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

S. 2321. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille.

S.J. Res. 40. Joint resolution authorizing the printing and binding of a supplement to, and revised edition of, Senate Procedure.

BLUE DOG COALITION

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

Mr. ROSS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This evening I rise on behalf of the 37-member strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition to discuss a grave concern of ours and that is the Nation's debt. As you walk the Halls of Congress, there is never a doubt whether you are walking past one of the 37 of us that make up the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition because you will see this poster as a welcome mat by each of our doors. As you can see from this poster, today the United States national debt is \$8,346,401,298,731 and some change. For every man, woman and child living in America today, including the children born this hour, their share of the national debt is \$27,905. I might add, a staggering \$27,905. It is what we call the debt tax, D-E-B-T. Mr. Speaker, that is one tax that cannot be cut or eliminated until this Republican Congress and this Republican administration gets its fiscal house in order.

As members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, we are here tonight, Mr. Speaker, to talk about trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. It is hard now to believe, but from 1998 through 2001, this Nation had a balanced budget and the economy was much better. People were saving more. They had good jobs. Today, for those fortunate enough to have a job, many of them have had to leave the good-paying jobs with the good benefits for low-paying jobs with little or no benefits.

It is time to get our fiscal house back in order so we can jump-start this economy, invest in alternative and renewable fuels and bring down the high cost of gasoline, ensure that our children are getting the very best education possible, ensure that health care is affordable and accessible, and ensure that we are doing right by our men and women in uniform and our veterans.

□ 2015

In order to meet what I believe should be America's priorities, we must first get our Nation's fiscal house in order. And we are not doing that. We had deficit spending, record deficits in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and, yes, the projected deficit for fiscal year 2007, you will hear a lot of people refer to it as \$350 billion. The deficit for fiscal year 2007, a lot of people will tell you it is \$350 billion, but it is not. It is not, Mr. Speaker. The real deficit for fiscal year 2007 is \$545 billion.

Why the difference between the \$350 billion and the \$545 billion? It is quite simple. Our Government is borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund to fund this deficit, to fund tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year.

I am now beginning to understand why when I came to Congress in 2001 the first bill I filed was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security Trust Fund. This Republican Congress refused to give me a hearing or a vote on that bill. And now we know why. Because for fiscal year 2007 the real deficit is not \$350 billion as they want you to believe, it is \$540 billion, because the difference is money they are taking from the Social Security Trust Fund with no provision on when or how it gets paid back and no idea where the revenue is going to come from to pay it back.

The national debt. Listen to this. The total national debt in 1789 to 2000 was \$5.67 trillion. But by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to \$10.88 trillion if we continue down this path. That is a doubling. That is a doubling of a 211-year debt in just 10 years.

Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest-growing parts of the Federal budget. And the debt tax, as I refer to it, is one tax that cannot be repealed or cut until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Again the D-E-B-T tax, the debt tax, \$27,905 for every living man, woman and child in this country today. That is what it would take to pay off this massive debt of \$8,346,401,298,731 and, of course, some change.

Why do deficits matter? Deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders who now own 40 percent of our debt.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of more than \$2 trillion of our public debt. Compare this to only \$23 billion foreign holdings back in 1993.

The top 10 current lenders, now get a load of this, think about this. We are passing law after law providing tax cuts to those earning over \$400,000 a year, while cutting Medicaid, while cutting student loans. And where is the revenue coming from? We are borrowing \$1 billion a day. We are spending half a billion dollars a day paying interest on the debt that we have already got, and we are borrowing another billion dollars a day on top of that.

Where is it coming from?

Japan. We owe Japan \$640.1 billion.

China. Our Nation has borrowed \$321.4 billion from China to provide tax cuts in this Nation to those earning over \$400,000 a year.

United Kingdom, \$179.5 billion.

OPEC. Imagine that. Our Nation has borrowed \$98 billion from OPEC.

Korea, \$72.4 billion.

Taiwan, \$68.9 billion.

The Caribbean banking centers, \$61.7 billion.

Hong Kong, \$46.6 billion.

Germany, \$46.5 billion.

Mexico. Our Nation has borrowed \$40.1 billion from Mexico to give tax

cuts in this country to those earning over \$400,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you it is time for us to get our Nation's fiscal house in order, to stop the deficit spending, to pay down this debt and get back to addressing the real needs and the real priorities of America's working families, America's farm families, and America's seniors.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments or questions about what we are discussing tonight dealing with the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and our concern about the debt and the deficit, and as we talk more about accountability this evening, restoring accountability to our Nation's Government, Mr. Speaker, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, I encourage you to e-mail us, sir, at bluedog@mail.house.gov. That is bluedog@mail.house.gov.

Now, I have laid out the problem that this Nation faces. We are not here as members of the 37-member-strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition to simply criticize the Republican leadership for their failures since they took over this House and became the majority, became the ones in charge of this place.

