

reader. In any event, the rights of freedom of speech and press were next, and then the right of us, the people, to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress.

You see, these rights are first because if you do not have these, the rest of them in the Bill of Rights do not mean anything. And when this speech phrase was put here, it was put here because there were two types of speech our forefathers wanted to protect: religious speech and political speech. You see, that is the controversy. You could not say what you wanted to say about the king. You might get in trouble. And so political speech is protected. Religious speech is protected. And that is why you have the right of freedom of speech and, of course, the right of press. And a free press protects the rights in this amendment and all the others as well. And, of course, the right of the people to assemble and petition the government.

So as we progress in the next few weeks, we will talk more about our Constitution in detail, hopefully getting some interest in the American public, into reading this book. Most books like this have the Declaration of Independence in it and then the Constitution.

The Declaration of Independence was the promise. The Constitution was the fulfillment of that promise. And it is a philosophy our forefathers had that we still are arguing and debating about tonight and debating in this House on a constant basis. It is the idea of freedom from government, or government controlling us. That is the choice we make every time we pass legislation.

Every time we give government more authority, we are taking more authority and responsibility from us, the individual and the people, and willingly giving it to government. Maybe we should do that and maybe we should not. But freedom is something that is very valuable. It is, in fact, the most valuable thing that any of us as individuals have or will ever have. And that is why the Founders of our country believed and died and lost so much to be free from British rule.

It is now a world we live in, where many countries are free, that raise the value and worth of the individual to its highest level and put government below the people. And in this country we must constantly be vigilant to protect the people from government, because it is government's responsibility to do our will, not our responsibility to do government's will. Our will is paramount to the government's. And the only way government gets authority is because we decide to give it authority over the rest of us.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to spend these few minutes talking about these great two documents, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States. And as the weeks progress, we will talk more about these truths that are self-evident, that these two docu-

ments are who we are, what we are, what we stand for, and what we will continue to stand for.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1053. An act to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Ukraine.

□ 1800

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor once again to come before the House. I would like to thank Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi for allowing us to have the time and the Democratic whip, Mr. HOYER; Mr. CLYBURN, our chairman; and Mr. LARSON, our vice-chair.

Mr. Speaker, we have been coming to the floor all this week. We are going to be talking tonight about our plans to hopefully move this country forward. Maybe we can work together in doing that in a bipartisan way. Mr. RYAN is here at the top of the hour tonight, and I am so glad that you are here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here. We have a lot to talk about again, as we wrap up another week of business here at the Capitol.

There are a lot of issues facing our country, and I had a lot of meetings this week on different issues: education, folks in about manufacturing, about the local economy and the problems that they are having with pension and health care.

I think if you look at what is happening in the country, you will see that most Americans either intellectually or in their gut realize that the country is going in the wrong direction.

So our plan tonight, as we come here several nights a week, is to try to let the American people know that we are moving them forward.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to say that, trying to let them know that we are moving forward because that is what we are trying to do, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to move this country in the right direction. Unfortunately, I must add there has been a lot of discussion here under the Capitol dome about who we are going to do business with, how we are going to do business with them, and how we are going to prevent ourselves from getting into a situation like this ongoing port situation that is some back-room deal that took place with a special com-

mittee, and we are finding out more and more about it each day.

When we start, I do not really want to focus on that, Mr. Speaker. I want to focus on the fact that we talk about working in a bipartisan way. The Republican Party here in this House is in the majority. That means that the majority has the opportunity to lead in a comprehensive way, including all Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, as we start to move down the road to not only making this country financially secure but secure its borders and secure all America.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. One of the issues that I think is a fundamental issue that we have in the country facing us is the issue of balancing the budget here and making sure that our country pays its bills. The Republican majority has not been able to get themselves together in a comprehensive way, as you said, to try to balance the budget here in the United States.

I want to just make a point here, and we have got several charts I think that are pretty powerful in illustrating this point.

The Republicans have increased the debt limit, Mr. Speaker, by \$3 trillion, \$3 trillion. This Republican Congress, Mr. Speaker, has said to the Treasury Department, go ahead and borrow that money. In June of 2002, increased by \$450 billion. In May of 2003, increase of \$984 billion. In November of 2004, \$800 billion, and we have an increase coming that is going to probably come in the next couple weeks of another \$781 billion. Over \$3 trillion this Republican Congress has okayed for the Treasury to go out and borrow because this Republican Congress does not have the fiscal responsibility or the discipline to rein in spending.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There is no probably about it. You are saying they probably will raise the debt ceiling. There is no probably about it. It is going to happen.

