

Buffalo Soldiers. So the Amistad Committee of New Jersey is integrating African history into the regular textbooks.

Then, of course, as you all know, we deal with the Africa brain trust, the theme, "The New Africa: Opportunities and Challenges." President Wade of Senegal and former President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Under Secretary Henrietta Fore, Ambassador Ali, AU Ambassador to the U.S. And we had Dr. Adasena, who was representing Kofi Annan's new group on the "Greening of Africa." And Ambassador Lyman, former Ambassador from the U.S. to South Africa and Nigeria. And Dr. Juma from Harvard talking about education.

So we really had standing room only. I recall 19 years ago, when I started the brain trust, we had a difficult time. We used to run in the halls and just drag people, beg them to come in. Now, unless you're there before 9 o'clock, you're not going to get a seat. So it shows that the Congressional Black Caucus, the constituency for Africa has grown very strong, and the members of the caucus are so supportive of the efforts we're doing, not only in Africa but in the Caribbean. And in Latin America, where Afro-Latinos are saying we want our share, too. We have, in Brazil now, an affirmative action program where in their colleges, they will have to admit the qualified blacks who've been ignored, and in Columbia.

So we have seen in the "hands across the ocean," as I often say, that the blood that connects us is much thicker than the water that separates us.

So with that, I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you, Congressman PAYNE, from the great State of New Jersey.

I am going to close out this hour and take these last couple minutes. One of the things that you make a mistake about when you leave a Special Order is you yield to everybody, and you forget to talk about your own workshops. So very quickly, I am going to talk about the two workshops that I did. The first one was "African American Athletes: Roles, Representation, and Expectations." It was a wonderful opportunity where I had the opportunity to host Jim Brown, the former Cleveland Browns player, renowned athlete, to talk about things he has been doing around outreach and mentoring. I had Keven Davis, a partner at Garvey, Schubert & Barer, who provided an overview of how African American athletes are represented in financial transactions. Carlos Flemming, a VP of IMG, who represents Venus and Serena Williams. Everett Glenn, the president and CEO of Entertainment & Sports Plus, who is an agent. Ken Harvey, president and CEO of JAKA Consulting, a former NFL player and a representative. Jacquelyn Nance, who is the executive director of the LeBron James Family Foundation. And finally, William Rhoden, who is the author of

"Forty Million Dollar Slaves," and is a sportswriter for the New York Times. And I particularly want to thank him for taking care of the workshop while I was required to be here on the floor voting on some other issues. It was a great opportunity, and we talked about a lot of issues around African American athletes.

My second forum was focused on the declining enrollment of African Americans in law schools across the Nation. My panel consisted of Christopher Johnson of General Motors; Vanita Banks, the president-elect of the National Bar Association; John Nussbaumer, associate dean of Thomas Cooley Law School; Dwayne Murray, the Grand Polemarch of Kappa Alpha Psi; John Brittain, a lawyer from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights; Karen Weaver, associate dean for academic affairs and diversity; and Pauline Schneider, on behalf of the ABA. She's at Orrick & Harrington.

And the quick issue around law schools is that African Americans do have a decline in enrollment and that ABA is responsible for accreditation.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I want to yield back my time and say thank you to Speaker PELOSI for giving the CBC this Special Order to focus on the ALC weekend. It's not a party; it's a legislative conference with great import for all people across the country.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, last week the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation held its 2007 Annual Legislative Conference.

Each year, I have convened the Science and Technology Braintrust. The Braintrust is a discussion forum aimed at bringing together America's brightest minds to share idea on how to diversify our science and technology workforce.

I have remained committed to hosting this Braintrust each year, because I believe that engaging young people in the fields of science and technology is one of the most important things we can do for the future success of America.

With India and China producing more than five times the number of engineers, computer scientists and information technology professions in 2005 than we did, our nation is losing its competitive edge.

The Science Committee ushered through a \$33.6 billion package of Innovation policies that are designed to help early career researchers, better train math and science teachers, and encourage industry and universities to partner with local high schools to improve science instruction.

Having a dialogue with students and with the science education community is another way to exchange ideas and assess the needs of our population.

My Braintrust consisted of two panels. The first panel consisted of high-level individuals who have risen to great heights in technology and engineering fields. They provided an executive perspective of the educational experiences that are needed for tomorrow's high-tech graduate to be globally competitive.

Panel 2 featured bright, innovative minds from individuals who work with technology in unique ways. The goal was to convince every-

one here that a career in math, science or engineering can be fulfilling, challenging and fun.

Madam Speaker, more than 150 local, African American high school students attended my Braintrust, and many of them participated in the discussion by interacting directly with the panelists.

It is my feeling that a few hearts and minds were changed that day, in the Science Committee hearing room. If only one student was influenced toward a career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, I will be satisfied. This focus has been a major goal of my work as an elected official.

In the 1990s, we responded to the digital age with breakthroughs in computer science and information technology.

Tomorrow's greatest challenge will be to meet the needs of the Innovation Age. We must compete at a global level.

CONGRESSWOMAN EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BRAINTRUST—EDUCATION AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE DIGITAL TO INNOVATION AGE

#### PANEL ONE

EDUCATION AND SKILLS FOR TOMORROW'S HIGHTECH GRADUATE:

#### THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Sam Ford, Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV

Panelists: Dr. Samuel Metters, CEO, Metter Industries, Inc. Mr. Scott Mills, President, BET Networks. Dr. Cheryl Shavers, CEO, Global Smarts, Inc. Mr. John Thompson, Sr. VP and General Manager, BestBuy.com.

