

terrorism, which we can agree is scourged. However, the rest of the world—there was another poll that was taken; 34 out of 35 countries, this was commissioned by the BBC, and this poll found that in 34 out of 35 of those countries more people believed, 60 percent believed that the war in Iraq increased terrorism, and 15 percent disagreed and said it impacted terrorism and led to a decline. Sixteen percent to 15 percent, and yet this administration, this Republican leadership, is tone deaf to that.

I am convinced we all, everyone in this Chamber, everyone in this government wants to defeat terrorism. It is just they do not know how to do it.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. The gentleman from Washington State makes a very good point when he says, as the viewers all across this country tune in, and they see people coming down to this floor and speaking from their hearts and their heads about the situation we find in here, the one thing we want the people of this country to know is that the main purpose that we come down to this floor is because of love of country.

The gentleman from Washington State loves his country, as do the gentlemen from Massachusetts and Maryland. And yet we found ourselves in this situation here where oftentimes our voices are muffled. We do not get an opportunity, even in a nonbinding resolution, to present our alternative point of view. This is a one-party town where the other side of the aisle, our erstwhile Republican colleagues, control the Presidency and all of its agencies and both Houses of these Chambers.

And it is because of love of country and a concern to make sure, as we said from the outset, that we distinguish the warrior from the war, that we have an obligation to come to the floor and speak truth to power.

That is why I commend all of you for coming down to the floor, as you have since the outset of this war. And again pointing out this evening that we need a new direction, a thoughtful, provocative direction that all of you have expressed this evening. Articulated by the gentlemen from Maryland and Maine and Massachusetts and Washington is the sense that the American people intuitively understand this and are yearning for their Nation to leave. But our inability in the minority to break through causes us to come here evening after evening in the hope, in the silence of this great hall, in this great room, that our message reaches out across this Nation and is heard by people who love this country.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle love their country as well. But our patriotism and our belief in this Nation stem from the fact that we are a nation configured through the rule of law.

And that is why I am so proud to stand here with each and every one of you this evening. Thank you so much for again coming out for Iraq Watch.

□ 2145

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honor to come to the floor; and hearing Mr. LARSON, who is our vice chair of the Democratic Caucus, make his closing in the last hour was definitely uplifting and very true. And I want to thank him and other gentlemen who are here on the floor sharing what should be happening in Iraq and what is not happening in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, that is the good thing about this great democracy of ours, that we can come to the floor even though we don't have the right to bring many bills to the floor that we have stuck in committee or ideas that we can bring to the floor that would balance the budget or provide health care for Americans and allow small businesses to provide health care for the people that work for them and with them.

As you know, the 30-something Working Group, Mr. Speaker, has been coming to the floor for the last 3 years sharing with Americans and also with the Members of the House initiatives and plans and opportunity for recovery. Many of those plans are still stuck in committee or stuck in legislation, Mr. LARSON and other gentlemen that are here, that we have not been able to bring to the floor, and this is the only way that we have an opportunity to share with the Members and also the American people about our plans and about the initiatives that we have that will bring about real energy policy, real prescription drug policy, real health care policy, and real policy on Iraq, and on and on and on.

So we look forward. And I am happy, Mr. LARSON, that the American people, the majority, well, a good majority of the American people believe in what we believe in: making sure that we do right by those that punch in and punch out every day by raising the minimum wage, by doing a number of things that you just finished talking about and the things that we are going to talk about in the 30-something Working Group.

I will yield to you.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I want to thank you and the 30-something Group for the enormous work that you have done on this floor. Again, as you rightfully point out, we do not have and are not provided the opportunity. You would think in this great democracy of ours there would be ample opportunity for these issues to be debated, but unfortunately time and time again we are not allowed the opportunity even to provide a countervailing measure on something as important as Iraq. Or we find the Voting Rights Act all of a sudden mysteriously is shunted off the floor. The Voting Rights Act,

something where there is near bipartisan, almost unanimous approval that is worked out. And you would think in the spirit of this great Chamber that we would be able to proceed. But unfortunately, as I said before, this is a one-party town. And when the Republicans control the House of Representatives, as they have for the last 12 years, and the United States Senate and the Presidency, in their arrogance they believe I guess that we shouldn't have a say, that there shouldn't be this discourse and dialogue.

And that is why I am so proud of the 30-something Group that has consistently come down to this floor. And I am proud to say also that so many people in my home State of Connecticut have called and written and said that they have heard you. And your message is getting through. And I commend you as well for linking up with a number of the blogs around the country who tune in on a regular basis so that they get an opportunity to hear from you and Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and the way that you are able to articulate these issues.

I see that we have been joined by the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, another individual who has been able to on so many occasions come to this floor in the silence of this Chamber, in the din of the night because we are not allowed the opportunity during the day to express our concerns.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. LARSON, some of the best work is done at night, and I can tell you that many of us that are in the minority here in this House, we have come to the floor, we have carved a plan for not only the House to deal with a number of issues that have faced us in the last recent years; we have tried to head off a number of the issues that we are facing now as it relates to record borrowing from foreign nations, we have tried to head off the largest borrowing surge in the history of the country by the Republican majority by saying pay as you go, Mr. Speaker. We have tried to head off a lack of leadership as relates to accountability in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama as it relates to Hurricane Katrina, and a lot of or all of the money that is being stolen from the taxpayers.

We have tried to bring about, Mr. Speaker, the kind of accountability that the Government Accounting Office has investigated and shown that a number of Federal agencies are overspending, they are not able to even give us an idea of where the money went. And we are talking about billions of dollars.

Folks talk about wasteful spending. I think it is important, Mr. DELAHUNT, to even talk about what the Republican majority has not done as it relates to oversight, has not done as relates to subpoenaing a number of individuals that some of this stuff in my opinion, Mr. LARSON, is close to being jailable. And I think when we look,

when Republicans, Independents, or Democrats look at what is going on here in this process as we speak in the moment and what will happen next week and the week after if left unattended, I think that we are going to gain a momentum of support from Republicans and Independents and from Green Party and from Democrats saying that we are willing to lead, we are ready to lead, we are ready to move America in a new direction.