We have our rubber stamp here because you know that they are going to rubber-stamp this deal. They are going to take this stamp out, and they are going to rubber-stamp raising the debt ceiling. What does that mean? What that means, by some \$821 billion, raising the debt ceiling, even more, beyond where it is now, and that is just the number that I received recently that Secretary Snow has predicted we need to raise the debt ceiling by.

It is because of the love affair with special interests, giving oil companies more subsidies or more money in the time that they are making record profits. It is when the President says let us make tax cuts permanent for billionaires, knowing that we have been fiscally irresponsible, Mr. Speaker; and I think it is important, I was about to just give some information that is pretty fresh about what happened last night in Appropriations Committee, and I think it is important for us to reflect on this.

We talk about bipartisanship. We talk about working in a comprehensive

way. We are trying to make that happen. Like you said, we are trying to bring this government back into pay-as-you-go fiscal responsibility, making sure that we do things in the right way.

I just want to say that the Democrats, we want to keep America safe, and I know Republicans want to do it, too; but we are following the 9/11 Commission recommendations of trying to move towards 100 percent container screening. Now, there are some other countries on the globe, I know one in particular, that is doing that, and I think it is important for us to be the superpower of the world, we are supposed to be financial superpower of the world, and we are only checking less than 5 or 6 percent of containers; and I think it is important that I point this out. That is not what Democrats called for. That is what the 9/11 Commission called for, because we believe in working with those that have researched issues and flushed them out so that we can move forward in protecting Americans.

It is not something that came out of the back rooms of some Democratic club somewhere in Sioux City, Iowa. This came about by professionals coming together, past Members of this House, Governors, security people, testimony from FBI, CIA, port directors, individuals that specialize in terrorism.

That is just like our innovation plan. We did not over a cup of coffee and a muffin say, well, what do you think our innovation plan should be, and write it on a napkin. We went out to the CEOs. We went out to the universities of higher learning. We went out to everyday, front-line employers and asked them what do you think we should do as it relates to innovation and where we are lagging. We went to students that are trying to get into the math and sciences and said what do you need.

We went out and we talked to America. We did not just come up with a plan in the back rooms, and we definitely did not get in a room with the special interests and say let us write a bill like the oil industry has had the opportunity to do and some other industries have had an opportunity to do.

I am not holding the oil industry or any other industry at fault here. They are just doing their job. I hold the Republican majority at fault that has allowed us to get in a situation that we are in now.

Real quick, I just want to make sure, just fresh from last night, from the Appropriations Committee, we offered amendments to strengthen how government reviews foreign transactions by mandating a review of all foreign transactions. That amendment was offered, and it was voted down. All Democrats voted for it. Republicans voted against it with the exception of one Republican that voted with the Democrats. That is strengthening, making sure that all transactions are

reviewed, not just a few, but all so that we do not have to continue to walk down the same road.

The second vote that came about was by Mr. SABO, basically providing \$3.4 billion for critical homeland security shortfalls, including a \$1.5 billion for port security needs. I think that it is important to say that, again: party-line vote, 27 Democrats voted for it, 34 Republicans voted against it.

I am glad that we get this information from the committees, and we are sharing with not only the Members who probably were not, there some Members with respect in the Appropriations Committee because all Members are not on the Appropriations Committee, but also, the American people should know. The American people should know exactly what we are trying to do here.

When I say trying, we are trying. If we were in the majority, it would be done. We would have all transactions reviewed dealing with foreign countries. It will happen. We would have had a Hurricane Katrina commission by now, and we would be taking action on what we should do to correct it, and so the oversight would have been different on Katrina. So I think it is important to bring these fresh votes to the floor, not even 24 hours ago.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, just as you were saying, this is what you were saying: only 5 percent of the cargo coming in is inspected. Mr. Speaker, our source on this one, our third-party validator on this one, is Fox News. So that is where we are.

Now, here is the recommendation from the Coast Guard. Their own estimates, this is the U.S. Coast Guard and I know you have a Coast Guard, probably more than one facility, down in Miami, in the intercoastal for sure, but this is what the Coast Guard estimates that they may need, \$7 billion in order to secure and meet their obligations through the Transportation Security Act. Here is what Congress has appropriated, \$900 million, not even \$1 billion. We need to be here. Here is where we are.

Now, what have the Democrats tried to do? We have been very aggressive and assertive and proactive in trying to make sure that we meet the obligations to protect and secure our own ports. This is just a laundry list. I am going to run through them real quick here.