We are here to also offer up solutions, something that I believe too many politicians fail to do. They are quick to criticize, but they are not quick to offer up solutions.

Mr. Speaker, we have a 12-point plan that will cure our Nation's addiction to deficit spending that has been laid out by the Blue Dog Coalition. We will be talking about these 12 points tonight, including a constitutional amendment calling for a balanced budget, among others; and we will also be talking about restoring accountability to our Government.

But at this time I will yield to my friend, a fellow Blue Dog, who comes to us from the State of California. That is the gentleman from California, Congressman JIM COSTA.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join tonight with my fellow Blue Dog, Congressman MIKE ROSS, the gentleman from Arkansas, who does an excellent job on behalf of representing his constituents from the great State of Arkansas.

Tonight, as a fellow Blue Dog member, I want to echo a number of the comments that Congressman ROSS has made, because in that 12-point program that Congressman ROSS will talk more about I believe lies solutions to the problems facing our Nation today, solutions that come to the heart of criteria and qualities that all Americans I think share. Those are accountability, competence and what kind of representation they want to see in their House of Representatives.

It does not matter what party you are a member of in this great Nation of ours. Accountability and competence are characteristics that Americans value throughout our great land.

In coming to the Congress as a new Member and becoming a fellow Blue

Dog, we have had an opportunity to share and really spend a great deal of time in examining the challenges that our Nation finds itself in in getting its fiscal house in order.

Recently, the Blue Dogs, in consultation with a lot of research, uncovered an unpublicized Department of Treasury document that made a report that I think most Americans, unfortunately, are unaware of. This Department of Treasury, run by this administration, using the same tried and true accounting methods that every business in America uses, cast new light on the fiscal severity that our Nation is facing, what some would call a mess.

This Treasury report, filed by the Bush administration, reinforces what the Blue Dogs have been saying for years. One of the startling revelations of this 158-page report indicates by the admission of Secretary Snow that the U.S. deficit, as Congressman ROSS said, under current accounting methods in 2005 was more than twice the amount that is being reported.

As a matter of fact, if you do not take into account, as Congressman ROSS just stated, the Social Security surplus, our fiscal deficit, ladies and gentlemen, is over \$700 billion today. And, yes, we pay the interest on that debt every day. But do not take my word for it. Look at the financial report of the United States Government, 2005.

Because it goes on to say that, in fact, in conjunction with the U.S. Comptroller, that there is no way we can get a clean audit from the books of most of our Federal agencies. Why? Because no one is being held accountable. Congressional leaders are not conducting the oversight hearings that we should do as a part of our responsibility as Members of Congress. And so, frankly, we do not know what the true state of our budget is, because so many of these agencies have not been able to provide the proper audits.

In a letter contained within this report, in this report, David Walker, the Comptroller General of the United States, explains that the model currently used by Government provides a potentially unrealistic and misleading picture of the Federal deficit, its overall performance, the financial conditions and what the future outlook will be for future generations of Americans to come.

The financial report makes it very clear that if we got into honest budgeting today, that in fact we would find ourselves with a much larger deficit than we have today. It goes beyond that to say that, in fact, if you looked at all 26 agencies in the Federal Government, that is on page 23 here, and you asked them for a clean fiscal audit, that over two-thirds of them would not be able to provide that clean fiscal audit.

That obviously is not the kind of condition that Americans want their Federal Government to be in. That is not the kind of operation and management that provides for the true fiscal

accountability and the competency. Competency. Remember, I said accountability and competency are characteristics that American taxpayers care about. They are values and characteristics that really make a difference.

So what we have today is not just a problem with accountability, but it is competence. It is not just the problems in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita with FEMA, but it deals with a budget deficit. It deals with a budget deficit that has been compounded by a trade deficit that has grown by 1,400 percent in the last 4 years.

In 1992, our trade deficit was over \$36 billion. 2005, our trade deficit has grown to over \$670 billion. Along with it, I might add, a lot of American jobs that have been exported overseas.

Let me close my comments, Mr. Speaker, by telling you that, as a new Member of Congress, I had served previously for 24 years in the California legislature. I think I did not come back here to Washington with any Pollyanna view of the world. But I also believe very passionately in representative democracy, when it works well and when it does not work.

I have just recently finished reading a book that I want to recommend to Americans back home. It is called *Flight Club Politics*. It is an accountability of what has occurred in the House of Representatives over the last 15, 20 years.

It did not begin with the Republicans. It involved the Democrats in the late 1980s and 1990s. And notwithstanding the Republican's efforts to pledge to reform the House in 1994 when they took over, the fact of the matter is, as the evolution of this, *Flight Club Politics: How Partisanship is Poisoning the House of Representatives*, has unfortunately, in my opinion, only multiplied the problems that we now have exist today.

We no longer have a system of checks and balances. Under the Republican leadership during the Clinton administration, there were over 1,000 subpoenas of the administration.