#### PANEL TWO

#### INNOVATORS AT THE CUTTING EDGE

Moderator: Derek Lloyd, Professor and Senior Network Systems Engineer, Howard University.

Panelists: Ms. Lyn Stanfield, Strategic Relations Manager, Apple Inc. Mr. Darrell Davis, Director, DEA South Central Laboratory. Mr. Rob Garza and Mr. Eric Hilton, Thievery Corporation band. Dr. Anna McGowan, Manager, NASA Langley.

#### NEW FISCAL YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. It is such a pleasure to come to the floor tonight as we start a new fiscal year for the U.S. Government.

A new year is a time where you get to look back at what happened last year, where you get to redirect your focus and talk about what your priorities are going to be and the goals that you want to set.

□ 2045

Now, we all do that with our families as we get to the end of the calendar year and start the new calendar year in January. It is a time that we enjoy.

I hope for each of us, as Members of the House, as we start this fiscal year, that we will put some attention on what we spend and how we spend.

Now, Madam Speaker, over the weekend, I had the opportunity to do a town hall with some of my constituents. We

got together yesterday afternoon after church over lunch. One of them said, "Do you know, I have been reading Alan Greenspan's book. My goodness, it is amazing to me, absolutely amazing to me what Congress spends, how much money they spend. It is amazing to me that we have seen this debt skyrocket through the '70s, through the '80s and begin to level off through the '90s but still continue to grow. It is amazing to me that decisions are made that grow that debt. It is amazing to me that earmarks are out of control. Explain earmarks."

My constituent posed this question before the group because, like so many, once he looked at the issue, he realized that every time we grow a program, every time some new program comes along, every time Congress stands and says, "We must meet this need," that there are two costs to that program. Of course, there is the dollars cost, and then there is also the opportunity cost, because if Government steps in and meets that need, the private or not-for-profit sector is not going to step in and meet that need. So my constituent posed this for the group to talk about. I said, "What a great discussion to have. This is the last day of the fiscal year for the U.S. Government. Tomorrow is a new day. They turn a page in the book and start a new slate with the new budget."

Now, my constituent said that he would have loved to have seen the U.S. Government get to the end of the year and brag about how much money they had saved. But in reality, he knows that probably there is going to be more bragging done about special projects that go back home to the district in the form of earmarks.

So we talked a little bit yesterday, Madam Speaker, about priorities, about earmarks and about how earmarks came to be. When communities have trouble coming in and going through the process, they will say, "Oh, can you help us, Member of Congress, to get this set aside in the bill? Can you help us to find this money?" Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, we all know not all earmarks are bad. It is the abuse of earmarks that are bad. As I came back this afternoon, I found on my desk a copy of Congressional Quarterly Weekly. You can find this at cq.com if someone wants to pull it up. In the article, they are citing that there were 7,000 specific House-passed earmarks in just eight of the bills. There were 500 sought by the White House; roughly 1,000 were identified with more than one sponsor. That left 5,670 earmarks worth a combined \$44.2 billion, each linked with a single House Member. And then it goes on and talks a little bit about how many and how much are here in the earmarks game and a little bit about who gets what. But it is the process and the abuse of that earmark process that has our constituents confused, frustrated and, rightfully, a little bit angry.

We know that many of us have pushed for greater transparency in this

earmark process. We have pushed for changes, for knowing what is taking place in our earmarks so that people know what is in those bills when they come to the House floor, so that it is easy to find, to pair it up, to know who is asking for what, where it is going to be located or what program it is going to go to, and then how much of the taxpayer money is being spent.

Madam Speaker, it is not our money. It is not government's money. It is the taxpayers' money. So like my constituent who posed the question yesterday, "Tell me how much you are spending and how you go about spending it and explain these earmarks," those are questions that, yes, indeed, they have the right to ask, and we as Members of Congress should be answering those questions and discussing what is in those bills, what is in those appropriations bills, and what we find in those earmarks.

Now, I will have to say that this is a year when we have started our fiscal year on what is called a continuing resolution, and we passed that last year. I will say that the new majority did a good job of bringing a fairly clean continuing resolution before us so that we were running today, so that we didn't have to shut government down. What the continuing resolution basically does is it takes last year's funding numbers and rolls them forward. A lot of people would like to see us hold everything at exactly the same spending level it was. That is not all bad. But the new majority was not able to get one single spending bill through both Houses and to the President to be signed, so that is why we are operating on the continuing resolution.

We have seemed to have time to talk about global warming and pass bills pertaining to global warming or conservation. We have named post offices. We have expanded programs. We have passed billions in new authorizations and new spending. But we did not get the budget done, so we are on a concurrent resolution.

It is our new fiscal year. We are going to spend a little bit of time tonight talking about how we spend that money and looking at what takes place through this earmark process and why we, as Republicans, and why we, as members of the Republican Study Committee, are continuing our push for earmark transparency and earmark reform.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) who is chairman of the Republican Study Committee, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership at the Republican Study Committee, Congress's conservative caucus. It is a very timely issue that we are discussing today since, indeed, today is the first day of the fiscal year for the

Federal Government. I think for many of us it is easy to sum up the actions of the new Democrat majority; that is, they spend too much and they tax too much. It bodes ill for the future of our Nation.