November 28 of 2001, DAVE OBEY from Wisconsin tried to put \$200 million in grants for port security and studies. Republicans knocked it down 216-211 in a party-line vote.

April of 2003, another OBEY amendment for \$722 million to increase security. Again, 221-200. All the Republicans prevented us from increased port security.

Again, Democrats, June 17 of 2003, OBEY again, \$500 million, shot down, party-line vote.

June 24 of 2003, OBEY again, Republicans blocked consideration of that amendment by a vote of 222-200.

All of the Republicans are voting to prevent the increase in funding just by a few hundred million dollars. It is not like we want to even say we are going to go for the whole \$7 billion that we need, but we are trying to slowly increase the funding for this so we can make sure that we are protecting our ports.

Again, in September 17 of 2003, OBEY, SABO and Senator BYRD tried to increase funding to enhance ports by \$475 million. Republicans defeated that amendment on a party-line vote.

Again, June 9 of 2004, Mr. Speaker, again, again and again; June 18 of 2004; October 7 of 2004; again and again, September 29 of 2005, \$300 million, again shot down along party lines. March 2 of 2006, again.

Mr. Speaker, we have a real problem here because it seems that every time that the Democrats want to increase funding even marginally to protect our ports, there is a Republican party-line vote that prevents us from doing that. That is what the Democrats are trying to do.

That is our plan.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I heard Mr. MEEK mention the lack of oversight that occurs within this institution, within this branch; and it is a very serious problem, and many have spoken to it.

What I found interesting, while I was at my desk, a friend and colleague of ours, I think it was Mr. CONAWAY from Texas, talked about a bill that he has, I presume, already filed, which would require Members of Congress to read the Constitution once a year.

I listened to him with some fascination, and I would propose that he should consider expanding that particular proposal to include a recognition that a constitutional responsibility of the House of Representatives is oversight of the executive branch and that every Member of Congress should make a solemn pledge before God to honor that responsibility, to conduct oversight.

□ 1815

Because I believe if every single Member of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, respected that constitutional principle, we would not be beset by the problems that are becoming obvious to the American people. But I didn't hear any mention of that by our friend and colleague, Mr. CONAWAY.

We are not meeting our constitutional responsibility because the majority party, the Republican Party in this branch, refuses, refuses to conduct oversight of the executive branch because of fear of embarrassing the White House. Well, again, their constitutional responsibility does not flow to the White House. Their constitutional responsibility, Mr. Speaker, goes to the American people, not to the White House.

I mean, it is remarkable that during the course of the Bush Presidency we have failed to conduct in-depth probes about some of the most serious allegations of executive abuse and misconduct.

And let me just note a few. The possible role of the White House in promoting misleading intelligence about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and ties to al Qaeda. Just recently, Mr. Speaker, a former CIA official, who served from 2000 to 2005 and has retired, penned a book that indicated that the intelligence was cherry-picked. Yet this House refused, refused to do any oversight; to ask a single question; to bring an executive branch official before the appropriate committee to ask questions that the American people deserve to have answers to.

And what about the responsibility of senior administration officials for abuses of detainees at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere? What about the role of the White House in withholding the Medicare cost estimates that were in their possession from Congress while we were debating a significantly expensive piece of legislation? In fact, it was acknowledged that the executive White House official in charge threatened to fire, he threatened to fire the Medicare actuary if he told Members of Congress that it was not going to cost \$395 billion, according to their estimate, but about \$700 billion. And again, no oversight.

And I could go on and on. But I have to tell you, if we are going to read the Constitution, if we are going to impose on ourselves the requirement, Mr. Speaker, to read the Constitution, then let us act in a constitutionally responsible way and meet our responsibility so that the American people know what is happening here in Washington and who is responsible.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And it is not just the war, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Of course not.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is the war intelligence that no one here has asked any questions on. It is what is going on with the ports. It is the amount of borrowing that we are doing; this \$3 trillion in new debt this Republican Congress and the Republican Senate and House and White House has incurred on the American people and, just like in our own houses, we have to pay interest on that debt, that money that we borrow.

What we are having happen now, because of the reckless and fiscally irresponsible behavior of the Republican majority, it is impossible for us to make the kind of investments that we need to make here, Mr. Speaker. Every single family fundamentally understands the importance of education; yet here is what we have to fund because of all this borrowing. We pay this much on our interest on the debt, not even buying the debt down, but just paying the interest on it, Mr. MEEK. We have to pay almost \$230 billion in the 2007 budget.