And we are saying it. We are saying we are going to have a plan to balance the budget, and we do have a plan to balance the budget within 10 years. We are saying that we want to be well on our way in doing it, because we are the only party here in this Chamber that can say that we have actually done it. Republicans can only say, well, you know, we want to cut it in half, or we believe that we can do it. Well, you can't do that when you continue to borrow at a record rate. I have got a chart over here, and I am going to talk about it later.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. While the gentleman is getting his chart, I would just like to comment again and commend him, and also commend him in the bipartisan nature and non-partisan way that you have come down here. I say that with this in mind, because you have heard me talk about the nature of this being a one-party town and what it means in terms of stifling debate and dialogue. And yet we do have plans and we do have ideas and vitality. And so one has to ask himself, Why is it that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to stifle, to cut off debate, to be seemingly uninterested in the proposals that Democrats put forward? The answer I believe lies in what Franklin Delano Roosevelt had to say about our colleagues on the other side of the aisle: it is not that they aren't good people. They certainly are. It is not that they don't love their country as we do. They do. But he said that they seem to be frozen in the ice of their own indifference. Frozen in the ice of their own indifference. Indifference towards making sure that there is a workable, living minimum wage. Indifference to working people, indifference to the men and women as Mr. DELAHUNT has pointed out time and time again who are lined up along the highway to Crawford, Texas, seeking only an audience with the President of the United States to talk about their sons and daughters who have given their lives. Indifference, as Ms. JACKSON-LEE has pointed out, to the senior citizens of this country who have become refugees from their own health care system and have to travel to Canada to get prescription drugs that they can afford.

Indifference to what we are doing to college students today, cutting back the funding that they so desperately need. Indifference to what happens at the gas pumps where people who are struggling to make a living and have to get back and forth to work find them-

selves. And I thank you for combating that indifference here on the floor every single night.

It is our direction, the new direction that Leader PELOSI is taking this party and this country into is what this Nation desperately needs, and that is why I am so proud to be down here with you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. LARSON, I want to say to the point that you just mentioned, what is happening to the country is historic, in the wrong direction. When you talk about tuition, and the President was up here on this podium talking about how we need to invest in the new generation as it relates to the joint session of Congress that we had, tuition has increased by \$2,000, that is 57 percent, at public universities, and by \$5,000, which is 32 percent, at private institutions since 2000, 2001 school year. Meanwhile, the majority has cut \$12 billion from college aid, increasing the cost of loans, has frozen Pell grants for higher education, and has failed to extend the college tuition tax deduction. And I think that is very, very important.

On the flip side of this whole thing, in our plan for a new direction, is to replace what the Republicans have taken out of student investment, also putting in, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, an opportunity for those that decide to go in an area of education tax credits for them to go into the public schools, for us to have trained and educated teachers.

So we start talking about what the majority is doing and our new direction, it is on HouseDemocrats.gov. This is not something I just said right now. All of this is on HouseDemocrats.gov. The energizing of America is on HouseDemocrats.gov. Real security as it relates to implementing all the 9/11 recommendations, Mr. Speaker, is on HouseDemocrats.gov. A number of other initiatives that we have going.

So I wanted to back in what you are saying, because this 30-something Group originally started off by making sure that young people have a voice here on this floor, and those that are supporting young people that are their parents and grandparents, make sure they have a better opportunity than they have.

Mr. LARSON, I want to thank you, sir, for carrying out your Iraq hour, continuing to focus on that, because we have men and women that are counting on us. We have been to Iraq. We know they have shared with us they want direction from this House, and we have to give it to them, and we have to also let the American people know what is going on here. Thank you, sir.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I wanted to add my appreciation to Mr. LARSON and thank him for giving me the opportunity to join the hour and to be able to reinforce your leadership. And I thank you for the good words that you have said about the 30-something, Mr. DELAHUNT, and a number of others who were on the floor. And, Mr.

MEEK, I want to thank you for allowing me to have a continuum, if you will, of the discussions that we previously engaged in on Iraq and also to reinforce your comment.

I want you to hear this out of an Associated Press article that appeared I imagine in papers around America, but this was in the Houston Chronicle today. And the headline reads: "No Such Thing As a Sure Thing in Congress." It talks about the inability to get any legislation passed. And one example was of course a bill dealing with marriage and the bill dealing with the flag. And all of us are patriotic, and so we understand people have different views, but we really ask the question, Is that really the crucial issue that the American people are thinking of?

The Republicans commented on Democrats and why they are not getting, why this Congress is not getting anything done. And I want you to hear this. In fact, I was proud when I read this: Republicans point out that Democrats are not above bringing up proposals just for political gain. They note that Democrats have insisted on bringing up a proposal to raise the minimum wage.

I am proud of that. I want you to hear that. It says that Democrats have insisted on bringing up proposals dealing with increasing the minimum wage. But the Republicans say the reason why they are giving us the short end of the stick is they say this is political, because they know that this has failed for 9 years.

Well, my friends, Republicans have been in the majority for 9 years. And Democrats are not going to step away from their values and their commitment to the American people that they need an increase in the minimum wage after 50 years just because the Republicans keep defeating it. We are going to win, and we are going to focus on this issue.

And let me move very quickly, Mr. MEEK, into just a few brief comments about Iraq and to be able to say why we are where we are, and maybe that is a reason why Pell grants are not funded, it is the reason why health care is not funded for the uninsured.

□ 2200

It is a reason why the environment and issues dealing with energy and alternative fuel have not been focused on because of the major conflict, if you will, in Iraq and the refusal of this House to really debate what is next, to really debate what is next.

Having just come back from Iraq and Afghanistan, let me tell you why we are in such a crisis. One reason we are in such a crisis is, we have spread ourselves too thin. This is how much money we have spent in Iraq. The place where Osama bin Laden is alleged to be hiding, we have given them this much. That means we are fueling the fires of bin Laden and the Taliban because there are not the resources invested in the very site where the horrific tragedy of 9/11 was seeded.

Now, of course, we are in a protracted conflict in Iraq, and there is no discussion of a way out of Iraq. This is the report card given by the Center for American Progress. Here is what is going on in Iraq: Security and stability, a D-minus. The overall grade, by the way, is a D. Governance and democracy, a C-plus; economic reconstruction, D-minus; and impact on U.S. national security is an F. Our security has been diminished because of where we are in Iraq.

Let me just show you another article that really breaks my heart because what I would say is, our soldiers are following orders, but it is difficult for them to carry forth their job because soldiers engage in war. Soldiers are not civilian police officers, and when you put them in the midst of a civilian population, that ignites controversy and jeopardizes them. Our soldiers are exhausted.

Although I don't excuse the violence that has occurred with five soldiers facing military tribunals because they are alleged to have raped and murdered Iraqi citizens and others, but this is out of exhaustion, out of frustration and putting a military population in the midst of civilians.

But listen to this: At least 60 die in a single day of sectarian battles; 60 Iraqis are killed between the Shiites' and the Sunnis' bombing of mosques, suicide bombings. This is not a safe place for Americans to be. It is now time to transfer over the sovereign leadership of this country to the Iraqi Government.

And it says here, "Sunnis Blame the Government While the Prime Minister Insists That Baghdad Is Under Control." They must get the sectarian violence under control. They must have the Iraqi national army enforce the safety of the Iraqi people.