I think that it is important that we step back for a moment and figure out just how much of the people's money is being spent. And it is the people's money. It is not the government's money. It is the people's money. Today, right now, the last figure I saw is that the Federal Government is now spending \$23,289 per family of four. This is just about the highest level that has been spent since World War II. Since I have been on the face of the planet, since I was born, the Federal budget has grown four to five times faster than the family budget. Ultimately, it is the family budget that has to pay for that. Since we have been in this 110th Congress with the new Democrat majority, rarely does a day go by that there is not a new opportunity to begin a new government program on top of the roughly 10,000 Federal programs spread across 600 agencies that already exist. It kind of begs the question: How much government is enough? Because we know that as government grows, our freedoms and our opportunities contract. This is supposed to be the land of opportunity. This is supposed to be the land of freedom. Yet, all we do under this new Democrat majority rule is add program after program after program.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately all of this new spending imposes a new tax burden on the American people. In the budget that the Democrat majority passed, they included in it the single highest tax increase in American history. When fully implemented over a 5-year period, this budget will impose approximately \$3,000 of additional taxes on the average American family. Now, every single day we come to this floor and we debate. And our friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats, want to talk about great investments in education, great investments in housing, and great investments in nutrition that they are going to use all this money for. Well, the challenge is, though, that every time that they increase some Federal budget, they are having to decrease some family budget to take it, and right now to the tune of \$3,000 per American family.

Madam Speaker, I often hear from people in the Fifth District of Texas that I represent. I take great pride in representing these people who have entrusted me with their representation in Congress. I hear from people like the Flores family in Garland, Texas. I heard this lady say, "I am a divorced mother with a child in college and a child in day care. An increase in taxes of this magnitude would wipe out hope of the first college graduate in the family. Don't let this happen. Let's hold the budget down."

So, again, what we have here is the Democrats are taking money away

from a family budget in order to give it to some Federal budget. We are not always debating how much money we are going to spend on these items, but we are debating who is going to do the spending. Democrats in Washington want the bureaucrats in Washington to do the spending. Republicans want families to do the spending, the people who actually roll up their sleeves and work hard. They work hard trying to make ends meet. They have got decisions that they have to make around the kitchen table. And this is just one example. I hear from lots of my constituents.

I heard from the Lopez family in Mesquite, "I would like to let you know that if our taxes are increased, this may mean that we could not continue to finance our child's education." I heard from the Winters family in Tennessee Colony, "Stop the wasteful spending. I am retired and disabled. I am raising three grandchildren. Sometimes I can't afford my own medicine." And here we are, this new Democrat majority wants to take \$3,000 a year away from these hardworking families to fuel their budget, not these families' budgets, but the Federal budget.

Now, ultimately, though, it is not just the tax increase that we see right over the horizon that is so challenging. It is what is going to happen to future generations. And rarely does a day occur that somebody doesn't come to the floor and talk about the need to help the least of these. Well, I often think that the least of these are those who cannot vote and those yet to be born. They don't seem to have a say-so in this great debate that we are having today.

For example, don't take my word for it, but all this spending that we have seen in Washington, here is the result. Don't take my word for it, but we, right now, are literally on the verge of doing something to the next generation that has never been done before: imposing such a draconian economic burden on them, something that has never been done before, that according to the Comptroller General, the chief fiduciary officer in America, we are on the verge of being the very first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

□ 2100

As the father of a 5-year-old and a 4-year-old, I will not sit idly by and let that happen.

Again, Mr. Speaker, don't take my word for it. Listen to the words of our Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who said: "Without early and meaningful action to address Federal spending, the U.S. economy could be seriously weakened, with future generations bearing much of the cost."

Listen to the GAO, the General Accountability Office. They talk about government spending, particularly entitlement spending as a "fiscal cancer" that threatens "catastrophic con-

sequences for our country and could bankrupt America."

Listen to the famous economist, Robert Samuelson, who writes frequently in newspapers all across the Nation. He says: "The rising cost of government retirement programs could either increase taxes or budget deficits so much that they could reduce economic growth, and this could trigger an economic and political death spiral."

The Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget, the General Accountability Office, the liberal Brookings Institution, the conservative Heritage Foundation, they all agree that spending is out of control: And what is going to happen is in the next generation either the Federal Government will consist of nothing to speak of but Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security; or you're going to have to double taxes on our children and grandchildren just to balance the budget.

Now we see that hurricane coming over the horizon, we see it coming towards us, and yet this Democrat majority every single day adds to the problem. Just last week the Democrat majority took an insurance program, the National Flood Insurance Program, that is already going broke, was supposed to be self-sustaining through premiums, it's \$20 billion in the red, and they add additional coverage to it that could expose the taxpayer to \$17 trillion, \$17 trillion of new liability in just one program alone.

So that is why it's so important that we start tackling the pennies and the nickels and the dimes, because we are talking about the priorities of American families, we are talking about their opportunities, we are talking about their ability to send their children to college, we are talking about their ability to save that nest egg, to launch their version of the American Dream and start their new business. We are talking about their ability to pay for their health insurance premiums.

Again, Mr. Speaker, every time you increase the Federal budget, you're having to decrease some family budget. I just often wonder when will the madness stop. When will we finally figure out that this isn't investment in the future, that is divesting our children's future by spending all of this money? The Federal budget should not be allowed to grow beyond the family budget's ability to pay for it.

That is why conservatives in the Republican Study Committee, the House Conservative Caucus, support a limitation on the growth of the Federal Government, to force Congress to decide amongst some of these priorities among these competing 10,000 Federal programs. Mr. Speaker, I defy any man, woman or child in America to tell me what they all do; 10,000 of them. It reminds me of what President Reagan once said: "There is nothing as close to eternal life on Earth as a Federal program." They all cost money, and they take away from our children's future.

So that is why I am so happy that members of the Republican Study Committee have gathered here this evening to talk about the challenges of spending for the future generations and to get together to ensure that we let the American people know that we are working to hold the line on spending, to bring more accountability, to bring more transparency, to try to stave off this tax increase of \$3,000 per American family, and that's for the families today. And we are fighting just as hard, if not harder, to ensure that the children and grandchildren of today's taxpayers are not saddled with a doubling of their taxation so that they would see a lower standard of living. That is not the America that we grew up in. That is not the moral obligation we have. We cannot be that first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

That is why I am happy to join my fellow members of the Republic Study Committee who have come here to debate this important subject tonight. I especially want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her leadership in this hour.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his remarks. He does such a wonderful job in directing the activities of the Republican Study Committee. You can find out a little bit more about the Republican Study Committee going into Mr. HENSARLING's Web site, House.gov/Hensarling, and enter in "Republican Study Committee." It will take you there to some of our activity and the work we are doing.

We also have a little "money monitor" that we use every single week, update it, to show you what the majority in the House is spending, show you how this is going to affect your budget. As he said, the priority is the family budget, to be certain that families have the opportunity to decide how and when they want to spend their money.

As the gentleman from Texas said, unfortunately, since World War II what we have seen is the Federal budget has grown four to five times faster than the family budget. The Federal budget growing four to five times faster than the family budget. That is exactly opposite of what our Founding Fathers would want.

I hope that my colleagues across the aisle will join us, join with us as we fight the growth of this budget, as we fight the growth of spending. When it is a new fiscal year, it is a good time to sit down and review this and say, okay, when we get to the end of the fiscal year, what do we want to look back and say we accomplished? Wouldn't it be a great thing if we were to say this is what we were able to save, this is how we were able to find ways to reduce the size and cut what government spends? So we invite our friend across the aisle to come over and join us and work on this issue.

I would like at this time to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr.

PRICE), who has been a stalwart in working on the earmark issues, the earmark reform, and a real leader in the push for earmark reform, greater transparency and more fiscal accountability from the House.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Tennessee for yielding and for her leadership on this issue, and I am pleased to join my friend from Texas, as well as my good friend from North Carolina, who is yet to come. I appreciate her bringing great focus to this issue, because, Mr. Speaker, if the casual observer were to give you a description of what they thought was going on here in Washington, they would say, Oh, well, they are being much more responsible. They are not spending as much money as they have in the past. All sorts of wonderful things are happening. They would say so because this new majority has captured what I have called "Orwellian democracy." They are talking the talk, Mr. Speaker, but they are not walking the walk.

So I appreciate my friend from Tennessee for taking the leadership and making certain that we bring focus to what truly is happening here in Washington under this new leadership.

Our good friends on the other side of the aisle, as you say, this is the first day of the new fiscal year. It is a great opportunity to look back and see what has happened over the last fiscal year that they have been in charge and to look forward. But if what has happened to date is any harbinger of what is to come in the future, Mr. Speaker, we have got real problems, because, as you know, Mr. Speaker, not a single appropriations bill of the 12 annual appropriations bills has made it to the President's desk yet, and we are done with the last fiscal year. The new fiscal year has begun today.

They didn't make it to the President's desk because this new majority has picked up right where they left off when they were last in the majority back in 1994 with more taxing and more spending. It is the spending that has our attention tonight, and through so many different areas.

This new majority is interested in spending over \$23 billion in new money, new Federal money, and that is just the beginning. That is just the beginning. That is what they have appropriated, not what they have authorized to be spent, which is truly hundreds of billions of dollars. But \$23 billion is what separates responsible spending from the new majority, which is why we haven't gotten any of the appropriations bills to the President's desk and signed.

What we are talking about tonight is a portion of all of that, and that is the issue of earmarks, the issue of special projects, the issue of spending that gets into bills, oftentimes late at night and oftentimes behind closed doors; little projects that one Member or two in Congress make certain are inserted into bills. It is an earmark process, it

is a special project process that we on our side, when we were in the majority recognized, albeit a little late, but recognized that it had significant potential for huge abuse. Some of our former colleagues, in fact, have different residences right now because of that abuse. They violated the law and were held to account.

So what we did as a majority before the end of last year was to pass a rule that said that all earmarks, all special projects, had to be disclosed. Whether they were in tax bills, whether they were in authorizing bills or whether they were in appropriations bills, every one of them had to be disclosed: who asked for it and how much did they ask for.

Mr. Speaker, that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? It is called sunshine. Sunshine for earmarks, we called it. It is what the American people desire. It is what the American people deserve. It is what my constituents home in Georgia say that is what we want. We want to know who is asking for these things.

We instituted this program. One would have thought, given the talk that we heard from this new majority, that when they took over that would have been one of those commonsense reforms they would have continued. That would have made a whole lot of sense.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as you know, that is not what happened. In fact, there was to be no disclosure of individuals who requested earmarks, as my friend from Tennessee knows; and we fought, Republicans fought tooth and nail to make certain that disclosure occurred in appropriations bills before any were passed. This happened in May and June of this year.

Finally, finally, the new majority relented and said, Okay, we will allow for disclosure of who is asking for those earmarks, but that is not true for authorizing bills or tax bills. So what we see in these bills, as my friend from Texas cited, is these projects that get pushed into these bills that have special rewards for certain Members of Congress and their districts. We see it in all sorts of bills.

Mr. Speaker, as you will remember, last week we passed in this House of Representatives the SCHIP bill, the State Children's Health Insurance Program bill. One wouldn't think that you would need to sway Members' votes on that from a majority standpoint. Just let the bill stand or fall on its merits. The issue of those merits is another debate. But what we saw in that bill were earmarks, special projects for Members on the majority side to sway their vote.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what my constituents want; it is not what the American people want.

That might not even be so bad if they were disclosed, if people knew what was happening; if the Member had to stand in this Chamber before his or her colleagues and offer the justification for those programs, if they would stand

before their constituents at home and offer justification for those programs.

But one of the things that really gets in the craw of my constituents, and I know those of my good friend from Tennessee, is the arrogance with which this new majority has fashioned these programs, the incredible arrogance, once again, saying one thing and doing another.

As my friend from Tennessee, Mrs. BLACKBURN stated, you can get this kind of information at CQ.com, Mr. Speaker, if you like. You may not have seen it. I would ask you to look it up.

They had an article today, as a matter of fact, asking: "Do you want to know how your tax dollars are being spent in Washington?" And the response is: "Tough (expletive)." They are quoting a very powerful Member of the majority party.

That is what is so distressing, Mr. Speaker. There is an arrogance about this majority. There is an arrogance that exceeds anything that anybody has ever seen in this Chamber, and there is a culture of excessive Washington spending that I believe the American people are sick and tired of.

So when you see this kind of activity going on in the committees, in the authorizing committees and in the tax committees and in the appropriations committees, where Members of this Congress are attempting to hide from their constituents and from other Members of Congress what is in these bills, who is asking for it, how much money and how do I identify it, and when a reporter in fact asks a very senior Member of the majority party how to find out "how much money for which projects are in this bill," that Member of Congress says, "Tough (expletive)."

□ 2115

Mr. Speaker, that is not befitting of this House. That is not befitting of the institution that you and I were elected to hold a seat in. That is not befitting of the responsibilities that our constituents desire us to have when we come to this House of Representatives.

So what is the solution? Mr. Speaker, the solution at this point in time for this issue is H. Res. 479. We have a resolution that we would like to get debated on this floor, to have a debate on this floor that says just what we have talked about, to disclose who is asking for these special projects, who is asking for these earmarks, whether it is in appropriation bills, authorizing bills or tax bills. It is a resolution that sits in one of the committees controlled by the majority side. There is an opportunity for all Members of this House to say we ought to be voting on that. It is called a discharge petition. There we have 193 Members who signed to bring that resolution to the floor and debate it and vote on it. It takes 218, which is the majority here. So it is going to take some Democrats. So 193 Members have signed that discharge petition. Not a single Democrat has signed that discharge petition.

So, Mr. Speaker, I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who said during their campaign and even come to the floor of this Chamber and say now: We want earmarks disclosed. We want people to know who has been asking for these special projects. So sign the discharge petition, and it will give us a great opportunity to debate this issue on the floor of the house during a legislative session, during a time when we are talking about adopting legislation and making certain that sunshine is present for earmarks.

So I want to commend my friend from Tennessee for her leadership on this issue, for bringing this issue into focus, and for making certain that we fight day in and day out on behalf of the American taxpayer whose money it is that we are given the responsibility for.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia so very much. We have started our new fiscal year, and the new majority was not able to get one single spending bill to the President's desk, so we do operate on a continuing resolution.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, some of us who want to reduce what the Federal Government spends, holding the spending at last year's level is not such a bad idea. We kind of like doing that. But for a new majority who said we are going to have transparency and openness, to come in and continue to spend more and more and more, not less, but more. More of the taxpayers' money, putting more of it into earmarks.

The gentleman referenced the cq.com article which referenced 7,000 earmarks in eight bills; 5,670 of those earmarks with a combined worth of \$4.2 billion linked to individual House Members. And the concern with that, as my constituent said, how much you spend and how you spend it and concern over the earmarks.

You know, we have seen quite a bit of hypocrisy from the new leadership. As the gentleman from Georgia said, we do have House Resolution 479. This is something people can go on and pull up on the Internet and take a look at it. We are trying to get that voted on, forcing the transparency issue and restoring those rules that we passed last year to make certain that an individual's name is there, that you can find what individuals are earmarking, not trying to hide this, but you can find it and know who is asking for what in that budget.

We have 193 signatures on the discharge petition so we can force it out of committee, force it to the floor, and force a debate for the American people so they know what is going to be spent here in the House.

I encourage our Members to take a look at that legislation and to come join us on this first day of the new fiscal year. Again, I encourage our colleagues from the other side of the aisle to embrace the issue of reducing what the Federal Government spends, to em-

brace transparency in these earmarks, and to work for earmark reform, to join us in continuing to work for earmark reform.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield to Dr. VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina who certainly has conservative credentials and understands so very clearly how to work with earmarks, how to work with Federal budgeting and making certain that we remain true to our conservative principles as we address our Federal budget issues.

Mrs. FOXX. I am very grateful to you, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. PRICE. I was enjoying listening to you all speak about this issue and helping to educate the American people about what we are dealing with here, particularly as it relates to the numbers that Congressman HENSARLING is so good at doing.

It probably won't surprise anybody that a September Gallup Poll revealed that Americans' trust in the Federal Government is at a low ebb. Today, most Americans trust the Federal Government less than they did during the Watergate scandal. At the same time, a new Reuter's poll found that Congress has an all-time low approval rating of 11 percent.

I am extraordinarily proud to represent the Fifth Congressional District of North Carolina in the Congress. I am not proud that is the way that Americans feel, though, about the Congress of the United States. I think there are many reasons that people feel that way about the Congress. I think that one of the main reasons that people feel that way is because last year the Democrats who ran for office and who became the new majority in this Congress after 12 years made a lot of promises.

Republicans were not perfect in the 12 years they were in control of the Congress. Lots of mistakes were made. Republicans, some Republicans, forgot their way, lost their way and strayed from the conservative principles that got them into the majority.

Democrats promised they would be different. They would run the most bipartisan, most fiscally conservative Congress that had ever been seen. They promised lots and lots of things, and they have broken all of those promises. That's why I think that the attitude toward the American people is so negative toward the Congress these days. They are disappointed.

You know, as children we are brought up to believe the promises that are made to us. I think one of the greatest disappointments people have is when they are promised something, particularly by their elected officials, and then the elected officials break those promises. I think that is what has happened.

What we are seeing here is, time after time, things that the Democrats said in the campaign last year, they have gone back on. I am going to give one quote here from Speaker PELOSI from 9-16-06 at a news conference: "We have to have the fullest possible disclo-

sure, and it has to be on earmarks in appropriations, in authorizations and in taxation. And it has to be across the board, with no escape hatches."

In fact, what has happened is the Republicans had to take the Democrats kicking and screaming into revealing what their earmarks were. In fact, I was here on the floor with an amendment on the floor for 22 hours back in June when we were dealing with the homeland security bill to say to the Democrats: It is time you lived up to your promise. You've got to disclose these earmarks.

They had planned not to disclose any of those earmarks until after the bills were passed, and then they were going to publish them in the month of August and let people try to figure out where the earmarks were. So I think, again, a major part of the problem that we are having with the attitude of the American people towards Congress is they are disappointed in us.

Republicans last year passed legislation that made all of our earmarks transparent. There are differences of opinion on whether we should have earmarks or not. I think the Constitution gives us not just the right but the responsibility to spend money the way we think it should be spent through the Congress. That is our responsibility. However, everything should be transparent. Everything should be out there.

If I ask for special project money, I should be proud enough of that money to say where it is going. But not everybody wants to do that. What the Democrats have done is they have hidden their earmarks in legislation. We finally were able to force them into revealing earmarks in appropriations bills, but not even in all appropriations bills have they disclosed them.

Reference has been made tonight to earmarks in the SCHIP bill last week. Every time a bill passes this House practically, we find there are earmarks buried in those bills written in such a way it is very difficult to discern where those earmarks are.

Republicans don't believe in that. We believe if you are going to have earmarks, they need to be transparent, and I think that is the direction in which we should be going. And I believe doing that will help the American people feel better toward what the Congress is doing, and we need to build trust with the American people in order for us to be able to do the work we need to do.

But what the Democrats have been doing is trading earmarks for votes. Again, it seems impossible to think that with the majority they have they would need to do that, but they have been doing it. What they are doing is taking taxpayer money, money that we confiscate from the taxpayers of this country, and then spend it on projects that we think are projects that should be funded. We don't need to be doing that, and we particularly don't need to be doing that unless we are willing to show exactly where we are doing it.

What is happening is, again, we forced them to say we are going to do it on appropriations bills, but they still have not agreed to do them on authorizing bills or on tax bills. But we have to have that. We have to have transparency and truth in all of the legislation that we have passing out of this House.

I support the discharge petition that has been signed. I was one of the first people to come here and sign that discharge petition. It is going to be very difficult, but we are going to be putting the Democrats who call themselves the Blue Dogs, call themselves conservatives, this is going to be a defining moment for them. Are you really a conservative or are you just a tax-and-spend liberal who tries to fool the people in your district that are conservative when you don't put your name on the line to bring these bills up so that we can see exactly how you are going to vote on them. You can talk a good game, but the real point is: Are you willing to vote for this legislation? Are you willing to sign a discharge petition? And so far none have been willing to do that.

We are on the first day of a new fiscal year, and we have a reckoning with the American people. No appropriations bills have passed the Congress this year. We are operating on a continuing resolution. I agree, a continuing resolution that keeps spending at last year's level is better than increasing spending. But the Democratic majority have not lived up to their promises. They have broken every single one. It is time we call them to account.

I want to thank Congresswoman BLACKBURN for leading this hour tonight and for bringing this matter to the public yet again, because I think taking care of this matter of earmarks, taking care of this pork barrel spending is something that the American people want us to do, and it is high time we did it.

□ 2130

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina, and she is precisely on target with her remarks.

A year ago, we had some of the senior House Democrats that joined us Republicans in calling for earmark reform in Congress, saying new transparency rules should apply to all earmarks, not just on appropriations bills, but on tax bills, on authorizing bills, transparency for all earmarks of any kind. And House Republicans later delivered those reforms last year when we were still in the majority.

But now that we have the new Democrat majority, they have retreated from those promises. They've gutted the reforms implemented by the Republicans, and they are denying Members the ability to have a full debate on those earmarks.

As the gentlewoman from North Carolina said, this is so unfortunate that this is what they're doing in the

House because the people do expect better from us, and as she said, there were promises that were made and there are promises that have been broken.

I want to yield once again to the gentleman from Texas, our Republican Study Committee chairman, Mr. HENSARLING for a few more comments on the earmark issue.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and earmarks are a very important part of the debate about spending in Washington, D.C. We know that the people are overtaxed and are overtaxed because Washington spends too much.

Now, some people say, well, earmarks are just a small portion of the Federal budget. You know, that may be true, but Mr. Speaker, if you look closely at the numbers today under this Democrat leadership, more money is being spent on congressional earmarks than it is the entirety of our veterans health care system. Now, that's a travesty. This body should be ashamed of that fact, that more money is going to these congressional earmarks than they are going for our veterans health care system. There are still needs in that system, but instead, under this Democrat leadership, the earmark machine continues to roll.

Now, when they became the majority party, they claimed they would do better. In fact, our Speaker, Speaker PELOSI, was quoted as saying she would just as soon do without earmarks; though, I've noticed in the latest copy of Congressional Quarterly Weekly she's in the top 10 out of 435 Members when it comes to digging in the trough for more pork, for more congressional earmarks.

Now, people understand that earmarks too often represent a triumph of seniority over merit. Too often they represent a triumph of secrecy over transparency, and too often they represent a triumph of special interest over the public interest.

Now, again, I'm not here to say that all earmarks are bad, but the process is broken. The Democrats claimed they would clean it up, but instead, they've created huge new loopholes in the system.

If you want to go on a pork lean diet, you just can't cut out the sausage. You've got to cut out the bacon and the ham as well, and so when people hear about appropriation earmarks and authorizing earmarks and tax earmarks, what they need to know is what the majority said they were going to do and what they did are two different things.

So I wish I were eloquent enough to have thought of this myself, but to quote a colleague on the Senate side, Senator TOM COBURN of Oklahoma, Earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction. And that's why this fight is so important, and it's so disappointing when the Democrats, in some cases rightfully, criticized the Republicans in the last Congress, but

we cleaned up the system. At a bare minimum, we brought transparency and accountability to the system, and they've rolled that back.

Now, it was mentioned earlier on the floor this evening that one of the first acts the Democrats had, they asked the entire House of Representatives to pass massive spending bills. They would hide in them earmarks and only later would they be revealed what the House voted on. Thankfully, under the Republicans, we came to the floor and we brought transparency to the debate, and the Democrats were forced to reverse themselves. So at least on a small portion of earmarks, known as the appropriations earmarks, there is at least a modicum of transparency now.

We need to have that great disinfectant of sunshine brought on to this system because earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction. They create the culture of spending, and we'll never be able to protect the family budget from the Federal budget until we deal with that culture of spending.

Earmarks, again by definition, have nothing to do with merit. They take merit, they take competition, they take competitive bidding out of the process, and instead what happens is senior Members, typically in smoke-filled rooms in the back of the Capitol, are somehow able to arrange these special earmarks.

Most recently, under the Democrat leadership, there was something like 30 Members of Congress managed to get a special funding stream for hospitals in their district that no one else, no other hospital in America was able to receive. Again, a triumph of seniority over merit, a triumph of secrecy over transparency.

It has to do with the culture of spending, and if we're going to save the next generation from having a lower standard of living than we have because we are on a pathway right now just with the government we have to double taxes in the next generation, unconscionable, immoral, and yet the Democrat leadership continues with this culture of spending.

The earmark machine is alive and well as represented by the cover story right here, Mr. Speaker, in Congressional Quarterly Weekly. I wish every American could read that to see what is happening in this earmark process.

Every time some Member of Congress comes to the floor requesting a new earmark, guess where that money is coming from, Mr. Speaker. Either they're taking it out of the Social Security trust fund, robbing seniors of the hard-earned money that they put into it, or it's going to be part of this \$3,000 a year tax increase that the Democrats put into their budget, the single largest tax increase in American history. Or if they choose not to tax it, there's only one other thing they can do, Mr. Speaker, pass on the debt to our children and grandchildren.

And that's why I appreciate the gentlewoman from Tennessee. I appreciate

all the members of the Republican Study Committee coming to the floor tonight to add more transparency to this earmark debate, because unless we have transparency and accountability, we won't reduce the number of earmarks, and until we reduce the number of earmarks, we won't be able to change the culture of spending and be able to give the next generation greater freedom and greater opportunity than we've enjoyed.

Mr. Speaker, I hope people have watched this debate carefully, and for those who wish to know even more, I would invite them to go to the Web site of the Republican Study Committee that I have the honor to chair, at [www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc](http://www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc), and learn a great deal more about the spending patterns of the Federal Government and how often the people's money is squandered and taken away from their future and their American dream.

But there's a better way. There's a better way under conservative principles to make sure that we do not allow the Federal budget to grow beyond the family budgets and be able to pay for it, that we don't pass debt on to future generations and that we reform these earmarks and make the Democrats remain good to their word.

So, again, I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her great leadership in the conservative movement in the House, with her eloquent and articulate voice for her leadership on this subject.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas, and Mr. Speaker, as we come to the close of our hour that we have had tonight where we put the focus on spending and put the focus on earmarks, I would remind my colleagues that a couple of months back Republicans successfully forced the Democrats to restore two critical GOP reforms from last year, and that was disclosing earmarks and their sponsors before spending bills are voted on on the floor and then the right to challenge those bills on the floor. Those were important changes we made last year, and we forced those to be re-instituted so that we could begin to have some debate. Now, they may try to cover up some of those. We're going to keep digging and playing hide-and-seek and figure out who all of those earmarks belong to.

I want to give you a couple of quotes that tie into this. From the AP, "Democratic leaders gave in to Republican demands that lawmakers be allowed to challenge individual Member-requested projects from the final version of each appropriations bill." That's from June 14.

From June 18 of this year from the Charleston Post-Courier, "A House compromise achieved Thursday night shows that the worthy cause of earmark reform is far from lost. When the Speaker recently signaled a retreat from her repeated vows to fix that problem, House Republican leaders cried foul."

We called for that accountability. The cost to the taxpayer for earmarks not being disclosed is hundreds of millions of dollars of additional spending.

I hope that as we start this new year that our colleagues across the aisle will reach out to us, that they will join us in signing the discharge petition on Leader Boehner's bill, H.R. 479, and get the 218 signatures we need so that we can come to this floor so that we can have a debate and ensure the public that all taxpayer-funded earmarks are publicly disclosed and subject to challenge and debate on this floor. The future of our children, the future of this government depends on getting our spending under control.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time this evening. I thank you for the opportunity to address the issue of out-of-control earmarks and the need for earmark reform by this body.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I'd like to share a few thoughts about national security and about American foreign policy. We have many challenges that confront us today, and we live in perplexing times, but we also live in a time when there are great challenges as well as great opportunities, as long as we, the American people, have the courage to live up to our potential as a country that could lead the world into a better way than we have known throughout the history of humankind.

We are indeed in a new millennium, and this new millennium, coupled with the technological capabilities that we have and the vast wealth that is available to the free societies of the world today make it possible that we can build a better world than any human being has ever known. But, again, a lot of this has to fall back on the United States of America and our willingness as Americans to live up to the responsibility that we've been handed.

Ronald Reagan used to say that America has a very special role to play in this world. He used to say that because we Americans are a very special kind of people. We are not of one race. We're not of one religion nor one ethnic group, but instead, we are made up of people who come from every part of this planet and every racial background and worship God in every way that you can imagine. And in fact, there are many atheists who don't worship God at all and have that right, but we've come here to live in freedom and to show the world and to lead the world as a country that's made up of people from all over, that lead the world toward that direction which will enable it to overcome those trials and tribulations, those hatreds, ancient hatreds that have plagued mankind for so long.

And yes, today, the United States is the great superpower, thanks of course a lot to Ronald Reagan who I just talked about. The fact that during the Cold War he was willing to act responsibly to make tough decisions, in a way that ended the Cold War in a very real sense, he oversaw the demise of communism in the Soviet Union. It was Ronald Reagan who everyone knows brought down the Berlin Wall and not George Herbert Walker Bush, George W. Bush's father.

□ 2145

But as the Berlin Wall came down because of the policies of Ronald Reagan, we too must make the right decisions to ensure that the challenges that we face today are overcome in time for the next generation to enjoy greater freedom and to free themselves from the threats of fear that we face today. This will not happen unless we act responsibly, unless we act with courage, but, most importantly, unless we stand up and proclaim that, yes, we are from every nation of the world and every race and every religion, and we are the ones who will promote freedom and liberty on this planet. It is that alliance that we can have with those people in every country, that we have are, as I say, those people within our own society who can reach out to every country with that message, that we are allied with those good and decent people throughout the world who would stand with us to create a world where human freedom and liberty and justice and treating people with respect is something that is commonplace rather than the exception.

Sometimes it's a little difficult to think of a world becoming free, and the expansion of liberty and justice in this world, when we hear the reports that we heard today coming out of Burma. Burma, for these last 4 decades, has lived under tyranny, a horrible, horrible tyranny. It has been a closed society. Burma is a country that is so rich in natural resources that after the Second World War it was thought that Burma would be the breadbasket of Asia, that Burma would indeed be one of the richest countries of Asia.

Instead, Burma has sunk year after year, suffering from tyranny but, as a result of that tyranny, its people have lived in deprivation and in hunger and in want that was never ever thought would happen. No one ever thought that would happen after the Second World War.

But if we have learned anything from Burma and from the other countries that are poor today, it is that poverty is not created by too big a population. Poverty is not created by even a scarcity of resources, natural resources. Poverty is created because of tyranny. Tyranny and dictatorship bring corruption and bring about a strangling of those creative impulses within any society and those productive people within every society that will build, that will create the wealth necessary to uplift the people of any society. Instead,