These little blocks down here, these are the investments that we have to make in education, in homeland security, for veterans. Look how small they are compared to the interest on the debt.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So what you are saying, Mr. RYAN, is that education could have \$250 billion; am I correct?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yes. Yes, if this money could be distributed to these other priorities.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Like homeland security and veterans?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Just wanted to be clear.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yes, these are our priorities as a country. And we can stand here and talk about port security, and we can talk about education all we want, and we can talk about what investments we need to make in alternative energy sources, and we can talk about the Democratic plan for innovation, research and development tax credits, broadband in every household, Mr. Speaker, in 5 years.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But the point is, Mr. RYAN, we cannot afford it because the debt that the American people now owe is in excess of \$8 trillion, and on that \$8 trillion we have to pay interest.

And what is the amount of interest on an annual basis, approximately? Do we have a range?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In 2007 it will be almost \$230 billion, with some interest.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So that is interest of \$230 billion. Just imagine what we could do with \$230 billion.

That interest, by the way, do you know where that interest is going to, at least a significant piece of it?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Japan.

Mr. DELAHUNT. China.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. OPEC countries.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And OPEC and other countries. Because to subsidize these substantial, very large tax cuts for just a small segment of the American people, we have to go into the financial markets and borrow money so that we can reduce taxes, and then that tax relief ends up not benefiting the vast majority of Americans.

But we are borrowing it. We are borrowing it from overseas. We are borrowing it from nations, many of whom could be potential adversaries, yet we are sending dollars over there of interest payments so that they can invest in roads, in health, and particularly in education, while we are slipping behind. We are slipping behind.

You know, there is a lot of talk in Washington about how this economy is growing. But what you never hear about is that the average American family is losing every year in terms of its income. It is going down. The most recent statistic was that in this past year it went down 2.7 percent. Well, that is hurting families. And that \$230 billion, let us say we just invested that. That is interest payments to China, to Japan, to other countries,

and to the OPEC countries. With \$230 billion, we could give every young person in this country a free college education, send them to the finest graduate schools in the country and ensure that their futures would be bright. But what we are doing is we are putting on our young people a debt that they will never, never in their lifetime be able to pay off. That is just simply wrong, and that is where we have a disagreement.

But you know what is interesting, and if I can just continue, because I am going to have to leave to catch a plane; but not only are Democrats criticizing this White House, but conservatives, people with impeccable conservative credentials like Bruce Bartlett, who just wrote a book and who served in the Reagan administration; like Andrew Sullivan, another noted conservative.

Well, here is what Andrew Sullivan said, and he wrote a book, too. I can't wait to read it. It is coming out soon. "The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It; How to Get It Back." Sullivan called Bush "reckless" and a "socialist" and accused him of betraying "almost every principle conservatism has ever stood for." Now, those are not my words, those are the words of Andrew Sullivan.

And Bruce Bartlett, a former Reagan administration official, had this to say. He called the administration unconscionable, irresponsible, vindictive and inept. And his book is entitled "How George W. Bush Bankrupted America and Betrayed the Reagan Legacy."

Yet here we are serving in this branch and we never, never meet or exercise our constitutional responsibility to review the actions of this administration, because the majority does not want to embarrass a Republican President. And I agree with much of what is said by these commentators: "This is a big government agenda. The notion that the Thatcher-Reagan legacy that many of us grew up to love and support would end this way is an astonishing paradox and a great tragedy."

Something is amiss when you have people with these conservative credentials making these harsh statements about this administration and this Republican Congress not daring to exercise its oversight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield, that is powerful, very powerful stuff. I mean, that is good. And in addition to what the gentleman from Massachusetts said, the point is that it is not conservative to balance the budget. It just is what it is. You just do it. The Democrats did it in 1993 without one Republican vote. President Clinton got in with the Democratic House and a Democratic Senate and balanced the budget, Mr. MEEK. That is just what you do when you take your oath, when you swear to uphold the Constitution and preserve, protect, and defend the country.

Part of preserving, protecting, and defending the country is making sure we balance the budget, Mr. DELAHUNT.

□ 1830

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) for spelling it out, and I do not want you to miss your plane. I want to thank you for coming down and sharing that information. We needed to hear it.

We have a number of Members running around here because they are following. They are following the Republican leadership on the Republican side and voting in a way that they probably could not go out on a street corner in their districts and if they were to ask 10 people, do you believe in this vote that I took, it would be probably two, maybe one and a half that may say that makes sense, give bigger subsidies to oil companies which are making record profits while we are paying more at the pump.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for putting the "something" into the 30-somethings.