Yes, we can provide, if you will, the background, not the background music, but we can move to the borders, and if there is a crisis, we can be called. We have to be able to encourage Arab states that believe in democracy to support their neighbor. We have to bolster up the Iraqi national army, but this violence is not the kind of solution that the United States military is prepared to handle.

These are not insurgents coming from outside, these are Iraqis who are fighting each other. And this was created because we created a nonstable situation, because we had no exit strategy. We did not understand how to transition from Saddam Hussein's despotic government to a democracy. And here we are with our soldiers going two, three, five times into Iraq, exhausted, a military that is exhausted, battalions that have been used up.

Let me say these few points about generals who have raised a point about the Iraq war.

Retired Army General John Riggs, "We grow up in a culture where accountability, learning to accept responsibility, admitting mistakes and

learning from them was critical to us. When we don't see that happening, it worries us. Poor military judgment has been used throughout this mission."

Anthony Zinni, former Chief of the U.S. Central Command, "I really believe we need a new Secretary of Defense because Secretary Rumsfeld carries way too much baggage with him. I think we need senior military leaders who understand the principles of war and apply them ruthlessly; and then, when the time comes, they need to call it like it is," and in my words, to bring our troops home as soon as practical.

The final words are from Retired Army Major General Charles Swannack, "He has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically and is far more than anyone else responsible for what has happened to our important operation in Iraq. Mr. Rumsfeld must step down."

That is disarray. What we need is an exit strategy to leave Iraq, not the cut-and-run that we are labeled with, but the dignified Murtha resolution that says, as soon as practical. Then, Mr. MEEK, we can address the energized agenda that we have as Democrats under Leader PELOSI's leadership to take this country back and give us the alternative fuels and begin to focus on education for our youth, universal access to health care, meaning we will address the question of 44 million uninsured. We will make sure that there is an increase in the minimum wage.

We understand, and in fact let me compliment Leader PELOSI who has said we are not leaving, we are not going home until the minimum wage has been passed. I cannot imagine Republicans would want to be quoted in the newspapers as saying Democrats are politicizing the minimum wage. They know that it has been raised nine times, and it has not passed. It has not passed because Republicans have not allowed it to come to the floor. They have eliminated it. They eliminated it the last week we were here.

So the only thing I would say is, shame on you, that you would boast in the newspapers that we are bringing it up as a political issue because it has failed nine times. If it fails 100 times, Democrats are going to keep fighting to increase the minimum wage for hardworking Americans, particularly those who have not seen an increase. And this is the lowest minimum wage in 50 years. People can barely make ends meet.

I hope as the 30-something Working Group continues to elaborate on its wonderful message, and might I say that you have got the 30-somethings listening, and you have the over-somethings listening. Everyone is listening to the message of new leadership for this Congress and also for America.

I cannot imagine what more we can say and what more we can do when we see the collapse of Iraq, no new leadership, when we see Afghanistan and President Karzai calling out for help and assistance so Afghanistan does not

become destabilized, and the very place Osama bin Laden comes from and grows more Osama bin Ladens and others who would attack the world with terrorist acts.

I don't know how much we can say this over and over again for the administration to be able to listen to the challenges of 60 dying, one soldier a day dying, the violence some of our soldiers have, unfortunately, been engaged in are acts of desperation, acts of exhaustion and exasperation. Until we get an exit strategy, we will be facing this every day.

I hope we will be able to do that, and I thank the distinguished gentleman. We need a reasonable debate, and we need to bring our soldiers home. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and for his leadership. And out of it, we will have a new agenda for America.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Ms. JACKSON-LEE. And even though you were coming down to join Mr. LARSON, you are always welcome to join the 30-something Working Group hour.

When you were talking about the minimum wage, when we call ourselves the 30-something Working Group, that means we work. We come together and we meet even when we are not on the floor to talk about these issues.

Mr. Speaker, minimum wage is a very important issue to 7 million Americans who are working for minimum wage, living on a minimum-wage salary, which is very difficult.

□ 2210

And one of the things that I wanted to share here, Mr. Speaker, as you know, we try to come up with charts to kind of break this down so that Members know exactly what we are talking about so they can't go back to their constituents and say, well, I didn't quite understand that minimum wage vote, but I will reconsider it next time. We call that in Washington, DC the Potomac two-step. Back home they call it hoodwinked, bamboozled. But I want to make sure that folks understand what we are talking about here.

Minimum wage, and this is actually a chart that is saying the real economy changed under President Bush, while the minimum wage has not been increased since 1997, this is what has happened. Minimum wage is at zero. But the cost for milk has gone up 24 percent. Minimum wage is at zero, but the cost of bread has gone up 25 percent. Minimum wage is zero since 1997, thanks to the Republican majority. But a 4-year public college education has gone up 77 percent.

The minimum wage is still at zero, Mr. Speaker, since 1997, not because we haven't tried to raise it, but the Republican majority has stood in the school house door on this, stopping it from happening.

Health care insurance has gone up 97 percent, Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Minimum wage is still at zero. And regular gas has gone up 136 percent.

Now, you want to know, the American people want to know who is on

their side. I think it is important that we find out whose side are the Republicans on? Let's just call it for what it is, Ms. JACKSON-LEE. It is more than, and I am not just a Member of Congress with a conspiracy theory, because I am looking right here because I can't help but go to a recent article that I saw, that I read last time that was in The Washington Post. Document says oil chiefs met with Cheney task force. White House documents show, and this is The Washington Post. I just want to make sure. You can go on Washingtonpost.com, and it is November 16 of 2005. This was actually on the front page.

White House documents show that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President CHENEY's energy task force in 2001, something long suspected by environmentalists, but denied as recently as last week by industry officials testifying before Congress.

The documents obtained this week by The Washington Post show that officials from ExxonMobil, Phillips, Shell Oil Company and BP of America met in the White House complex with Cheney aides who were developing the national energy policy, parts of which became law, and parts of which are still being debated in Congress.

The meeting happened in 2001. Oil companies got their increase in the minimum wage. These are the profits of the oil companies: 2002, \$34 billion in extra profits. I think this was a pretty good meeting. I am pretty sure if I was an oil executive, I would be saying I am glad I attended.

2003, \$59 billion in profits, oil companies. Meanwhile, we are paying more at the pump. Minimum wage still at zero, remember, since 1997.

2004, \$84 billion in new profits to oil companies. I think that meeting was landmark as it relates to profits for the oil companies

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Monumental.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And in 2005, \$113 billion. Now I can tell you what is happening as it relates to whose side they are on.