□ 2030

Now, one could argue that the Congress was doing its part to provide checks and balances. Unfortunately, by comparison, under the last 5 years, with the Republican administration, there has been less than 10 subpoenas requested of this administration to hold them accountable, regardless of what Department or agency you are talking about.

When you have a view of the world that the only legislation that we can bring to the floor of the House must first pass with a majority of the majority, you are taking away the opportunity to have true bipartisan solutions. And it is one of the reasons, I believe, why today in America one of the fastest growing views of voters in America is "decline to state or independent." So regardless of what party

one must be registered under, people more and more view themselves as independents.

What we have to do today and in the future is to restore bipartisanship to this Congress. The Blue Dogs believe in that. We have to reinforce the opportunities that we don't need a de facto parliamentary system, where there is less focus on checks and balances and one party basically runs the entire government. Those are among the many challenges that we face today.

My colleagues, I am proud to be a member of a group of moderate to conservative Democrats who frankly believe that we must first get our fiscal house in order. How do we do so? We do so with true accountability, we do so with competence in terms of how our Federal Government is run, and we do so by ensuring that our House restores the civility and bipartisan workmanship that is what our founding fathers had in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my colleague and good friend, Mr. ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from California, a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, JIM COSTA, for joining us this evening.

The gentleman mentioned the financial report of the United States Government for 2005. You pointed out that in that the debt is really not, for 2005, it really wasn't \$319 billion; it was really \$760 billion. And I just want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that you understand we are not trying to make things sound worse than they really are, or make up some numbers or anything. The \$760 billion deficit for 2005 is contained here in the financial report of the United States of America, which was published by John Snow, President Bush's Secretary of the Treasury.

Now, how does this financial report say that the deficit is \$760 billion in 2005 when everyone else has been saying it is \$319 billion? And, again, there is no reason to make it any worse than it already is. It was already one of the largest deficits ever in our Nation's history. There is no reason to try to make it worse. But here is a little known fact that very few Members of Congress are even aware of: it is not well published on Capitol Hill.

When the budget rolls out, you will see them bringing it to Capitol Hill with a lot of fanfare. It is about that thick and several volumes. This is quietly brought to Capitol Hill, and not even provided to every Member of Congress. Why is that? Because this is true accounting.

The difference is that the budget uses cash-base accounting, which only the tiniest businesses in America use because it hides future obligations, thus painting, potentially, an unrealistic and misleading picture of the Federal Government's overall performance. That is according to David Walker, the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office.

So when you do cash-base accounting, the deficit for 2005 was \$319 billion.

But in this financial report of the United States of America, as required by law, the Treasury Secretary has to report what the real debt is, the real deficit is, based on accrual accounting. And, Mr. Speaker, accrual accounting is something that most businesses in America are very aware of because it is the method required by law. It is the method required by this Congress to be used by every business in America with revenues over \$5 million.

This financial report takes into account future obligations of the Federal Government, presenting a clearer, more understandable picture of Federal finances. So the real deficit for 2005 was not the \$319 billion contained in the budget using cash-base accounting, but rather it was \$760 billion as contained in the financial report of the United States Government for 2005 issued by the Secretary of the Treasury, John Snow, as required by law, using accrual accounting.

This is the same accounting method required by this Congress for businesses with revenues over \$5 million to use; and if they don't use the accrual method of accounting, they are slapped with all kinds of fines by the IRS and in all kinds of trouble with the Justice Department.

So I thank the gentleman from California for bringing that to our attention this evening.

Now, as I said earlier, the Blue Dog Coalition has a plan on how to fix all of this. We have a 12-point plan for meaningful budget reform. I mentioned one of them, which is requiring a constitutional amendment for a balanced budget.

Forty-nine States require a balanced budget. Most businesses require a balanced budget. And I can assure you, in the Ross family my wife requires a balanced budget.

A second idea we have in our 12-point plan for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending is don't let Congress buy on credit.

Back when President Clinton gave us the first balanced budget in 40 years, we had something implemented on this House floor called PAYGO rules. Pay as you go. If you want to fund a new project, you have to show us which project you are going to cut. If you want to pass tax cuts, you have to show us which program you want to cut. In other words, pay as you go. Don't continue down this track that we are on today of running up the deficit, running up the debt, and borrowing money from China and Japan and Korea and OPEC to pay for this reckless spending.

Another thing that we are doing, as members of the Blue Dog Coalition, is we have a plan to restore accountability.

The author of this plan is a founding member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, JOHN TANNER, of Tennessee.

Let me just say that under the United States Constitution, Congress

has an obligation to provide congressional oversight of the executive branch. Congressional oversight prevents waste and fraud, ensures executive compliance with the law, and evaluates executive performance. However, under this Republican leadership, Congress has abandoned this responsibility by failing to conduct meaningful investigations of allegations of serious waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

By failing to serve as a check and balance for overspending, waste, fraud, and financial abuse within the executive branch, this Republican-led Congress has failed the American taxpayer. Every 24 hours, \$279 million of your tax money is being spent in Iraq. But don't ask the President to be accountable for it. He will tell you you are unpatriotic.