Mr. RYAN, it comes down to leadership. That is the word, leadership, and making sure that the folks that woke up early one Tuesday morning to elect every Member of this House, if a Member leaves midterm, gets sick, whatever the case may be, I do not want to be in Congress any more, there has to be an election called and it has to be filled. The Governor cannot appoint someone like in the Senate.

I think it is important for us to be able to point out the irresponsibility that not only the President has carried out as it relates to being fiscally sound, not putting this country in a bad posture.

You have a chart there that talks about what we are facing right now. I am going to take maybe 5 minutes and go down the line, just in case a Member did not see us last night or the night before. I think it is important for everyone to understand what is going on.

Our good friend, Secretary Snow, the Secretary of the Treasury, wrote this letter about raising the debt ceiling on December 29, 2005. I was thinking about the new year, enjoying family. I was not in my office writing a letter saying we need to raise the debt ceiling. I do not blame Secretary Snow; I blame the policies of this Republican majority.

It says, "We will be unable to continue to finance government operations." Basically, he is saying we have to raise the debt ceiling, but that is the punch line. That is enough to send me running saying we need to do something immediately.

If the Democrats were in control, we would not have to go through this process because we believe in balancing budgets. The Republican majority says we want to cut it in half, or eventually by the year 2084 we would cut it in half. We are not saying that. We have balanced the budget, and we are about paying as we go so we do not get further into debt.

Secretary Snow wrote to Mr. SPRATT, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, just to say he has to now

go into what they call the G Fund, the Government Security Investment Fund, that is for the Federal Employee Retirement System. They are saying they can no longer pay into that because there is no money to do it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, this means that we already are not meeting our obligations. That already means that the financial constraints that the Republican majority has put upon us already is forcing the Secretary of the Treasury to not put money in to meet the obligations of the Federal employment retiree program.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Mr. RYAN is 110 percent right.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is the first step.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me say this, Mr. RYAN. He says, starting today, February 16. Now that is when you have waited as long as you can. When you write a letter talking about an action that you are going to take on that day, the same day, not that we cannot do it a week from now. Not that we can't do it on the 18th; I cannot do it the day I sign this letter.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. He must have faxed it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It must have been faxed.

March 6, this letter is very, very alarming. As you can see through our discussion, we have stamped the rubber stamp Congress onto it. We have this rubber stamp, and it should be very familiar to the Members right now.

This is about the fact that they are going to do exactly what the administration asked them to do, and that is why we are in this situation and not able to meet our obligations.

We are going to go down memory lane real quickly. This is saying for the first time in U.S. history we will not be able to meet our Federal Government obligation, our financial obligations. That means paying our bills if the debt ceiling is not raised immediately. The Secretary is going into in this letter that he is going to have to use his special powers that he has been given to divert and no longer pay into and suspend paying into not only the G Fund but other governmental accounts, and it has to happen as soon as possible.

Mr. RYAN, how did we get into this situation, and who do we owe? How did we make history? And when I say "we," the Republican majority. Well, they made history by following the President, and by following the President, they made it in a wrong way, Mr. Speaker. No other time in the history of this country, no other time since the beginning of this country, and I am saying the history, and I am trying to crumble this thing down, since the beginning of the United States of America have we ever been in this situation and borrowing from foreign nations that is now reaching the 50 percent mark that we are going to owe foreign nations; \$1.05 trillion we have borrowed from foreign nations.

We have the Republican Congress right under the President's picture because the President could not do it on his own. Forty-two Presidents, \$1.01 trillion, 224 years; it took 224 years for 42 Presidents to borrow \$1.01 trillion from foreign nations.

Mr. RYAN, that means that the Great Depression, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, all of the issues we have had as a country, they knew being financially sound as a country and paying our bills as we go, that borrowing, record-breaking borrowing from other countries was not a good thing to do, Democrats and Republicans. This President and this Republican Congress in 4 years.

So what is going to happen if we do not bring it under control now? You know we cannot do it alone. We have to have the majority to bring a stop to this.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Borrow and spend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Borrow and spend.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This President has not vetoed one spending bill, not one. So to say Congress needs to get its act in order, Congress is spending and the President is okaying it. Then the President puts his budget, and this Republican Congress gets out the rubber stamp, all at the expense of the next generation who are going to have to borrow and pay interest on this money to pay it back. Ultimately at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it weakens the country.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. To be able to paint this even further for the Members, I am going to put a couple of countries up, more than a couple up, thanks to the Republican majority, that own a piece of the American pie. This bothers me in putting these countries up, but I think it is important that we spell it out.