Now, one may say, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, and I am glad that those of us here in the 30-something Working Group, we do our homework before we come to the floor. I can't say that about all Members that come to the floor as it relates to having the facts, because what is important here, Mr. Speaker, is the truth, facts where people can follow up, and not fiction. And folks are not used to that out of this majority, and not used to that here in Washington, DC, and that is what we are saying we want to provide. Because nothing is better than the truth. Because no matter what party you are affiliated with, we still salute one flag, thanks to our men and women that were in uniform, veterans, and those that are in uniform now.

The least that we can do is be straight with them, and being straight with them is basically just saying, just

recently, June 22, here on this floor, Democrats worked to raise the minimum wage, and this was appealing to the rule of the Chair by Mr. RANGEL in a motion to offer the minimum wage increase. And he was ruled out of order. And it was appealed. And then the Republicans voted against us from having it on the floor by 229 votes to 195, and that is rollcall vote 313.

Again, June 27, which is a couple of days from the first time, from that attempt that we moved to get the minimum wage up, the Science, State, Justice, Commerce appropriations bill when it was here on this floor, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, you were here that day, I saw you. The rule to block consideration of the Obey-Hoyer-Mollohan amendment to increase the minimum wage, rollcall vote 319, the rule was adopted, but there was a procedural move to block us from getting this on the floor.

The House adopted a resolution to adjourn for the Fourth of July recess without bringing up the bill to increase the minimum wage. That is rollcall vote to adjourn, which was rollcall vote 353 to adjourn. And I think it is important. That was 220, supermajority voted for it; 197 voted against it. It was only one Republican that was on our side and saying that we shouldn't leave until we deal with it, Mr. Speaker.

So, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, I wouldn't get concerned about what they say because that is what Speaker Gingrich has said. He has the chart, and if staff can give me the chart that said "they," that "they," that is what he calls the Republican majority, that is what they called the Republican majority. You remember that, Mr. RYAN, because he felt that they are no longer responsible in a way that he thought they should be when he was the father of giving, case in point, once again, third-party validator.

Mr. Speaker, this was the Speaker of the House when the Republicans took control of the House. And this is what he has to say. And this was in the Knight Ridder newspaper, Friday, March 31, 2006: "They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function." "They." He is talking about the Republican majority. "They"? Goodness gracious. If Speaker Foley came and called us "they," I mean, this would be a travesty. This is Newt Gingrich. This is not someone in some club somewhere, or someone that doesn't have House credentials. He was here on this floor. He was the Speaker. He was the leader in the Republican majority and he was the Speaker. He wasn't majority leader. He wasn't a whip. He wasn't over the conference. He wasn't over a caucus. He was the Speaker. He sat there on the Speaker rostrum. He was the man. His picture hangs up back here in the Speaker's lobby. I can't boil this down any further, to say that it is substantial when a chief Republican says "they."

And so what we are talking about here, Ms. JACKSON-LEE and Mr. RYAN,

is something that everyone should understand. Republicans have to have a problem, Republican voters and independent voters, and Democratic voters have to have a problem with a dysfunctional government that is making history in all the wrong ways. And I am going to share that chart, but I am going to yield to you. I see Mr. RYAN is here, and I want to come back on our chart of irresponsibility that has taken place, because I want to make sure if we have got to say it 1,000 times, I want it on the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that we have said it 1,001 times, so that the American people, when they are asked to make a decision in November, Mr. RYAN, that they have the information that they need to have to make sure that their country, not their party, that their country is strong and that it is vibrant and that it is here to make sure that it is in the shape to where they can afford education, where they can afford health care, where small businesses can afford to give their employees health care, and where States don't have to sue the Federal Government over education dollars.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I am delighted that Mr. RYAN and the two of you, Mr. MEEK, have really captured the essence of why you come to the floor every night and why it is so important.

Mr. RYAN, I had an article, and I just want to repeat because it really captures the gentleman's comments, the gentleman from Florida. It really captures what he has said and why we are so frustrated.

□ 2220

The bottom line of this paragraph was an article that talked about the marriage amendment and the flag amendment as the chief initiatives of this great body. It said that two-thirds of the legislative calendar is finished and this body can only count two major initiatives that they have passed: one, the PATRIOT Act renewal that they engaged in, and many Democrats, of course supported that; and then they had a \$70 billion tax cut. This is all that they can put in their belt notch, if you will, to say that they have accomplished. And at the same time, the recounting of the low esteem or low level of the working Americans, where they cannot pass, if you will, a minimum wage. When it really comes to helping Americans, they have done nothing.

So gas prices have doubled. Right now this week, oil is at \$75 a barrel, and we are now approaching \$3 a gallon for gas. The minimum wage has not been increased. Health care is costing more. In 2005 a typical family was paying \$1,200 more a year for health insurance, increasing it by 55 percent.

So this debate that you are articulating really ties into where we are in Iraq and the frustration, the amount of money, and it really ties into this bottom line, which is we have work for

two-thirds of the legislative session and we really cannot show the American people any bread and butter issues that we have been engaged in. No bread and butter issues. Nobody is better off since this Congress has been holding court, if you will, for 2006.

And I thank you for allowing me to be here.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues for organizing this special order to discuss the conduct and costs of the war in Iraq. I look forward to engaging in dialogue with my colleagues about the most important issue facing the country today and the most fateful and ill-considered decision of this Administration.

I. THE BUSH IRAQ POLICY HAS HARMED THE U.S. MILITARY

A few weeks ago we learned the sad news that the 2,500th soldier has been killed in Iraq. More than 19,000 others have been wounded. The Bush administration's open-ended commitment of U.S. troops to Iraq has weakened the U.S. Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserves. The extended deployments in Iraq have eroded U.S. ground forces and overall military strength. A Pentagon-commissioned study concluded that the Army cannot maintain its current pace of operations in Iraq without doing permanent damage to the quality of the force. So more than three years of a continuous deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq has:

Contributed to serious problems with recruitment, with the U.S. Army missing its recruitment targets last year;

Forced the Army to lower its standards for military recruits; and

Led to military equipment shortages that hamper the ability of U.S. ground forces to do their job in Iraq and around the world.

II. THE IRAQ WAR HAS BEEN MISMANAGED AND THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS

Quotes from the retired generals calling for the ouster of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld:

"We went to war with a flawed plan that didn't account for the hard work to build the peace after we took down the regime. We also served under a secretary of defense who didn't understand leadership, who was abusive, who was arrogant, who didn't build a strong team."—Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste.

"My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results."—Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold.

"They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda. I think that's a mistake, and that's why I think he should resign."—Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Riggs.

"We grow up in a culture where accountability, learning to accept responsibility, admitting mistakes and learning from them was critical to us. When we don't see that happening it worries us. Poor military judgment has been used throughout this mission."—Retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni, former chief of U.S. Central Command.