That is where I disagree with this President. I believe we have a duty and an obligation to be accountable for taxpayer money. The current Federal debt, as you know, is \$8.346 trillion, much of which, as we talked about earlier, is borrowed from foreign countries. This President, this administration, and this Republican Congress must be held accountable for our massive Federal debt and for the \$279 million of tax money that is being spent in Iraq every day. Now, as long as we have troops in Iraq, I want to support them, and I want to send money there. But I want to make sure that money is accounted for and being spent on our men and women in uniform.

American taxpayers simply deserve to know how their money is spent. They deserve answers as to why their children and grandchildren will have to foot the bill for this administration's fiscal mismanagement of the Federal budget. And, Mr. Speaker, this includes answers as to why the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to pay \$250,000 a month to store almost 10,000 mobile homes, to be exact, as of tonight 9,957 of them, at the Hope Airport in Hope, Arkansas, in my congressional district, here is an aerial view of it, while many victims of Hurricane Katrina and other storms remain homeless.

It is past time for FEMA to be held accountable and provide these new fully furnished mobile homes to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. FEMA's response so far has been, oh, my goodness, they are liable to sink in this pasture. As you can see here from a better view, and you have to see this to believe it, here are the 9,957 mobile homes just sitting in a hay meadow. Here is the barbed wire fence at the Hope Airport in Hope, Arkansas.

Instead of moving them to storm victims that have been left homeless from various natural disasters, FEMA's response has been, oh, my goodness, the Inspector General is right, they are liable to start sinking in the hay meadow, so now they are spending \$6 million putting gravel in this hay meadow at the Hope Airport in Hope, Arkansas.

It is time, it is time for FEMA to be held accountable for this mismanage-

ment. No business in our country could succeed financially if it failed to fully report back to its shareholders on how it is spending its money. But that is exactly how our Federal Government is operating. The administration is not telling its shareholders, the American taxpayers, how it spends the money coming into Washington.

We have a plan to fix this. It is House Resolution 841, introduced by Representative JOHN TANNER, a founding member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, and at this time I want to call on Mr. TANNER to use as much time as he so desires to explain this bill, our solution, to try to address this lack of accountability in our government.

I am real proud that we are not just here to criticize this administration, this Republican Congress, but also to offer up a solution. At this time I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. TANNER. Thank you, Mr. ROSS, and I am delighted to be here and delighted that this hour is being devoted basically to common sense.

You know, when I was growing up in Tennessee, my parents basically taught me three things about financial responsibility: one was live within your means; two was to pay your debts; and three was to invest in the future, whether it was for your retirement or your kids' college or whatever. But those were three pretty good financial guidelines, I thought. Live within your means, pay your debts, pay who you owe, and save enough to invest in the future.

Unfortunately, this government of ours, all of us, we are not doing any of those things. We are not living within our means, not paying our debts, and we are certainly not investing in the future.

I have been so frustrated because, for the last 3 years, anyway, along with Congressman Ross from Arkansas, some of us have been talking about the consequences of what is going on here. Unless one can figure out how to repeal the laws of arithmetic, folks, I am telling you, this country is getting in deeper and deeper financial trouble.

To give you some idea, in the summer of 2002, on the same tax base we have in the summer of 2006, there is now \$60 billion less of the money that Congress takes away from the American taxpayer involuntarily in the form of taxation and appropriates to any administration. There is \$60 billion a year less because we have borrowed, just since the summer of 2002, this Congress and this political leadership in Washington have borrowed, in your name and mine, over \$1.5 trillion. And what is worse is that 75 percent of those borrowings have come from foreign sources.

I wish I was making this up. It is no fun to talk about. And as Khrushchev said, the former dictator in the old U.S.S.R., he said, an American politician will promise to build a bridge where there is no river. And part of our

problem is the political leadership here in Washington is not leveling with the American people about the consequences of what we are doing in terms of hitting the Nation's credit card for not only that \$1.5-plus trillion but all of the surplus money that is going into the Social Security trust fund. So we are borrowing that too. We just don't have to write interest checks to the Social Security trust funds every year.

Anyway, I was thinking about this, as a father and grandfather now, what kind of country are we going to leave our children? There are two things that come from reading of history. One is, there is no nation that is strong and free that has no infrastructure.

Our infrastructure in this country is in bad shape. Everybody knows that. Whether it is water, sewer, dykes, levees, and you can go down the list, we have serious infrastructure problems. In my home State of Tennessee, most of the county courthouses were built during the Depression, during the WPA days.

□ 2045

I am sure that is the same way in Arkansas and probably in Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, all over. The courthouses were built back in those days, a lot of courthouse, I betcha. But that is not the real crux of the matter.

The real crux of the matter is we have to, and only the government can, invest in infrastructure. Because, after all, that is where private enterprise can go to create the jobs, to create prosperity, so that people have water, sewers, bridges, highways, airports, whatever it may. That is how private enterprise grows, around infrastructure investment by the government.

We are not able to do that because we have, just in the last 60 months, transferred out of the tax base, not raising taxes, not lowering taxes, we have transferred out of the tax base over \$60 billion a year every year that goes not for veterans, not for education, not for infrastructure, but for interest. Seventy-five percent of that \$60 billion that we are writing every year in checks for interest is going overseas, not even staying in this country.

The consequences of that are twofold. One is, we cannot invest in infrastructure to keep our country in as good of shape as it needs to be for private enterprise to prosper and create jobs in a good economy. The second thing we are doing is we are depriving ourselves and the government of the ability to invest in human capital.

What is human capital? Basically, it is the ability of the citizens of this country to compete in an increasingly globalized world.

Now, the government loses its ability because of this transfer of the tax base to interest, loses its ability to make the necessary investments in public education. Public education is not important in a dictatorship. Public education is not important in a Communist country. But public education

is critically important in a democracy, because we are called on.

As President Jimmy Carter said, the highest office in this land of ours is not the office we hold, it is that of citizen. Because the citizen holds the card, the voting card, if you will, to determine what happens. They hire guys like us every couple of years or so, but the citizen is the highest office that one can hold in our country. If we deprive the citizens because we do not have the ability to invest in public education, then we are on a downward spiral, I would say.

So you have two human capital factors. You have public education, because we are called on as citizens, the highest office in our land, to not only make a decision affecting us and our immediate families but also make a decision affecting our States and our country. In order to do that, we have to be educated; and in order to maximize that participation and that ability to understand what is going on, the masses of free people in a republic like ours have to be educated so they can read, write, think and rationalize their decisions. Public education is part of this investment in human capital.

The second thing is health care. Our country is no longer able to make the necessary investment in health care.

If one reads history, as I do, one will readily understand and discern that no nation, since the dawn of civilization, has ever been strong and free with an unhealthy, uneducated population. It is simply not possible. So the consequences of what you have been talking about on the national debt are very real to the citizens of this country.

They may not realize or think so in terms of the national debt, \$8.3 trillion, but don't try to make it off of me. I am trying to make a house payment, car payment, and all the other things that I have to do with my kids and everything else. So that is a big number, but that is not a number people really relate to.

What people relate to, I believe, if we adequately articulate it, is the consequences to them, every day to us, of what is going on in this town, which leads me to this House Bill 841.

It is hard to imagine this, and when I tell civic clubs that I speak to in Tennessee from time to time, they look at me aghast. They can't believe it. In the year, fiscal year 2005, the Government Accountability Office reports that 19 of 24 Federal agencies cannot produce an acceptable audit. What that means is, if you go and ask them what did you do with the money that Congress involuntarily extracted from the taxpayers of this country in the form of taxation and appropriated to any administration, what did you do with it, 19 of 24 Federal agencies can't tell you.

Now I am in business in Tennessee. Well, my brothers and I are in a family business. Can you imagine going to your comptroller or your treasurer or whoever you look to handle your money in your business and saying,

here is an expenditure of \$5,000, \$10,000. What is that for? The answer would be, you know, I can't tell you. I don't know.

No private enterprise in America would tolerate that. Because if they did, they wouldn't be in business. They would be broke. Yet that is what the American people are tolerating in this one-party government town where Congress not only takes money away from people in the form of taxation and then doesn't even ask the administration they appropriate to what they did with it. If they asked them, they couldn't tell them.

If there is one thing that the American citizen, highest officeholder in this land ought to expect from this Congress and any other Congress, in my view, is, what did you do with the money? If you can't tell us, any administration, if you can't tell us what you did, well, you don't get it next year.

So House bill 841 that we have introduced, the Blue Dogs have introduced is basically under three circumstances, when the inspector generals in every department, and every department has one that identifies waste, fraud, abuse, so forth, right now, the inspector general reports are just laying around gathering dust, because Congress is not going to ask, what did you do with the money?

There is no oversight here. Everybody knows that. All you have to do is read the paper about the money that is flowing out of here through a fire hose. Congress isn't asking the administration, where is it going? All we hear is, well, there is a no-bid contract here, a no-bid contract there.

I am going to bring a list of things that we have identified, \$10 million to rehab an old Army base to house six people, no-bid contract. It cost \$10 million to some contractor to rehab a house that holds six people.

That is what is going on under these no-bid contracts, and this Congress has totally, in my judgement, completely abdicated its constitutional responsibility to say what is going on over here.

I am going to read something in a minute that is going to even more shock people. One, any inspector general, I don't care whether it is a Democratic administration, Republican administration, Democratic Congress, Republican Congress, we have got one economy. We have got \$1. We don't have a Democratic or Republican dollar bill. We have got a dollar bill that is an American dollar bill.

So we don't care. The Blue Dogs don't care whether it is a Democratic administration, Republican. This is what ought to be done on behalf of the American taxpayers who are Americans, first. They may be Democrat or Republicans. They are Americans. We are all Americans first.

What this bill would do is say when there is an adverse finding by the inspector general in any, any agency, Congress must hold a hearing within 60

days of that adverse finding so that at least we can bring it to light and the general public will know that, one, they can't find the money we appropriated to them.

Or, two, the inspector general has what they call a high-risk program. That is government talk for it means it probably is not working like we intended it to and like the people want it to. But they can't find the money for the high-risk program.

Or three, the auditor issues a disclaimer. Here is what I want to read about the department.

Four, that, basically, when they tried to audit these departments, the auditors said, look, we don't know whether this is true or not.

On the front page of the audit, they say everything you are about to read here about what these people are doing with taxpayer money, we don't know. We can't vouch for it. We make no, absolutely no assertion that any of this, what you are about to see, is true, because we can't find out from the people that Congress appropriated the money to.

I wish I was making this up, but I am not.

This is what the Office of the Inspector General says about the Department of Energy, for example. This is one. Audit work performed by the auditor identified significant deficiencies in financial management and reporting controls related to the Department's FY05 consolidated financial statements. Specifically, the Department was unable to correct previously described weaknesses and could not provide a number of supporting documents required for audit. Not only can it not produce an audit, they can't even provide a document so the auditors can produce an audit.

Listen to what they say about the Department of Homeland Security. Quote, unfortunately, the Department made little or no progress to improve its overall financial reporting during fiscal year 2005. The auditors were unable to provide an opinion on the Department's balance sheet.

Now we sit here in Congress and pass all these laws, Sarbanes-Oxley and all of this, about what private companies ought to do in terms of audit.

Here is the Homeland Security. You were just talking about 12,000 or 10,000 or 9,000 trailers at Hope Airport in Hope, Arkansas. They say, we are unable to provide an opinion. They can't even tell you. We don't even have an opinion because the books are so screwed up. This is quotes.

So House Bill 841, the Blue Dog bill, just says, when an IG report comes back like this, Congress must take action. What you have here, unfortunately, and this, again, is not partisan. I am a taxpayer. All of us pay taxes. We ought to be able to tell the American people what we did with the money we extract from them involuntarily in the form of taxes.

Here is an IG report. There hasn't been oversight on this, because Congress is not going to ask. You have a

compliant Congress, a friendly administration. Nobody wants to embarrass anybody else. So we have stuff like this that we tolerate in this town because we are all playing the political game.

I tell you, I don't know why we can't get some of our friends on the other side to join with me. What are they going to tell their constituents? We don't want to know where the money you sent us goes to? What are they going to say?

What could possibly be wrong with this Blue Dog bill for simple accountability? We took money from taxpayers. We gave it to the administration. What did you do with it? You can't tell us. You are not getting it. That is what the Blue Dog position is. I think that is where it is. I mean, I don't want to give them any more money when I don't know what happened to it.

Mr. ROSS. You are so right on target with what we need to be doing as a Nation.

In 2003, the Government Accountability Office identified 26 high-risk areas for the Federal Government.

Mr. TANNER. High risk means it doesn't work.

Mr. ROSS. Twenty-six. Since then, only three programs have been removed from the list, and four more have been added. Clearly, it is necessary that Congress become involved to curb mismanagement in Federal agencies.

You raised a good point. In fact, to go into that a little more, in 2004, \$25 million of Federal Government spending went absolutely unaccounted for, according to the President's Treasury Department. The Bush administration was unable to determine where the money had gone, how it was spent or what the American people got for their tax money, \$25 billion in 2004.

Even worse, this Republican-controlled Congress failed to hold the executive branch accountable, failed to hold the executive branch accountable for this submission.

□ 2100

And with your bill, sir, it would require this Congress, it would require this government, to hold this administration accountable for this kind of reckless and irresponsible spending. Furthermore, in 2005 the Government Accountability Office reported that 19 of 24 Federal agencies were not in compliance with all Federal accounting audit standards and could not fully explain how they had spent taxpayer money appropriated to them by Congress.

And yet the Republican leadership in this Congress did not force these agencies to fully account for how the money was being spent before doling out billions more of taxpayer dollars to the same programs. Clearly, Congress has failed to ask serious questions about the Bush administration's fiscal irresponsibility, record-high deficits 4 years in a row, and have now pushed the Federal debt to \$8.3 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments or concerns about what we are discussing this evening, and I hope you do, I hope you will email us at bluedog@house.mail.gov. I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. TANNER. Let me tell you about another bill that our Blue Dog friend, DENNIS CARDOZA, has. And we passed the Sarbanes Oxley Act about holding the CEOs of all of these major corporations accountable. DENNIS has a bill that says, basically, if a Department of the Federal Government cannot produce an adequate or passable or acceptable audit within 2 years, then that Cabinet Secretary must go back to the Senate for reconfirmation as to why you can't tell us what is going on in your Department with the money that is being appropriated to your Department.

This is what would happen in private enterprise. And people tell me all the time, and I am sure they tell you, we would like the government to operate a little bit more like a business. Well, both of these bills, particularly 841, that is all we are asking is for this Congress to pass a bill that will require basically Congress to do its job and ask them what happened to the money, because Congress is the agency, is the separate but equal branch of government that levies taxes. The President doesn't tax people. The Supreme Court doesn't tax people. The Congress does. And it is the Congress's responsibility to see where it is going.

And this Congress has completely, totally failed to ask or even inquire about what is happening to the money that we are appropriating. And, really, the American people shouldn't put up with that. The more we can talk about it, I think, the more people will realize that there has got to be some changes made around here on accountability. And, again, this is not partisan. I don't care what administration is over there at the White House. Any of them ought to be able to tell us what did you do with the money, so we can either determine that it needs to be cut or added to.

When people get up and say we have got baseline funding, I say, you don't understand something. I want to cut some of this stuff that is not working. The IG reports identify government talk for high-risk programs. That means they don't work. But do you think this Congress has asked? Well, you just said it. They added four more since they cut them. And it keeps right on rolling along, money flowing out of here through a fire hose. It keeps rolling right on along.

There is one other thing I would like to mention tonight if I could. We have a bill that the Blue Dogs have endorsed that sets up an independent commission in every State to redistrict for Congress. The Supreme Court, yesterday in the Texas case, left the door open for mid-decade redistricting, which means that any State that gets all the levels of power, the Governor's

office and the House and State Senate, can redistrict anytime they want to. I think that is one of the biggest threats to our process, to our Republic that I have ever heard of because I think where we are going here is a tit for tat. The Republicans did it to the Democrats in Texas, so the Democrats are going to do it to the Republicans in Illinois. Democrats did it to us in Illinois, so we are going to do it to them in Ohio, wherever, all over the country.

And you are going to see nothing but political turmoil where the "ins," whoever the "ins" are, Democrats or Republicans, they are both "ins," are playing this political game, and the people of this country are left in the dust. They are pawns on a chess board to be played with by the "ins," whoever the "ins" are, Democrat or Republican. I think that this is one of the most misguided opinions I have ever read.

The other thing about that is this: there was a case that came from Tennessee in 1962, *Baker v. Carr*, and that was a case that said in the case of the State House, State Senate and U.S. House, everybody had to represent approximately the same number of people.

Now, how in the world any State legislature could reapportion Congress in 2008 based on 2000 census data and say we are complying with *Baker v. Carr*, in that everybody represents an equal amount of people, is beyond me. And I will tell you what you do. If you don't believe me, go pick up an 8-year-old phone book and see how many people you can call in that 8-year-old phone book or how many businesses you can call that are still there. There is no way that any legislature can comply with one person, one vote 8 years after the data was compiled.

Yet that is what the Supreme Court left open. You talk about activist judges. I just think that what they are doing is setting this country up for nothing but a political food fight while the country's needs go unattended. And this is the "ins." And what we have seen over the last 40-something years, since the *Baker v. Carr* decision is the "ins" have manipulated the system for themselves. It suits all the Republicans to make Republican districts more Republican. It suits the Democrats to make the Democratic districts more Democratic. So what you have here is the wings coming here to Congress and being unable ideologically to figure out how to get along. And this is why I think we have one of the problems here, and that is the middle is disappearing where everything gets done in a free society where nobody can order anybody else to do anything.

So I wanted to mention that because we have that bill, the Blue Dog endorsed bill, that would set up independent commissions. And one of the criteria is they can't take into account where the incumbent lives. And we are asking people to give up a lot of power. I understand that. But I hope the

American people realize that they are the victims of this with the "ins," Democrats and Republicans, who are in, manipulating the system for each other's benefit.

And what do we have? We have a food fight here on the floor of the House every day. And it is not a parliamentary system. It is a representative system and one, I think, as Ben Franklin said after they got through with all the Constitution, everything, said, what have we wrought? And Ben Franklin said, a Republic, if you can keep it.

We are in, I think, grave danger with what we have done to gerrymander the country. And it is the "ins," Democrats and Republican, who are in that are doing it. And we are trying to change that, and the Blue Dog bill will do that. And I hope we can get some action. It will have to come from outside of this building, unfortunately. Thank you.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) for his leadership as a founding member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. I want to thank him for his leadership on House Resolution 841.

We have talked tonight about House Resolution 841 to require congressional hearings when there is fraud, waste and abuse and mismanagement of Federal agencies with your tax dollars.

We have also talked tonight about another commonsense solution, and that is H.R. 5315, by one of the Blue Dog cochairs, Mr. CARDOZA of California, who has a real commonsense idea, and that is if you are a Cabinet head and your Federal agency that you oversee cannot fully account for its spending, you should have to go back to the Senate for reconfirmation.

So these are commonsense solutions that we are offering up. We are not here just to be critical of the Republican administration. We are here to say here is what is wrong and here are the things that we think we can do to fix it. Clearly, the time has come to hold this administration accountable for its reckless behavior. I believe Congress must act now to renew its constitutional responsibility to serve as a check and balance for overspending, waste, fraud and financial abuse within the executive branch of government.

Wasteful government spending has forced the national debt to its current record level of \$8,346,401,298,731, and future generations, our children and grandchildren, will be forced to pay that bill. Future generations will have to pay back with interest the money the Federal Government is borrowing from other countries due to this administration and this Republican Congress's fiscal recklessness.

The time has come, Mr. Speaker. The time has come to restore common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. The legislation that I have described to you this evening, these are two different legislative proposals put forth by the fiscally con-

servative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition that will put our Nation back on the track toward balancing the budget and restoring accountability.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. national debt, when we started this evening it was \$8,346,401,298,731. And just in the past hour, as we have been discussing this financial crisis facing America, this number, this national debt has risen \$41,666,000.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is borrowing \$1 billion a day. We are spending a half a billion a day paying interest on the debt we have already got.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government, and once we do that, once we do that we can meet America's priorities. A half a billion dollars a day simply going to pay interest on the national debt. In my district alone, I have got \$4 billion in road needs. I need \$1.5 billion to finish I-69, Interstate 69. I need another \$1.5 billion to finish Interstate 49. I need \$200 million to finish Interstate I-530; \$300 million to four-lane 167 from Little Rock to El Dorado and beyond; about 80 to \$100 million to finish the Hot Springs Expressway; and \$200 million to four-lane U.S. Highway 82 from the east to the west side of Arkansas. These kinds of road projects can create jobs and economic opportunities for one of the poorest regions in the country, the Delta region, which I am proud to represent.

But before we can meet America's priorities and lift these folks up out of poverty and give them a helping hand by building the roads they need, we must first restore common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government and pay down this national debt and stop this deficit spending.

WHY ARE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SO ANGRY?

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am going to make an attempt to answer a question: Why are the American people so angry? I have been involved in politics for over 30 years and have never seen the American people so angry. It is not unusual to sense a modest amount of outrage, but it seems the anger today is unusually intense and quite possibly worse than ever. It is not easily explained, but I have some thoughts on this matter.

Generally, anger and frustration among people are related to economic conditions, bread and butter issues. Yet, today, according to government statistics, things are going well. We have low unemployment, low inflation, more homeowners than ever before, and abundant leisure and abundant luxuries. Even the poor have cell phones, televisions, and computers.

Public school is free and anyone can get free medical care at any emergency room in the country. Almost all taxes are paid for by the top 50 percent of income earners.

□ 2115

The lower 50 percent pay essentially no income tax. Yet general dissatisfaction and anger are commonplace. The old slogan "It's the economy, stupid" just does not seem to explain things.

Some say it is the war. Yet we have lived with war throughout the 20th century. The bigger they were, the more we pulled together. And the current war, by comparison, has fewer American casualties than the rest, so it can't be just the war itself.

People complain about corruption, but what is new about government corruption? In the 19th century, we had railroad scandals. In the 20th century, we endured the Teapot Dome scandal, Watergate, Koreagate, and many others without too much anger and resentment. Yet today, it seems, anger is pervasive and worse than we have experienced in the past.

Could it be that war, vague yet persistent economic uncertainty, corruption, and the immigration problem all contribute to the anger we feel in America? Perhaps. But it is almost as though people are not exactly sure why they are so uneasy. They only know that they have had it and are not going to put up with it anymore.

High gasoline prices make a lot of people angry, though there is little understanding of how deficits, inflation, and the war in the Middle East all contribute to these higher prices.

Generally speaking, there are two controlling forces that determine the nature of government: the people's concern for their economic self-interest and the philosophy of those who hold positions of power and influence in any particular government.

Under Soviet communism, the workers believed their economic best interests would be served while a few dedicated theoreticians placed themselves in positions of power. Likewise, the intellectual leaders of the American Revolution were few but rallied the colonists who risked all to overthrow a tyrannical king.

Since there is never a perfect understanding between these two forces, the people and the philosophical leaders, and because the motivations of the intellectual leaders vary greatly, any transition from one system of government to another is unpredictable. The Communist takeover by Lenin was violent and costly. The demise of communism and the acceptance of a relatively open system in the former Soviet Union occurred in a miraculous manner. Both systems had intellectual underpinnings.

In the United States over the last century, we have witnessed the coming and going of various intellectual influences by proponents of the free market, Keynesian welfarism, varieties of socialism, and supply-side economics. In