Mr. Speaker, when American civilization 500-600 years from now, when they start digging into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to find out what happened at this time, because I will guarantee you this, and I was talking to a group of veterans that came to my office today, this Congress, this Republican Congress, the 109th Congress and the President of the United States will go down in history, not in history of, oh, wow, something great happened, history in saying what were they doing? How did we get to the point that we owe so many foreign nations money? How did they buy a piece of the American pie? Why wasn't this an alarming time?

We want them to be able to unearth this map here.

U.K., they own \$223.2 billion of our debt. The U.K. did not make us do it; they just were available to say fine, because you are going to owe us.

Germany, that should mean something to some veterans, \$65.7 billion of our debt.

Taiwan, folks talk about Taiwan, many of the toys that are floating around the United States are made in Taiwan; and what they are doing with

the money, they are buying our debt, \$71.3 billion that they have of our debt.

Canada, the country just north of the United States of America, they own \$53.8 billion of our debt.

Korea, and that should mean something to our veterans, \$6.5 billion they have of our debt. We owe them.

OPEC nations, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, I can go down the line. OPEC nations, oil-producing nations, while we are here paying record-breaking prices for gas, they are flipping that around and getting a piece of the American pie financially at \$67.8 billion, OPEC nations.

China, Red China.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Communists.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Communist China, \$249.8 billion of U.S. debt they have purchased. We owe them.

Japan, the island of Japan I must add, the island of Japan, not as big as the United States, but we owe them a whopping \$682.8 billion. We owe them. The American people owe them. And we owe them because of the policies of the Republican majority and the White House.

Now, Mr. RYAN, let me say this. I do not care what party an American is affiliated with, if it is Republican, Democrat or Independent, or someone who does not vote at all. The bottom line is you are going to receive the tab for this. You are, not your children's children's children. You are. They are going to pay their fair share, but I guarantee if this Republican Congress continues to head down the track that it is heading down now, more countries will be on this map.

Like I said last night, when creditors call your house for you to pay them, they call you by your first name. They disrespect you from the beginning. They do not say, Mr. RYAN, maybe you can pay us whenever you feel like it. No, they say, TIM, you are going to pay this bill now. These are the terms; and if you do not do it, this is what we are going to do.

Mr. Speaker, I can see folks saying Mr. TIM RYAN and Mr. KENDRICK MEEK and Ms. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. DELAHUNT and the rest of the 30-something Working Group, they are just down there talking fiction. This is fact. We should be alarmed. We are alarmed, and more Members of this House should be outraged by the fact that we have allowed these countries. It is not because of their doing; it is because of the votes that went down on a party-line basis, not votes that went down along lines that are in the better interests of the people of the United States of America.

I challenge Members to go to your constituents and say, is this okay with you all? Is it okay that foreign nations own \$1.6 trillion of our debt? And this has all happened over a period of 4 years, and I want you to reelect me. I guarantee you there would not be a Member of this House that would put this on a T-shirt and say "reelect me." That is the reason why people need to understand how important this is.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. At the same time, my friend, the Republican majority is borrowing and spending and borrowing and spending. They are not borrowing it from Sky Bank in downtown Warren, Ohio. They are not borrowing it from National Citibank.

□ 1845

They are borrowing it from these other countries. And at the same time, at the same exact time, Mr. Speaker, this Republican Congress has given \$6 billion in corporate welfare to the energy companies, primarily the oil companies, which are having their most profitable quarter, one after another, one after another; \$22 billion to the health care industry, Mr. Speaker. Corporate welfare.

So what the Republican majority is doing, my good friend, is they are borrowing money from the Japanese, the Chinese, and OPEC countries; and they are then taking that money that they are borrowing and then they are giving it in corporate welfare to the most profitable industries in the world. And at the same time, tuition costs go up, local property taxes go up, no investment into after-school programs, the significant kinds of investments that we need to allow our kids to be competitive in a global economy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I want to say something about that chart that is right behind you. I am going to tell you, Mr. Speaker, how the American people end up going through what we call here in Washington the Potomac two-step. I will break it down a little further, how they get fooled, what one may say, bamboozled, hoodwinked. You go that way; I am going this way.

Let me just quarterback this thing for a minute, Mr. RYAN. As you can see, the increase in foreign borrowing is \$1.16 trillion on this chart. What the President has done and what this majority, the Republican House, has done, Mr. Speaker, is they have said, well, we will put it in this column and further down here in the corner where you have a \$0.02 trillion increase in domestic borrowing, we do not want folks to really know what we are doing. We want to borrow from these other nations and let us make a big deal here at home because if we make a big deal here at home, maybe, just maybe, Mr. RYAN, the American people will say, wait, slow down, easy on that credit card.

That is an interest rate. It is a \$230 billion interest rate per year, more than what we are investing in education, more than what we are investing in homeland security, since the President and the Republican majority are supposed to be the big homeland security people. More than what we are doing there.

Mr. RYAN, I know it is tough because I am living it, getting in this building at 8 o'clock in the morning, being in the middle of meetings, running from this end, going to committee meetings,

going to try to figure out what happened in the secret port deal, running over here and trying to get over to Armed Services so that we could hopefully get the truth of what is happening in Iraq or what is really going on. You have to run over to your other committees and try to figure out what is happening, meanwhile answering constituents' phone calls.

And, Mr. Speaker, meeting about what is happening in this dome, trying to find out what is going on, talking to staffers, I am going to tell you, I am just going to come clean, Mr. Speaker, we have got Republican staffers talking to the 30-something group about what is going on in the back scenes. That is how bad it is right here. That is how bad it is.

Congressman, excuse me, do not look at me, I just want to tell you something.

Congressman, here is a little note here. Maybe you need to talk about this because this is happening.

That is how we are able to unearth this stuff. That is how we are able to share with people what is going on. We have got Americans emailing us, saying, Hey, I am in the military and I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. Expose this.

The VA in my rural community is only open on the second Wednesday of each month, and they are talking about stopping that from happening.

Meanwhile, we have got folks around here advocating on behalf of billionaires, saying they want to make the tax cut permanent, or they want to give record-breaking subsidies to industries that are making record-breaking profits. And we have American families. Some are small businesses that are trying to provide health insurance for their employees, and we cannot help them?

The President marched down this aisle here. The Republican side stands up and claps, and we are all clapping when he comes in because he is the Commander in Chief and the President of the United States and the "leader" of the free world. And then we start talking about health care on only one side of the aisle. The Republican side can get up and start clapping. We are thinking the President is going to come with a comprehensive plan that we can all work together in a bipartisan way, a major paradigm shift in providing health care, Mr. RYAN.

No. What does he do? I just want to use an example. It is almost like going to the refrigerator, taking out a carton of milk, and saying, Oh, this is sour. Let me put it back in. Maybe it will be fresh tomorrow.

On the health care plan, they want to go back to health savings. There is already evidence that that is not working. We want to increase that plan. What do you have to do to be a part of the health savings plan? A, you have to have some savings. So you have to invest not only for your kid's college fund, where in the President's budget

and the Republican budget they are cutting student aid, and talk about innovation, that students will be able to compete against the kids in China and these other countries that are cleaning our clock right now as it relates to training and innovation and all these other areas, not because our students are not up to the fight. It is because we are not putting forth the kind of platform they need to be able to educate themselves financially.

So, Mr. RYAN, when we start talking about this issue of responsibility, it is not serving Americans enough for us to go the extra mile.

A supermajority of Members, Mr. Speaker, right now are already home. But let me tell you something. It is important that we continue to hammer at this nail.

Mr. RYAN, I want to commend you for doing what you do. And I know it is hard. I know it is hard to come here and do it, because we are doing it together along with other Members of this House.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am going to say it time after time, that we must stop using the credit card and spending it on things that are not improving U.S. cities, that are not protecting America, that are not educating our children, and that are not bringing down gas prices that Americans are paying through the nose for right now.

So it is important because we are in this thing together. And I am going to tell you it is almost like the Congress being in first class and the American people being in coach. If the plane is going down, we are going down together. And I think it is important that we put a stop to using this credit card.

Mr. RYAN, I want you to put that chart up again about how much we are paying on the debt service. I want you to put that up because that goes right into what I am talking about. I want you to explain it one more time because the reason why I was able to make it through school was that my teachers kept going over the stuff, and we have got to make sure that some folks are coachable here because this is the information that is prepared and we get this from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, also from the Budget Committee.

Mr. RYAN, would you just explain that so people will understand what I am saying.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. All of this money that we are borrowing, we have got to pay interest on it. And if we pay the interest on it, that means that we cannot spend that money in other areas or give it back, in fact, to the taxpayer maybe in the form of a tax cut so there may be some middle class people.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. For a change.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. For a change, instead of giving it to Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, who themselves say they do not want the tax cut. Bill Clinton, who is making millions a year, we do not want the tax cut; make the proper investments.