"I really believe that we need a new secretary of defense because Secretary Rumsfeld carries way too much baggage with him. . . . I think we need senior military leaders who understand the principles of war and apply them ruthlessly, and when the time comes, they need to call it like it is."—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Charles Swannack.

"He has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically, and is far more than anyone responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. . . . Mr. Rumsfeld must step down."—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton.

III. WAR IN IRAQ HAS DIVERTED RESOURCES AND ATTENTION FROM OTHER FRONTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORIST NETWORKS

The killing of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi was a major success for U.S. troops, but it is not likely to diminish Iraq's insurgency. Iraqis make up 90 percent of Iraq's insurgency, unlike foreign fighters like Zarqawi, and a primary motivation for Iraq's insurgency is the U.S. troop presence. Even after the Samarra shrine attack in February threatened to push Iraq into all-out sectarian civil war, the vast majority of attacks still target U.S. forces.

Outside of Iraq, the Bush administration has failed to present a realistic strategy for countering the threat posed by the global terror networks. In a recent survey of more than 100 of America's leading foreign policy experts conducted by Foreign Policy magazine and the Center for American Progress, 8 in 10 (84 percent) do not think that the United States is winning the war on terror. The War in Iraq has not helped America win the broader fight against global terrorists. Instead:

By invading Iraq without a realistic plan to stabilize the country, the Bush administration created a new terrorist haven where none had previously existed.

By maintaining an open-ended military presence in Iraq, the Bush administration is presenting U.S. terrorist enemies with a recruitment tool and rallying cry for organizing attacks against the U.S. and its allies.

According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center, the number of large-scale terrorist attacks in Iraq increased by over 100 between 2004 and 2005, with a total 8,299 civilians killed in 2005.

Osama bin Laden remains at large and al Qaeda offshoots proliferate.

By diverting resources and attention from Afghanistan to an unnecessary war of choice in Iraq in 2003, the Bush administration has left Afghanistan exposed to a resurgence of the Taliban and al Qaeda. The United States needs to complete the mission in Afghanistan and cannot do it with so many troops bogged down in Iraq.

By focusing so many U.S. resources on Iraq, the Bush administration has taken its eye off the ball in places like Somalia, which was overrun by Islamist militias tied to al Qaeda last week.

IV. THE WAR IN IRAQ HAS INCREASED THE BURDEN ON U.S. TAXPAYERS WITHOUT STABILIZING IRAQ OR MAKING AMERICANS SAFER.

Over the last three years, the United States has spent more than \$300 billion in Iraq, yet the investment has failed to stabilize Iraq or improve the overall quality of life for most Iraqis. According to the Congressional Research Service, total assistance to Iraq thus far is roughly equivalent to total assistance, adjusted for inflation, provided to Germany—and almost double that provided to Japan from 1946 to 1952. Yet on key metrics like oil production, Iraq has failed to advance beyond pre-war levels, and quality of life indicators remain dismal:

Oil production is below pre-war levels (2.6 million barrels per day in 2003 vs. 2.1 million barrels per day in May 2006);

The majority of water sector projects and health care clinics planned in 2003 remain not completed, despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars;

One in three Iraqi children is malnourished and underweight, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Rather than a record of progress and achievement, the Bush administration's record is one of corruption and waste:

\$8.8 billion given to Iraqi ministries by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) remains unaccounted for, according to the Congressional Research Service;

Iraqi Defense Ministry officials spent \$1 billion on questionable arms purchases;

The Interior Ministry has at least 1,100 ghost employees, costing \$1.3 million a month.

In short, we have no strategy, no support from allies or friends in the region, a nascent civil war in the country we are supposed to be helping, an overstretched military, a misdirected counterterrorism effort, and a massive diversion of funds in support of a failed effort.

V. MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS HURT MORALE AND FAMILIES

Multiple deployments taking toll on military families, answers questions of how to help families of deployed service members.

Military families need greater psychological, emotional, and organizational assistance according to the results of a new survey released March 28 of this year by the National Military Family Association, NMFA.

The study, "Cycles of Deployment Report," which focused on the needs of military families, shows service members and military families are experiencing increased levels of anxiety, fatigue, and stress. In response, NMFA outlined recommendations for meeting these challenges amid multiple and extended deployments, increased rates at which servicemembers are called upon for service, and the heavy reliance on National Guard and Reserve forces.

This report clearly shows the range of support programs for families has expanded since the start of the War on Terror. However, multiple deployments and a high operations tempo mean different types of support are needed for families' continued success before, during, and after deployment. The survey results provide the Department of Defense a detailed roadmap for making sure families are taken care of during this important time.

Key findings from this study about the impact of deployment includes:

Almost half of respondents reported they have used or would use counseling services such as anger management classes and family counseling. Three quarters of those who stated they were better able to deal with subsequent deployments found counseling services to be helpful.

Two-thirds of military families surveyed did not have contact with their unit or unit network volunteer during the critical pre-deployment stage.

Less than one-half reported a consistent level of family support through the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases. Seventeen percent reported no support was available.

Many respondents are concerned that volunteers who help families adjust to life during deployment and what to expect after the reunion are becoming fatigued and subject to "burn-out." They stated that the leaders of unit family groups should be paid or have paid professional support personnel assigned.

Military family members with civilian jobs face pressure to avoid taking time off before, during, or after deployment. Sixty percent of military spouses are employed outside the home and many have either quit their jobs or are considering it.

Military families are worried about how the reunion will go with their deployed family member even as they are worrying about their servicemember's safety in the field. Unfortunately, many families are not taking advantage of specific return and reunion briefings and activities.

Many respondents expressed that when entering a second or third deployment, they carry unresolved anxieties and expectations from the last deployment(s). While they may have gained knowledge of resources available to them, respondents whose servicemember deployed multiple times reported being more fatigued and increasingly concerned about their family relationships.

Although challenged by the demands of deployment, families noted they are proud of their servicemember and their service to our country. They understand that family support is primarily their personal responsibility, but they expect "The Military" to provide support as well.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEAL WITH STRESS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS

The National Military Families Association has developed a series of recommendations for how the Department of Defense (DoD) can better train and support military staff and civilian volunteers to assist military families, including:

Expand program and information outreach. Create formats for families to access support services and maintain touch with their commands and unit family group that live too far from either the unit or from other military families.

Assist families in developing realistic expectations, and then meet them. Educate military families about what to expect before, during, and after deployments.

Direct more resources to support family volunteers. Increase the level of resources and paid professionals, both counselors and administrative, to support the logistics of family support and conducting family readiness activities.

Address return and reunion challenges throughout the deployment cycle. Help with the reintegration of a servicemember with the family after deployment.

