

The sixth point in the plan is we are going to require a rainy day fund so we set aside money for the natural disasters that befall our country on a regular basis.

Number seven, and this is really important because we are getting ready to do this as we speak, and that is do not hide the vote to raise the debt limit. Right now under the rules of this House and in the Senate, we are going to raise the debt limit without taking a vote of this House on a recorded vote so each Member of Congress has to put their voting card in and be recorded on raising the debt limit. That is just not appropriate.

Number 9 is to ensure that Congress reads the bills it is voting on. What a novel concept. We actually believe each bill should have to sit on the Speaker's desk for 3 days to give us time to prepare and actually know what is in legislation. It was 2 years ago that we passed the Medicare prescription drug bill. We got that bill 20 hours before we were voting on it and that bill was 680 pages, 678 pages long. I can tell you one thing for sure, no Member of Congress was able to read that bill and know what was in it. And that is probably why it cost the American people double what they told it was going to cost.

The next plank is to justify pet projects. We believe that every earmark passed in this Congress should be justified by the Member of Congress that is asking. There should be a paragraph written about every request and that the Member should have to sign it and say they stand by that earmark.

We would not have the scandals of Mr. Abramoff and all of the other problems that are befalling this Chamber if every Member had to justify their pet projects and earmarks.

Number 10, we require an honest cost estimate for every bill.

Number 11, be sure that every bill fits within the budget that we pass at the beginning of the year. We pass a budget, and we never look at it again. We continue to pass bills that most likely will not fit into that budget, so we just keep expanding the budget with every bill that comes through here after the budget is passed.

The final plank is that we do a better job of oversight. Right now, Congress passes oversight and frankly, we never go back and look at what we have passed to make sure that it is doing the job that we intended when we passed that legislation.

Those twelve points are just the first step in restoring fiscal accountability and making sure that we live within our means.

As I said before, in September, I joined my colleagues in the Blue Dog Coalition in writing a letter asking President Bush to host an emergency bipartisan budget summit to put our Nation's fiscal house back in order. Unfortunately, our genuine effort to engage the Republicans in a reasonable discussion on the budget was brushed

aside. We have yet to receive a response to our letter. I think even this White House should be able to pen a letter back to us in the months since we sent it to them. I know they have gotten it. We have talked to them about it on this floor. We have talked to our colleagues in this Chamber on a regular basis requesting cooperation to get together and work together to solve the problems facing this country, and we have not gotten a response.

Mr. ROSS. As we wind down this hour that we do every Tuesday night, as members of the 37-member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog coalition, I would like to remind you, Madam Speaker, the reason why deficits matter, deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren's liabilities. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders who now own some 46 percent of our publicly held debt.

It matters because as a Nation, at a time when we are spending half a billion dollars a day simply paying interest, not principal, just interest on the national debt, we are also increasing that debt. We are increasing it to the tune of about a billion dollars a day, \$260 million every day going to Iraq, \$33 million every day going to Afghanistan, but do not dare ask how a single dime of your tax money, \$260 million a day going to Iraq, \$33 million a day going to Afghanistan, do not dare ask this administration how it is being spent. Do not dare ask them because they will say you are unpatriotic.

As taxpayers, I think this administration has a duty and an obligation to let the taxpayers understand that he has, that this President has a plan on how this \$260 million a day is being spent of your tax money.

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We all want to make sure that our soldiers get the equipment they need and get taken care of and can get back home to their families as soon as possible. And the President, if he is going to spend \$260 million in a day to Iraq, he ought to give us a plan. He ought to give us a plan. He owes it to the American taxpayers. He certainly owes it to our troops.

Mr. CARDOZA. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSS. Yes, I would.

Mr. CARDOZA. I just want to highlight that there is precedent to doing it a different way. During World War II, then-Senator Truman formed a commission that actually did an audit and went after wartime profiteers and, in fact, did a great job at getting to the bottom of the fact that there were people trying to profit irresponsibly on the backs of our soldiers during World War II. So he went in and got to the bottom of the overcharging and the contracting fraud and really cleaned up those who were trying to take advantage of the situation that the world found itself in.

That is the kind of accountability that we need today, Mr. Ross, and I ap-

preciate that you are bringing this up. It is not unpatriotic to question how our taxpayer dollars are being spent. In fact, if we don't waste our taxpayer dollars, then there is more money available to actually spend doing the right thing by our troops. Thank you for raising that issue.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA), the co-chair of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, for joining me this evening. I want to thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON) for joining me this evening, the co-chair for administration within the Blue Dog Coalition.

And, Madam Speaker, if you have got comments, concerns, or questions regarding our discussion this evening about the budget, the debt and the deficit, the manufactured homes sitting in a pasture in Hope, Arkansas, I would encourage you to e-mail me. Bluedog@mail.house.gov. That is bluedog@mail.house.gov.

As we finish this Special Order each week, it is a very sobering thing that we do. As you can see, when we started this hour, the national debt was \$8,270,385,415,129-and-some-change. Just in the hour that we have been on the floor this evening discussing the budget, the debt, the deficit and, yes, a solution, a 12-point plan for budget reform, the deficit has increased by approximately \$41,666,000. It is a very sobering thing that we do at the end of this hour each Tuesday night. But the national debt, 60 minutes later, is no longer this number here. It is \$8,270,430,081,129. So, again, the deficit now, at the beginning of this evening it was \$8,270,385,415,129-and-some-change. One hour later it has increased approximately \$41,666,000. The national debt now stands at \$8,270,430,081,129-and-some-change.

Madam Speaker, we will be back next Tuesday evening. Well, Congress is on recess next week. But the following week we will be back on Tuesday evening to continue this discussion about the budget, the debt, and the deficit. We raise these issues because, you see, my grandparents left this country better than they found it for my parents. And my parents left this country better than they found it for our generation. And, Madam Speaker, I believe we have a duty and an obligation to try and leave this country better than we found it for our children and our grandchildren. That is why we are here.

#### THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DRAKE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come before the House this evening and appreciate the leadership granting me the opportunity to share a few words with the Speaker and with the House.

I know it is late. We just have five more minutes this evening in our House session, but I am here to represent the Official Truth Squad. And the Official Truth Squad, as so many folks know, was begun by a group of freshmen Republicans. Having been in Congress now for about 15 months, and throughout the last year, we had talked with each other and with others in Congress about why is it that you so often hear so much misinformation and disinformation on the floor of the House. And so we thought what we would do as a group is to get together and begin the Official Truth Squad.

And I know it is late, Madam Speaker, and I was going to give folks a break and not take the remaining 5 minutes of the evening, but I was sitting over in my office and I was listening to the previous presentation by some well-meaning folks on the other side of the aisle, and they talked about this, the need for accountability in the budgeting process. And I know that my colleagues and I couldn't agree more. We couldn't agree more.

What I would like to do in this very brief time that we have, though, is to bring a little truth to the debate, and that is the issue of the balanced budget amendment. We, so many of us, support a balanced budget amendment. We agree that there ought to be appropriate accountability. I believe that the desire or the inertia to restrain spending at the Federal level is, frankly, nonexistent. So I think that it is imperative that we have some kind of control on the amount of spending that we have here in Washington. And one way to do that, and I believe an appropriate way to do that, is through a balanced budget amendment.

We just heard within the past hour some folks on the other side who say, yeah, we think there ought to be a balanced budget amendment. But what's the truth about their actions when given the opportunity? And that is what the Official Truth Squad is about, is to make certain that folks are held accountable for not just talking the talk, but walking the walk.

Here is the most recent opportunity that Congress has had to vote on a balanced budget amendment. Now, this was an actual vote in 1997 on a balanced budget amendment. And how did the other side vote? Well, 8 individuals on the other side said, yeah, that is an appropriate thing to do; we believe that that is the kind of budget accountability that we need: 194 was the "no" vote on the other side. 194.

And, Madam Speaker, I might mention that it included a majority of the folks who call themselves Blue Dog Democrats. And I don't do this to point fingers, but I do do it to say that when you are talking about issues, it is important to speak the truth and to allow and have your vote follow your speech.

The Official Truth Squad, we have some, a number of mottos, and a number of quotes that we enjoy. One of the quotes that we enjoy and appreciate is

that of the former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who said oftentimes that you are welcome to your own opinion, but you are not welcome to your own facts. And, Madam Speaker, this is a fact. And this is a fact that speaks louder than anything I could ever, ever say which says that when given the opportunity for budget accountability, that the vast majority of individuals on the other side of the aisle said, no, we really don't want to do that. We say we want to do that, but in fact we really don't want to do that.

So I am pleased to come before the House this evening, Madam Speaker. I look forward to coming back tomorrow. We will be back tomorrow to shed some more light on some economic good news with the American people and to bring that truth, those pearls of truth that are so incredibly important as we talk about the remarkable challenges that confront us as a Nation, not Republican challenges, not Democrat challenges, but American challenges that we all need to solve together.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of business in the district.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of business in the district.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. SWEENEY (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

#### 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 Mr. FARR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. DREIER, for 5 minutes, today and March 15 and 16.

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, March 15.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and March 15 and 16.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and March 15 and 16.

Mr. NUSSLE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mrs. HAAS, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

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

H.R. 1691. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin, as the "John H. Bradley Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), the House adjourned until today, Wednesday, March 15, 2006, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

6675. A letter from the Deputy Bureau Chief, CGB, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities [CG Docket No. 03-123] received January 17, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

6676. A letter from the Legal Advisor, WTB, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Implementation of the Commercial Spectrum Enhancement Act and Modernization of the Commission's Competitive Bidding Rules and Procedures [WT Docket No. 05-211] received February 15, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6677. A letter from the Legal Advisor to the Bureau Chief, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Amendment of Section 73.202(b) Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations. (Randsburg, California) [MB Docket No. 04-276; RM-11033] (Mooreland, Oklahoma) [MB Docket No. 04-279; RM-11036] received February 15, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6678. A letter from the Legal Advisor to the Bureau Chief, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Amendment of Section 73.202(b) Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations. (Lovelady, Texas) [MB Docket