From all the borrowing and spending and borrowing and spending that the Republicans have done, Mr. Speaker, this is the interest on the debt for 2007: \$230-some-odd billion. Of the tax money that the American people will send down here, 230 billion of it will go to those countries that Mr. MEEK mentioned to pay off the debt service. Meanwhile, education, homeland security, and veteran spending will be reduced here, here, and here.

Now, what the Democratic plan is to make sure that we ask the Warren Buffets of the world to pay their fair share, make the proper investments in the broadband research and development tax credit, and grow the economy so we can reduce this payment, and we can make sure that we properly fund and invest in education, homeland security, and veterans.

Now, if you want to just look at what we could do, my friend, if we did not have to pay that interest on the debt, the red bar, what would we be able to do with it? Sixty thousand kids we could enroll in Head Start to make sure that they have health care so they could be healthy, productive, educated citizens. Every single Member of Congress would get \$1 million a day for their congressional district, \$365 million for you, \$365 million for me, \$365 million for all 435 Members. Could you imagine what you could do in your district with \$365 million a year to spend if we did not have to pay that interest on the debt? Your schools; your transportation issues; your ports; the Coast Guard, which I know is there in the intercoastal; health care. Almost 80,000 veterans would be able to get health care, improve Social Security solvency by \$5 billion. This is what we can do, my friend, when the Democrats take over. We will be able to move ourselves in this direction. Will it be a panacea? No. Because we have got a big mess to clean up when we take over this place.

But, Mr. Speaker, time and time and time again, the Republican majority went out, borrowed money, and spent it on corporate welfare for the most profitable industries, whether it was health care or whether it was the energy companies. Time and time and time again. And one of the provisions that the Democrats have tried and tried and tried to get on, we need a structure in which we could contain the reckless spending of the Republican majority, and what we have tried to do is put an amendment on bills that say if you spend money, you cannot borrow it. You either have to go and raise it, raise revenues somewhere, or you have to cut it out of another program so it is deficit neutral.

Mr. SPRATT, our leader on the Budget Committee, tried to put these PAYGO, pay-as-you-go, rules onto the 2006 budget resolution. It failed. Not one Republican voted for it. That is rollcall No. 87, March 17, 2005. I am not making this up. This is right in the rollcall. We wanted to put controls on spending. Republicans voted against it. Again in

the 2005 budget resolution, Mr. SPRATT tried to do it again, rollcall vote No. 91, March 25 of 2004. Not one Republican voted to contain the spending and put the pay-as-you-go rules on.

We also have been trying to do this for years now. For years. MIKE THOMPSON in California tried to do it. Charlie Stenholm of Texas tried to do it. DENNIS MOORE of Kansas tried to do it. What are the Democrats for? We are for balanced budgets, and the proof is in the pudding. The proof is in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, because we have tried to do it time and time and time again, and every time we have been shot down by the Republican majority.

So we are trying to contain spending so that we could reduce our debt payments so that we could take that money and provide broadband for every citizen in the country in the next 5 years, to have a strong, sufficient research and development tax credit, to encourage spending, investment, into innovative programs. We have a plan, and we know what we want to do.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I want you to get the Web site information up because I want to make sure Members have accurate information.

Also, I would just like to say that Members can go onto the Web site and get any of these charts that we have shared with them in the past and tonight so that they can see exactly what we are talking about if they need further information, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. www.housedemocrats.gov/30something. Drop us a line.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I want to thank you. I want to thank Mr. DELAHUNT for being a part of this 30-something hour.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the time. It is an honor to address the House once again.

CORRECTION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2006, AT PAGE H737

Rollcall No. 23 printed incomplete in the RECORD of March 8, 2006. The corrected version follows:

[Roll No. 23]

YEAS—409

Abercrombie	Berkley	Boyd
Ackerman	Berman	Bradley (NH)
Aderholt	Berry	Brady (PA)
Akin	Biggert	Brady (TX)
Alexander	Bilirakis	Brown (OH)
Allen	Bishop (GA)	Brown (SC)
Andrews	Bishop (NY)	Brown, Corrine
Baca	Bishop (UT)	Burgess
Bachus	Blumenauer	Butterfield
Baird	Blunt	Buyer
Baker	Boehert	Calvert
Baldwin	Boehner	Camp (MI)
Barrett (SC)	Bonilla	Campbell (CA)
Barrow	Bonner	Cantor
Bartlett (MD)	Bono	Capito
Barton (TX)	Boozman	Capuano
Bass	Boren	Cardin
Bean	Boswell	Cardoza
Beauprez	Boucher	Carnahan
Becerra	Boustany	Carson