Recognize that family time is important. Encourage service leaders to give family time a higher priority when planning operational activities, especially for servicemembers who have only been back from deployment for a few months.

Continue deployment briefings throughout the year. Never assume families have all the information they need. Ongoing deployment briefings can especially help new spouses or the parents of new recruits. Experienced family members also may find new challenges during a subsequent deployment or find the accumulated stress from multiple deployments creates the need for re-engagement with the family readiness/support group or for accessing different support personnel.

VII. IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL GUARD

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the large and extended deployment of National Guard units overseas has undermined the ability of the

United States to deal with terrorist attacks or natural disasters. For example, State officials in Louisiana and Mississippi struggled to overcome the absence of National Guard members from their States in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In Louisiana, about 100 of the National Guard's high-water vehicles remain abroad—even as the State continues to rebuild from Hurricane Katrina. Coastal North Carolina is missing nearly half its Humvee fleet, and Guard officials there say shortages have forced the State to pool equipment from different units into one pot of hurricane supplies.

In addition, the equipment the Guard needs to help in the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina is in shorter supply because the gear is in use in combat zones, is battle-damaged, or has been loaned to cover gaps in other units.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, our troops in Iraq have never faltered and they have never failed. They were never defeated in battle. They won the war they were sent to fight. They completed their mission. They performed magnificently.

They have earned the right to return home and be reunited with their families and loved ones. Now is not the time for us in Congress to falter or fail. Now is the time to embrace a plan for our troops in Iraq that offers a chance of success. We need a plan that will work. There is only one such plan. It is the Murtha Plan I support.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We always enjoy your presence, and I think you have made a good point.

And I come from a conservative Democratic district in Ohio. I am probably one of the most conservative Democrats from Ohio in the Congress.

Regardless of how you feel about the gay marriage amendment, regardless of how you feel about flag burning, regardless of how you feel about any of these political issues that the Republican Congress is bringing forth, I think we can all agree that gas prices, health care costs, tuition costs, and lack of education funding rank just a little bit higher than these issues that the Republican Congress and Republican President bring out every other year or every election year.

Now, the President runs a whole 2004 election campaign, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, on the gay marriage amendment and then days after getting reelected says, I do not think we are going to pass it. I do not think I am going to push it. The country is not ready for it.

You just ran your whole campaign on it. Now you are not for it? And they, the President and the Republican Congress on the other side, actually think that the American people are going to fall for this again. Well, we have got news for them.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Gingrich is calling them "they."

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Exactly. We are not the only ones.

And I think the country is obviously divided on those very polarizing issues. But regardless of how you feel, we have got real problems in this country, Mr. Speaker. Can we stop insulting the American public to think that they are

going to somehow fall for these she-nanigans again that were used in 2004? The President was for a gay marriage amendment; then he was against it and decided he was not going to push it. And then 1½ years later, when he is 30 percent in the polls and the Republican Congress has not passed one piece of significant legislation, all of a sudden, they are for the gay marriage amendment again.

It is not going to work. Do you know why? Because this is what has been going on, Mr. Speaker: People making more than \$1 million are getting \$42,000 a year back in tax breaks, and we are borrowing the money from China. We do not have money to give a millionaire \$42,000 back in this country, Mr. MEEK, Ms. JACKSON-LEE. If we had the money to give them, we would have a discussion. We would have a debate: Why are we giving someone who makes \$40,000 a year \$17,000 and someone making \$1 million a year gets \$42,000? If we had the money, we would have that discussion. We would have a national debate about whether or not that was a good idea, about whether or not that money should go into tax cuts for millionaires or education spending or Head Start spending or health care for our citizens or making sure that young kids had health care or veterans would have the proper care that they needed. Mr. Speaker, we would have that discussion. But we do not have the money. We do not have it. We are running \$400 billion deficits, borrowing the money from Japan, China, OPEC countries.

Mr. MEEK, can you imagine with the cost of gas right now, we are borrowing money from OPEC? We are not just giving it to them at the pump. We are going to go out and use them as a bank.

Let us get this country in order, Mr. Speaker. It is time to go in a new direction. And do you like this? Do you like the cost at the gas pump when you have got to put in 55 bucks to fill up your truck? Do you like the fact that the health care costs are up, health insurance up 97 percent; that 4-year public college is up 77 percent; that gas is up 136 percent; that bread is up 25 percent; that whole milk is up 24 percent? If you are happy with this, vote Republican. Continue. They have been in charge of the House and the Senate and the White House for a good many years now. The neoconservative agenda, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, has been implemented. We do not have to worry about what is going to happen. We do not have to wait and see one day how it will affect the American people. It has been implemented and this chart is the end result.

Look at these numbers. And we are having debates about gay marriage? You have got to be kidding me to insult the American people like that.

I go to Giant Eagle in Niles to do my shopping. Union meat cutters, a small little town of Niles, Ohio. I go and get some bread, Lucky Charms because I like to eat cereal, and I get the organic

milk because it lasts a lot longer than regular milk. We are traveling a lot; so I get the organic milk. So we go and I fill my basket up, and I checkout. And you know how it is when you go back home, people will grab you and they will want to talk issues. No one grabs me in the aisles and says, "Can you please stop the gay people from getting married up in Massachusetts because they are really affecting the gas prices?" No one says that to me. No one asks me about flag burning, Mr. MEEK.

They ask me about how are we going to reduce the cost of gas because I am a nurse's aid and I have to travel around.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Making minimum wage.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Making barely minimum wage. I have to quit my job because I cannot afford the gas prices as they are. I am better off going on welfare and registering for Medicaid.

We have a system that is going against people who want to work. We want to incentivize that. And in the first 100 days, it will be amazing what the Democratic Party can do.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. A real agenda.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can you imagine in the first week when we raise the minimum wage? I am just going to pick two of the issues: We raise the minimum wage, and we cut college loan interest rates in half. Can you imagine the impact for average people in Ohio, in Miami, in Texas? Can you imagine? You are actually going to be helping people. We can do this, and we need an opportunity to do it, Mr. Speaker.

I have taken way too much time, and I know both of you have points you want to make. But look at what is happening in the country and look at the disgraceful debate that is happening here in Congress.

And one final point: The debate we had a couple weeks ago on the Iraqi war resolution, we had a debate here in Congress. We have lost \$9 billion in Iraq, and no one really seems to know where it is, and the Congress is not much interested in finding out exactly who has it. We have spent \$318 billion, \$400 billion, tons of money in Iraq with no oversight. We have had hurricanes in the country and we do not know where FEMA is spending money. They are paying for divorce attorneys' fees and the like, and we don't have any oversight hearings on that. So if the American people want to keep going in that direction, all they have to do is continue to rubber stamp the Republican House, the Republican Senate, and President Bush.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Well, if the gentleman from Florida will continue to yield, I just want to take just a moment. I cannot tell you the passion or the core that you have touched.

People hear us on the floor of the House, and they probably assume that we are taking up the cause of our

Founding Fathers and using the skills of debate.

□ 2230

What I hear you saying and what I have seen when I have been home a week ago, we have been in and out of our neighborhoods, and what I have seen is that people are hurting. The minimum wage has not been increased, but the administration had a paltry 122,000 jobs, barely a blip on the radar screen. There is unemployment in all communities. People want to work, but they are frustrated by the pressures or the finances needed to work.

So we are touching on people's lives. We are touching on the single mother, we are touching on the family of four that maybe does not have a vacation, even though we have been in the airports and it looks pretty busy. There are people who barely can make it because we have had no action, and the sadness is to go to a public hospital and see people who really need to see a doctor and they are in the emergency room because basically they do not have the resources even to participate in what you call a pay-as-you-go clinic, which they would want to do.

So, my only point on the method that you have just given is, for God's sake, we need a new direction in America. We really need a new direction, and that would cover all of the basic bread and butter issues that you have just recounted.

So what I am hoping is that Democrats do not let up, that we tell the American people that we would much rather stand with them than fall amongst the throng who think it is always good to be with the special interests. I would much rather pass a minimum wage, I would much rather ask the question why the gas per gallon is so high and do something about it. I would much rather keep kids in college and take care of the environment and see people go back to work. That is what I think we are saying here tonight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think that is exactly it and I know Mr. MEEK has points he wants to make, but I think Members of Congress and average Americans need to ask themselves just one question, and we will just pick two of these.

Implement mentally this in your mind if you are an American. We will raise the minimum wage to \$7.50 an hour in the first week we are here, and we will then cut your student loan interest rates in half. Whether they are parent loans or student loans, your rate will be cut in half if Democrats are in. Let us just pretend we will not do anything else, and we have got binders full of ideas here that we will implement, broadband access, tax cuts for venture capital that was basically written by the high-tech industries who NANCY PELOSI sat down with to make sure how do we get the country up and running again.

But just say we do those two things, we are not saying we are going to over-

promise. We are saying in first day or two we are going to pass the minimum wage and we are going to reduce college loans by half. What would that do? That will save students \$4,000 or \$5,000 over the course of their loans, parents the same way, and the minimum wage will be increased unfortunately just a few thousand dollars a year. Hopefully, if we take the majority back in a significant number, along with the Senate, we can do maybe even more.

But just picture those two things and the impact it would have on your life.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. JACKSON-LEE for joining us. I think it is important as we look at the last 10, 12 minutes of our time here of looking at being responsible, looking at being responsible, and what the American people in every district that is represented here in this House, Mr. Speaker, woke up early one Tuesday morning just after 7:00 a.m. to vote for representation. They need a change in this Chamber. We are saying we are willing to give them the chance.

We are not looking at party affiliation. If you live in the part of the country where you are a Republican and there is nothing but Republicans get elected, this is not a Republican club or a Democratic club or an Independent club or a Green Party or Reform Party House. It should not be. The American people expect for us to work in a bipartisan way for their greater good. That has not happened.

The Republican majority does not have the will, nor the desire, to work in a bipartisan way with Democratic Members in this House or the one Independent that is here.

On every major piece of legislation, Ms. JACKSON-LEE has just said there has only been two, there has been no Democratic input on those pieces of legislation to where that when it was a conference committee meeting, nine times out of 10, those Members are not even invited. The first time they see it is when it comes to floor, when it comes out of the conference committee, and this is when both House and Senate pass the bill and then they sit down and work out to appoint a small committee. They work out the differences and then go back to their respective Chambers and pass the changes that were made. That just does not happen.

So I think when Mr. RYAN started talking about the tax cuts for the millionaires, and I am talking about in the heavy millions, and what they are walking away with and what the American people are not walking away with, you have to look at who do you trust.

Here is an article, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure folks know they can get this on housedemocrats.gov. I think it will be up hours after we leave the floor here. "The Spending Virus," by the Washington Times, of all places, washingtontimes.com, very conservative newspaper here in Washington, D.C. This is by Steve Chapman.

June 25, 2006. Last August, President Bush demanded Congress curb its appetite for

spending so that we can continue to send a signal to the people around the country that we are serious about being fiscally responsible with the people's money.

It is not my writing. It is Mr. Chapman's writing and it was there. He is a columnist. Now today is Monday right, so this meant if he said this today, on tomorrow, Tuesday, this is what the President did.

The next day he signed a port bill, transportation bill, that broke all records for public works spending. Next day, the very next day.

Well, I would give the President the benefit of the doubt if he said it a couple of years ago and just forgot that he said it, but when you say something today and then the next day you go and you sign a bill that breaks records in spending, how in the world could that stand?

The article goes further to say, since 2001 expenditures have risen more than \$900 billion, up nearly 50 percent. The expansion of the Federal discretionary spending has been faster than under Lyndon Johnson who was once the king of the big spenders but has been dethroned, dethroned this is his writing, by George W. Bush, and I would add, the Republican majority. Dethroned.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This guy said that George Bush dethroned Lyndon Johnson?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You know the thing about it, Mr. Speaker, at least under Lyndon Johnson we were able to improve education. At least under Lyndon Johnson, public works projects, as it relates to housing, was built, not just this runaway spending as it relates to satisfying the first of billionaires and millionaires and allowing oil companies to make record profits on the backs of the American people.

Now, how do we get to where we are now?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Corporate welfare. Let us expand just for a second. Corporate welfare, \$16 billion to the energy companies and between 20 and \$30 billion to the health care industry. That is where that money is going. So if you are going to dethrone Lyndon Johnson, at least dethrone him by investing in education.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Since you got fired up about this, I just want to get started. I am going to read the last couple of lines of this article because we are running out of time.

But when it comes to that sort of wisdom and courage in Washington, DC, we suffer another deficit, and what this person is saying is that we have to have leadership in this chamber that is willing to enforce it.

Now, let me just say this very quickly. I think it is important in our last 5 minutes to talk about being responsible. This is the U.S. Department of Treasury. This is not the Kendrick Meek report or Tim Ryan or the 30 Something Working Group report. This is on our Web site and this is on the U.S. Treasury's Web site if you want to go in and find it and crunch the numbers.

President Bush and the Republican Congress, from 2001 to 2005, have borrowed from foreign Nations \$1.05 trillion. In 4 years, 4 years, Mr. Speaker, \$1.05 trillion, you see the President and the Republican Congress.

Forty-two Presidents that you see here, some are wearing wigs, \$1.01 trillion, they were only able to borrow from foreign Nations in 224 years.

So that meant the President has accomplished something that 42 Presidents before him have not been able to accomplish.

□ 2240

But the Great Depression, World War I, World War II and a number of conflicts, he dethroned, that is our new one, Mr. Chapman gave it to us, third-party validator he has dethroned 42 Presidents and Congresses before it with the record-breaking borrowing.

Who is he borrowing it from? I mean, we break this all the way down. My 11-year-old can get this. And that is the way we got to do it, because I want to make sure that the American people and the Republican majority have no way to go home and hoodwink their constituents by saying, oh, I did not quite understand that bill, or that when I raised the debt limit.

Japan, we borrowed \$682.8 billion. Japan is an island, I must add. China is \$249.8 billion that they own of the American apple pie. The UK is at \$223.2 billion. Caribbean nations. You know, I was home recently over the break, and someone came up to me and said, how can Caribbean nations own a piece of the American apple pie? They are just the Caribbean. Well, guess what? In Washington, DC the Republican majority are just big spenders. Well, they borrow from whoever will give us the money. They are buying our debt. They are getting a part of the American apple pie thanks to the Republican majority and the President. They come in at \$115.3 billion.

Taiwan, \$71.3 billion. OPEC nations, which, Mr. Speaker, I must add, I need to break this down for the Members are all of those oil-producing nations, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, you name it, Venezuela, all of them have a piece of the American apple pie that comes in at \$67.8 billion.

Germany, \$65.7 billion. Korea, \$66.5 billion, and Canada, \$53.8 billion. They own a part of the American apple pie, not because the American people did not do what they were supposed to do, because they are being asked to go beyond the call of duty. I am so glad that Mr. RYAN came to this floor in a very passionate way shared the level of frustration that so many Americans have that wish they could come to the floor and come before this great democracy and come to this House of Representatives and let them know what is on their mind.

It is our obligation and duty, Mr. Speaker, that we come to the floor and share what it is. We cannot sugar-coat it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Look at this, Mr. MEEK. The Republicans increased the debt limit by \$3.7 trillion. You will notice that is a "T" there in the red, not a "B". In June of 2002, May of 2003, November of 2004, March of 2006, and the House Budget Resolution, another \$653 billion, \$3.7 trillion this Republican Congress has increased the debt limit, which is saying, go out, Mr. President, Secretary of the Treasury, go out and borrow some more money. It is okay to borrow money and then spend it on corporate welfare for the oil industry and the energy companies. It is okay to spend it for the health care industry.

Come on. Let us get things in order here. This is not brain surgery. And, you know, Mr. MEEK, I thank you for doing that, because our whole mission here as 30-Somethings is to break down and talk about issues that are going to affect our generation in the long term. And when you look at the kind of borrowing from these other countries, you know, just an example of China. Okay. How much we are borrowing.

Now we are asking China to help us negotiate with North Korea. Well, you think they are going to be helpful when they are our bank? You think they are going to be pressured by us when they are loaning us money? Like you say so eloquently, when you loan someone money, it changes the dynamics of the relationship. You loan me \$5, now I owe you so I cannot come back and say, hey, help us with North Korea.

This is not about North Korea. We got to take this country in a new direction. This is about North Carolina. This is about the north side of Youngstown. Okay? This is about the north side of Cleveland and the north end in Boston. This is about America. Let us get this country going in a new direction again.

We know what the world looks like when a neo conservative Republican agenda has been implemented. Just look around. Read the front page of the newspaper, Mr. MEEK. Look at the foreign policy, look at the domestic policy. That is the implementation of the neo conservative agenda.

You like it, vote Republican. You do not like it, take the country in a new direction and vote for the Democrats. And let me get this out here, our oldest and most trusted chart. If you would like to contact us, Mr. Speaker, Mr. MEEK, www.housedemocrats.gov/30somethings.

All of the charts that were available here tonight are available on that website. I would like to take one second to thank Tom Anatos who does such a tremendous job helping us gather all of this information.

I would like to thank my good friend from Miami. I missed not being with you last week while we were on break. I look forward to spending more time with you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, it is always a pleasure working with you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing

us to have this hour, all of the Members that participated in it.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HINOJOSA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and July 11 on account of a death in the family.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in the district.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. MCNULTY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and July 11.

Ms. SLAUGHTER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. GIBBONS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business.

Mr. SESSIONS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for the week of July 10 on account of taking his son to scout camp.

Mrs. EMERSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of travel delays.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

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

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LYNCH, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MCKINNEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MACK) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, today and July 11 and 12.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah, for 5 minutes, July 11.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, July 11, 12, 13, and 17.

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and July 11, 12, and 13.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and July 11, 12, and 13.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, July 11, 12, and 13.

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, July 11 and 12.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2125. An act to promote relief, security, and democracy in the Democratic Republic

of the Congo; to the Committee on International Relations.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on June 29, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 5403. To improve protections for children and to hold States accountable for the safe and timely placement of children across State lines, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5603. To temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House also reports that on June 30, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 889. To authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2006, to make technical corrections to various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4912. To amend section 242 of the National Housing Act to extend the exemption for critical access hospitals under the FHA program for mortgage insurance for hospitals.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until, tomorrow, Tuesday, July 11, 2006, at 9 a.m., for morning hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8374. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Citrus From Peru [Docket No. 03-113-3] received May 3, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8375. A letter from the Administrator, FSIS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Addition of the People's Republic of China to the List of Countries Eligible to Export Processed Poultry Products to the United States [Docket No. 05-012F; FDMS No. FSIS-2005-0034] (RIN: 0583-AD20) received June 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8376. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Myclobutanil; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions [EPA-HQ-OPP-2006-0395; FRL-8068-2] received June 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8377. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Spinosad; Pesticide Tolerance Technical Correction [EPA-HQ-OPP-2005-0510; FRL-8073-9] received June 20, 2006,

pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8378. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Technical Amendments; Change of Address for the Office of Pesticide Programs [EPA-HQ-OPP-2006-0403; FRL-8070-7] received June 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8379. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Notice of Waivers for the Native American Vocational Technical Education Program (NAVTEP) and the Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational and Technical Institutions Program (TCPVTIP) and Funding of Continuation Grants — received June 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8380. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research — Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program; Funding Priorities — received June 7, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8381. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Division of Regulatory Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Grants for the Integration of Schools and Mental Health Systems — received June 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8382. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel Division of Regulatory Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Overview Information; Emergency Response and Crisis Management Grant Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 — received June 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8383. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Office of Special Education Programs — State Personnel Development Grants Program — received June 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8384. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research — Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program — Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs); Funding Priorities — received June 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8385. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research — Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program; Funding Priorities — received June 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

8386. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation