

proposing a precipitous withdrawal. There are other reasonable alternatives. We believe that the better course, a new course, is a safe, orderly, fully funded, phased redeployment. The British already have this underway.

□ 1845

The British already have this underway. We can follow their example, and we can follow the leadership of the American people reflected in one study after another, that they want that kind of change in course.

The choice to redeploy or not is a decision about priorities. While it is true that the big cost of what we are doing there is measured in the blood of the brave, we are also hemorrhaging some \$3 billion in Iraq expenditures right out of our Treasury, week after week, month after month.

The President vetoed the Children's Health Insurance bill, because even too little for our children seems to be too much for him. Half a trillion dollars for a war already that he chose in Iraq, but for the children of America's working poor, he brusquely tells us, they can just go to the emergency room. With millions of children uninsured, it is too soon to declare "mission accomplished" there, just as it was too soon for him to make that declaration years back and many deaths back in Iraq.

In Iraq and with the Children's Health Insurance Program, we believe that the President is on the wrong course and that we cannot afford to wait until he departs office to end this war and to end the indifference that he has shown toward our children.

This fifth anniversary then should be commemorated with thoughtful consideration of alternatives for new courses and new avenues to address the tremendous damage that has been done by this faulty policy of preemptive war. I believe that we need in these next few months to continue to focus on the wrongs that have been committed, the damage that has been done, and bring people together behind a genuinely new course that we have not tried before, and that is a complete but phased, safe and orderly, fully-funded redeployment of our troops that will protect our families, that will assure our Nation's security, and will not continue with the hemorrhaging that we have suffered these last many years.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Madam Speaker. It is an honor to be here before the House once again. As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we come to the floor weekly, if not once, twice, if not twice, three times, to share with the Members the forward progress we are making

with a number of pieces of legislation. In some areas we not only need Member help, but we need the American people to stay involved and get involved in certain issues.

As you know, last week we talked quite a bit about the children's health care bill that passed in a bipartisan vote here in Congress. We know that we have given Web sites out to the Members so that they can be able to educate themselves even more and also to the American people. I think it is important, Madam Speaker, that we continue in that light.

There will be a vote, I believe not this Thursday, but next Thursday, to override the President on behalf of children's health care. There are a lot of editorials that have been written, a lot of pressure that has been applied to the President and also mainly to Members on the Republican side of the aisle that we would need to vote in the affirmative to be able to allow us to do that.

I have faith, because I have watched legislation pass. I have watched the President and I have watched Republicans on the other side say that we're not going to increase the minimum wage; we're not going to take part in increasing the minimum wage. And when the American people voted for a new direction, that legislation was one of the first pieces of legislation that came before this House. We voted an overwhelming affirmative, the whole Congress.

The President was kind of stutter-stepping on it, and, all of a sudden, he signed it, even though he said he wouldn't sign it. That is not because of an act of the Members of Congress. That is because the American people were involved in that process and thought it was very, very important. A supermajority of the American people called their Members of Congress and said this is important, we must do this, and it is important for our economy.

The same thing as relates to the student loan interest rate. We cut it in half. The President said he would not sign that bill. It was not just because of the act of the Democratic majority moving in a new direction, it was because the American people got involved in that process and President Bush changed his mind.

I think it is very, very important for us, and I just want to say this to the Members and also to staff, maybe it is important for us to get the time that the President signs these bills late Friday at like 7:30 in the afternoon before he goes to Camp David. If the President signs it in broad daylight or at night, as long as he signs the bill and allows the American people to get what they deserve, a piece of the pie.

I am going to yield right now, because I know that I have a couple of colleagues that are here that want to shed some light on action. We have finished votes.

I just want to say also, Madam Speaker, our colleague, Congress-

woman Davis, our hearts go out to her family and also to her constituents and also everyone that she has touched in her lifetime. We served together, I believe on Armed Services, and even though she was on the Republican side of the aisle, we were colleagues here in Congress. She served to the very end, and I am forever grateful to her family for allowing her to serve and be a part of this body, to serve the American people.

I know that over the coming days, tomorrow, I believe, will be her home-going service, that there will be further reflections on her life.

With that, I would like to yield to Mr. MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you very much, Mr. MEEK, and my condolences go out as well to the Davis family.

Mr. MEEK, I am glad you started where we left off last time, talking about children's health care, because it is still on the table. For a lot of us, we still believe that it has hope. This 2-week period in which we postponed a vote on the override will give our friends on the other side of the aisle the opportunity to rethink their position on this issue, to go back to their districts and talk to the millions of families, thousands and thousands of families in each congressional district across this country who are struggling with the real peril associated with trying to get health care in this country.

We are talking about 6 million kids which are going to lose health care if we don't reauthorize the national Federal Children's Health Program, the SCHIP program. We are talking about 4 million new kids that don't have health care now that could have health care.

We are really talking about families that are playing by the rules, who are doing everything we ask of them, working one job, two jobs, maybe even three jobs, but can't get health care through their employers. It just makes sense for us to reach out and try to help those families.

Mr. Speaker, it makes sense not only because it's the right thing to do from a moral standpoint, but we care about our fellow human beings, and we are our brother's keeper. But reaching out a helping hand to a sick child who lies in their bed simply because their parents can't afford a doctor, that is part of our moral obligation as Members of Congress, but it's also the fiscally responsible thing to do. These kids get health care, but they don't get health care until they get so sick that they end up in emergency rooms, and they end up getting the least humane, most expensive health care available to them.

Madam Speaker, this bill, the SCHIP bill, the Children's Health Insurance bill, which we hope we will have enough votes to override the President's veto on next week, this is not just about our moral obligation as a Congress, but it is also about our fiscal

obligation. I know Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ will talk about this today.

It is also about choices. This is not about play money, found money or new money. This is about taking funding that we have been sending for far too long into the civil, religious conflict in Iraq. Thirty-seven days worth of funding of that war could insure every child that the SCHIP bill seeks to cover, 10 million kids. In the end, this is just about choices.

Madam Speaker, we have still got time to convince a few folks on the other side of the aisle to join us. You remember, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, when this bill first came before the House, there were only a handful of Republicans that supported that. They went back to their districts over the course of August and they came back to take another shot, and, guess what? We had almost three to four times as many Republicans who, after they went back and heard from their constituents on this, decided they were going to stand with us, stand up for children's health.

I think the same thing can happen again next week if families throughout this country, if hardworking Americans who have no health care, go to their Members of Congress and say, listen, it is time to do the right thing for kids, time to do the right thing for families, time to do the right thing for health care. I think we can have a victory.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I also want to add my voice and sorrow that goes out to the Davis family. Mr. MEEK, Mr. MURPHY, this is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Since we know that our dear colleague, Mrs. Davis, succumbed to breast cancer after a valiant 2-year battle, I think it is important to note that we are in Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Breast cancer affects so many women from so many different walks of life, and it strikes every potential family, whether you're a Member of Congress, a maintenance worker, whether you're a scientist or someone from any walk of life. It is important that we focus our research and our effort, our dollars, our passion and our commitment to finding a cure for this horrendous disease. My prayers and thoughts go out to her family as well.

Madam Speaker, that having been said, I do have to tell you that I go back to my district and have talked to lots of different groups at home and in various places around the country, and when I bring up the possibility of the fact that President Bush might, and then did, veto a bill that would expand access to health care to 10 million kids, people really look at me like we must be working with aliens from another planet. Really. The jaws drop open, the puzzled look on people's faces in the audiences that I speak in front of, when I tell them that most of the Republicans and this President are actually opposed to expanding access to children's health care.

Now, they will say they are not. They have been saying, no, no, we support it. But words are pretty hollow when it comes to a mom or a dad whose child is suffering with a fever and they have no health insurance, which means they can't call up a doctor like we can and make an appointment to have a simple checkup or to get some antibiotics, and that they have to wait until their child is so sick, until that temperature climbs to about 104, 105, until you're ready to push the panic button, fly in your car, if you have a car, if you have a way to get yourself to the emergency room, to take your child to the emergency room to use it as your primary health care access.

People get that this is simple: You are either for making sure that kids have health care, or you're not. The lame excuse that they use, Mr. MEEK and Mr. MURPHY, is that they try to tell people that this is covering kids whose parents can afford insurance already, or who are already covered. They actually say that there are people that will drop the health insurance that they are paying for privately now to sign up for SCHIP; that that is exactly what any right-minded parent would do, is drop comprehensive health care coverage that they already have so that they can hopefully qualify for and keep their child qualified for a health insurance program that is really targeted for kids who fall in the gap.

Madam Speaker, not only is that completely wrong, it's a shell game designed to take away the focus that is clearly being shined on them right now, that shows that we are for children and they are not. That is the bottom line. It is very simple.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a simple choice coming up next Thursday, October 18. They can stand with the kids and make sure that kids who fall in the gap, who don't qualify for Medicaid, whose families aren't poor enough to qualify to get them Medicaid, and whose families can't afford to buy private health insurance, the gap of those kids in the middle, we need to make sure we cover them. It's the bottom line, Mr. MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Let me tell you a story. I know you have heard it, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, but it is pretty indicative of how low the other side is prepared to go to try to undermine children's health care.

□ 1900

There is a family, the Frosts. Their son, Graeme Frost, doesn't have health insurance. He is 13 years old and suffers with severe brain injury as a result of a car crash. The family has been the face of some of this discussion. The father is self-employed. He is a woodworker. The mother has had some part-time jobs on and off. They are not living in destitute poverty, but they are playing by the rules and doing everything we ask them to do. They are paying their taxes and contributing to society.

But because their son has a pre-existing condition, they have been turned down for health insurance time and time and time again. And so they have to pay for injuries from a car crash for a 13-year-old boy out of their pockets. This is the kind of family that we are talking about. This is a family that has done everything that we have asked, a family that is getting by, but because their son has an injury that excludes him from most private insurance, he has no other recourse than the SCHIP program, a stopgap solution until the family finds some insurance program that does cover him.

Well, what happened. This family had their whole life uncovered by the right wing that is trying to stop children's health care from going forward. Every tax return, every purchase they have ever made, right down to the type of countertops they have in their kitchen was exposed by the right wing of this city to try to prove that this family is just leaching off the government.

This is a 13-year-old kid with brain injuries and a family that has done everything that they can to try to find insurance and haven't found it.

I was home this past weekend, and on Monday I listened to one of the talk show hosts in my district talk about the fact, he said: I don't understand why people are saying the poor can't get health care insurance. I went onto a Web site for one of the big health insurance companies, and I just plugged in for a family of four to see how much it would cost. He said, it is reasonable. You can get a 80/20 plan, he said, 80 percent covered by the insurer, 20 percent by you, with a \$5,000 deductible for only \$300 a month. That's a deal. That's a deal.

Madam Speaker, think of that, for a family making a little more than minimum wage, maybe making \$22,000 a year, which in Connecticut just to have a roof over their head is paying about \$10,000 a year in rent, now has to pay \$9,000 a year for insurance.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Do you happen to know what the average price of a house or of housing in your district is?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. In my district, forget buying a house, if you want to rent an apartment with a couple of bedrooms, it is at least \$600, \$700 a month. You are talking \$10,000 a year when it is all said and done. You add on \$9,000 for health care costs, which under that plan that he found on a website, the minimum amount you have to pay before you even have a dime of health care coverage kick in, and you have \$2,000 or \$3,000 left over to do everything else, to put food on the table and educate your kids and pay for heat. It is mind numbing that people can't see that health care is so expensive that it is prohibitive for families doing the right thing. This is humane and it is right.

The conspiracy that gets thrown out there, and the stats and the numbers, by the right wing on this issue are

pretty easy to punch through in the end.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There are different ways to talk about this issue. As a mom, I like to talk about it from the standpoint when I talk to other parents that there is pretty much nothing more basic, no more guttural reaction that a parent has than wanting to keep their child healthy. Everywhere I go when I talk to people, this is the most basic thing. It is as simple and as black and white and as big a no-brainer as most people have ever come across.

A lot of the issues we deal with up here are complex. They are not black and white necessarily. There is a lot of gray. There is no gray on whether or not, if we can cover 10 million kids, we should. There is no gray for most folks. If that is the case, and I am certain that is the case in my liberal Democratic district, as opposed to conservative Republican districts or moderate Democrat/moderate Republican districts. I don't think there is any tinge of partisanship on the basic instinct that parents want to make sure they provide health care for their kids.

But if that is not the priorities that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle share, what is? Well, I think a glance at this chart will demonstrate what their priorities are.

This chart details 37 days in Iraq and what that would pay for if we were comparing it to what we could pay for to cover children's health care.

One day in Iraq costs \$330 million in funds that we appropriate. That would cover, over the 5 years that this children's health insurance program would authorize, 270,222 children.

One week of paying for the war in Iraq costs \$2.3 billion, which would cover 1,891,551 kids over the 5 years of this program.

A month of the war in Iraq, which we are now in the sixth year, I believe, costs \$10 billion, and that would cover 8,196,721 kids over the 5 years that we would authorize this program.

And finally, over 37 days, which would be about 4½ months' worth of paying for Iraq in the 5-year program, \$12.2 billion, it costs us for 37 days in Iraq, that would cover the 10 million kids this program would cover. So 10 million kids times 5.

They have repeatedly voted to blindly follow President Bush, blindly follow President Bush on the war in Iraq, and now, except for 45 brave Republicans who understand that children come first, blindly follow him over a cliff and vote for \$12.2 billion over 37 days in a given month and a week for the war in Iraq, and to continue it even though Americans want us to withdraw and refocus our efforts on homeland security here. And on top of that, choose to spend that money on a hopeless war as opposed to funding health care for 10 million kids.

Who is for children and who is just kidding? I think the numbers demonstrate that it is clear. They have an

opportunity to right the wrong that the President's veto pen established last week. Next Thursday they can vote to override it, and the American people have been speaking and need to continue to speak to their Members who voted wrong on this bill. We need 15 more Republicans. We are this close, 15 Republicans. Grow some courage, see the wizard, toughen that spine or grow one. Vote to override the President's veto and 10 million children get health care coverage.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I was going to pick up on that point. We are so close. This has been a bipartisan effort. We have the votes necessary to override the President's veto in the Senate. You have Senator HATCH saying that the SCHIP proposal is an honest compromise that improves a program that works for America's low-income children. You have Senator GRASSLEY saying it is a good bill, it is a good compromise. PAT ROBERTS rises to express his support for the SCHIP bill. So with 45 Members in the House supporting this bill, we are so close.

This is a picture, I believe, from earlier in the year. We have a President standing out in front of his loyal soldiers, the Republican caucus in their winter coats, which suggests it was one of the early meetings the President had to galvanize support for his plan to escalate the war. We have seen, as time goes on, that if the President were to regather this group for a conversation on SCHIP there might not be as many Republicans there.

I think as Members go back to their district and start to hear from constituents about how important this SCHIP bill is, all of those loyal soldiers are going to get a little smaller and fewer every day. As people start to figure out that the President is so far out on a limb on this issue, that not only is he doing damage to America's children, but he is doing damage to the prospects of his colleagues in the House, you are going to find a lot more people seeking that courage and finding that wisdom and coming on board here.

We hope it happens next week. But if it does not happen next week, we are not going away because the 4 million kids out there who are showing up in emergency rooms because they can't get the treatment to try to prevent the mental illness that will cripple them as an adolescent, they can't get the treatment to try to cure that physical ailment that ends them up in the emergency room, those kids aren't going away, so we won't go away. If we fall 15 votes or seven votes or two votes or one vote short, we will be back here next year, we will be back here next summer. If there is anything that is important to us, it is standing up for the kids. If there is anything that should be important to the entire Congress, Republicans and Democrats, it is standing up for the kids. That is our message here tonight. It is not just that we hope that the Republicans go out and find that courage and that wis-

dom, but they know, and all those children and all those families know, that we are not going to stop until we get a bill that insures kids of families in this country who so desperately need our help.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. MURPHY, this process we are going through in trying to win over the 15 Republicans kind of reminds me of the lessons my parents taught me when I was a little kid. You would struggle, Madam Speaker, with what was really right from wrong and to understand the values that your parents were instilling. I know I did. I would ask my mom on tough questions: How am I going to know I did the right thing? What is the guidepost I should use? That is the kind of lessons parents teach their kids all the time.

I remember so vividly my mom and dad telling me you have to be able to go to sleep at night and wake up in the morning and look at yourself in the mirror and like what you see staring back at you. You have to know that your conscience is not going to gnaw at you.

There are plenty of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who will thump their chests and use a lot of bravado, false bravado, I would add, and say, I can live with myself. I am doing the right thing. But you know in your heart of hearts when you go to sleep at night and you are the only one in the room with yourself whether or not you have done the right thing.

I am desperately hopeful they will listen to that inner voice, because you know your inner voice has to be telling you, if they truly have the values that they say they have as opposed to the ones that are reflected in many of their votes, that they will do the right thing, at least 15 of them, and vote to override the President's veto.

We all remember the vivid picture that we had when history was made on January 4 this year when Speaker PELOSI was sworn in and handed the gavel with all of those children, the children of our colleagues and grandchildren, surrounding her at the roster. That was a very vivid picture, but that wasn't a photo op. That was a representation of what Speaker PELOSI has staked her speakership on. She dedicated her speakership to our Nation's children, and we are making our entire agenda about improving their lives and affecting and impacting their future.

I mean at the end of the day, like I said a couple of minutes ago, and it bears repeating, this is a black-and-white issue. You vote to override the President's veto, you are for expanding access to health care for 10 million children. If you vote no, you are against it, period. There is no other way to define it.

This is one of those things, Mr. MEEK, the more they have to explain why they are doing what they are doing, the worse it gets for them. Again, I go back to standing in front of your constituents at a town hall meeting, and sometimes you look out at the

faces that we represent and you hope you are winning the audience over. But on this issue, those puzzled expressions don't go away the more words that come out of our colleagues' mouths in explanation of why they can't support expanding access to health care for 10 million children.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. MURPHY, I can't help but think of the action that we are taking here in Congress, and we know that we have some of our friends on the other side of the aisle that don't necessarily see it our way. But because the American people are involved in what we are doing, because we are moving in a new direction, we are giving the American people what they asked for. That is what is supposed to happen. You run for office and say what you stand for. The people send you to Washington. Some races are closer than others. Or you are re-elected to Congress and you come here to represent the people.

I see a pattern. You showed a picture of some of our friends on the other side of the aisle running down to the White House saying we are going to stand with you, Mr. President, not to allow the Congress to override, article I, section 1, of the U.S. Constitution.

□ 1915

I want you to talk about that a little later. There's something blowing through the air conditioning ducts, I guess, here in Congress and in the White House. One would be in disbelief of the fact that we actually have a say in what happens in this government because we appropriate the necessary dollars. We put forth the policy to be able to get the revenue to run the country.

I just want to say that some things that we have done here we can claim victory on, and I think we need to talk about a few of those things. We can claim victory on passing a children's health care bill with a bipartisan vote. This was not just powerful Democrats that voted. There are a number of Republicans that voted in both chambers. We have quotes on the Speaker's Web site. I believe it's, what is it, 45 Republicans over here and 18 Republicans in the Senate. And on www.speaker.gov you can go on the Web site and get the quotes of our Republican colleagues that spoke so very highly about this bipartisan piece of legislation.

You know something, we're putting in the work. We're putting in the work. I mean, the House last week held its 943rd rollcall vote of the year, and I mean of this year, breaking a previous record of 942 votes. That mark was set in 1978, and we're well on our way to taking care of the country's business of heading into a higher number of at least 1,000 votes by the end of this year. People wanted us to go to work. We're working now. We're working now. If it wasn't for the loss we had here in Congress, we would be working tomorrow.

But the bottom line is this, Madam Speaker, is that we have to continue to

move down the track of responsibility, and that's the reason why we come to the floor because we want the Members to feel the pressure.

You might have seen me moving around here on the floor because, as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ can tell you, my good friend from Florida, and Mr. MURPHY can tell you, that we pride ourselves, Madam Speaker, on making sure that we share accurate information with the Members and the American people. That's just where it is. We don't talk about fiction. We just talk about facts.

Now, earlier today we had H.R. 3056. What does that mean? There's a lot of House bills that are around, but this bill was actually a very, very important bill to the U.S. taxpayer. It dealt with the Tax Collection Responsibility Act.

We had tax collectors that the Republican majority put it in power to have the phone numbers of every American taxpayer, and they were so-called to ring in dollars of individuals that are not paying taxes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Private.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Private. I mean, these are private tax collectors that we ended up spending more money paying them than what they collected, and then they turned around and there's an instance of when an elderly couple received 150 calls in the course of 27 days. Now, anyone that knows anything about people calling your home that you don't want calling your home, and they're calling for someone else, they're calling the Murphy household and they're asking for the Johnson family, and you keep telling them that, no, the Johnson family doesn't live here, what we did today was to do the right thing on behalf of the American taxpayer by passing that piece of legislation that repealed the IRS authority to enter into private debt collector contracts. I think that's very, very important.

Also, when you look at it from a fiscal responsibility piece, Madam Speaker, and we're talking about being responsible, you have to look at this whole issue of the study that shows that the IRS employees that are employed by the IRS is 13-1 on what they can collect from what the private collectors are actually able to collect.

Also in that great piece of legislation was something that we all feel very strong about, the 1-year suspension on the 3 percent, 3 percent that is collected from small businesses up front when they contract with local governments, and a number of other issues that were in that bill.

I'm saying all of this to make this point: 210 Democrats voted for it; 22 Republicans voted for it. Now, one can say that's a bipartisan vote, but when you look at 164 Republicans voting against something that, on its surface, you don't have to dig far, the numbers, when we had hearing in Ways and Means on it, the numbers represent the

true meaning of what has not happened and contracting with a private company to call the taxpayers of this great country of ours and not doing the job that they set out to do, that they ended up getting a real paycheck at the end of the day, which they didn't even do the work, and then better yet, they're calling individuals' homes that already paid their taxes, because the accountability was not there.

I think it is very, very important. I just want to make sure that it is very important that we highlight these issues and we talk about the success that we're having here in Congress where we need our Republican colleagues to join us, but we're still pushing forward because the good thing about it is the fact that the American people are with the new direction agenda, and it's their agenda. We're just a vehicle to allow it to happen, need it be children's health care, need it be cutting student loan interest rates in half, need it be increasing the minimum wage, need it be what we're doing and what's at the President's desk on the issue of energy.

I mean, we have all these issues. Some were the 6 in '06 that we talked about. Some were ideas we picked up along the way that we thought was very, very important.

As we continue to move down this track, I just want to share with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that it is not necessarily or if it is something of a Democratic idea, because when you see votes like this, I can't help but think as a legislator going into my 14th year of public service, you have me by 2 years, to see a vote like this vote, that was obviously a good vote to take on behalf of the American people and to go the opposite way, if it was just merely politics, then I would say, well, you know, let's just go back and sit in our office and allow them to continue to take these votes.

But when we start looking at how we are going to deal with the war in Iraq, you called those numbers out of how many children I mean by day, by week, by month, by days that can receive health care, and just like this, \$3,316 I think are spent every second in Iraq when children can receive health care.

And so when you look at it, I mean, when we start talking about why and it should work itself out or it's the right thing to do, it's something that's happening around here that we haven't quite uncovered yet. But I don't have a lot of time, Madam Speaker, to try to uncover the problem on the other side of the aisle. I don't.

I'm with the Speaker and I'm with the majority leader and I'm with the majority whip and I'm with the Chair of the caucus and the Vice Chair of the caucus and all of the leadership folks that are running around here in the different caucuses and saying that the American people sent us here to go to work. We've gone to work. We've already broken records. We're on our way to break another record as it relates to

what we're doing on behalf of the American people.

But that's something that Members are going to have to explain back home if they're taking these unpopular votes, when one may say the blind leading the blind and two shall fall down in the ditch, that should happen. That's what we used to stay when I was on the football field at Florida A&M.

The real issue here is we should feel good about what we have accomplished. We should feel good that the American people are on board. We're on board with the American people. We're carrying out their agenda, and that's Democrat and Republican, too. I don't want an American that opens their wallet and, you know, look at their voter registration card and say, well, I'm a Republican, Congressman MEEK is not talking to me. I'm talking to you because when you look at fiscal responsibility, when you look at this issue, this is your wallet, too. When we cut interest rates in half, the President didn't want to do it. You wanted it to happen, Republican, independent, non-voter, Democrat, you wanted it to happen. That was a bill for you, not for the three of us, for you to cut your interest rates in half. So when we look at these issues, we have to look at a functional government, that we have responsibility, and then we have to put the partisanship aside.

One thing I can say, that we have passed major pieces of legislation in a bipartisan way and have allowed Republican input that has not been the case, I know and I can attest, for the 108th and 109th Congress.

I say all of that to say that I think it's important that we continue to paint the picture, especially for our colleagues that are not voting when it's abundantly clear of why you should vote for something. I mean, someone had to say don't vote for it, and then they say, okay, I'm not going to vote for it. There has to be a reason why, when you empower private debt collectors to have private information, you know what I'm talking about because I know you wear that privacy hat, privacy information of your personal information, okay, and they abuse and they fail in the mission of collecting the dollars that they're supposed to collect from individuals that are not paying their taxes. And then to turn around and see numbers of cases of abuse where individuals have been called over 150 times that have been documented over a period of 27 days to an elderly couple and still you come to the floor and vote no? I mean, I just don't understand it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I'm so glad that you brought this up, because as a member of the whip team, I was working this debt collection bill that we passed on the House floor today, and I was just equally as shocked as you were about how many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted against this because here are the facts.

Those private debt collection companies were costing us \$70 million. We paid them \$70 million of government funds to collect \$20 million.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I know we have it for the record, but I just want, when folks open the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that they can see that number twice, because that's the point even driven further down the street as it relates to why would you vote against something like this.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I will be glad to say it again. It's that shocking. We were paying private debt collection companies, instead of paying IRS employees a salary, to collect the debt that is owed in taxes from the people who have not been paying their taxes, \$70 million to private debt collection companies to collect \$20 million, and if we had spent the same \$70 million, the statistics show that the track record of IRS employees paid the same amount of money would have collected \$1.6 billion. \$1.6 billion would have been collected by government employees working for the IRS who we have to presume are quite a bit more trustworthy with our constituents' private, personal information in this time of stolen identities and stolen funds from our constituents.

The thing that strikes me as the most disturbing about this is that the Republicans talk this good game about being fiscally responsible and being the ones that are the stewards of the public's tax dollars, and then let's go down the list of where our votes and our leadership has been as Democrats under Speaker PELOSI and where theirs have been.

There was this bill today. Do you have the numbers on how many Republicans voted against this bill today? Voted to continue the practice of spending \$70 million to collect \$20 million. 232 Democrat "yes" votes and 173 Republican "no" votes. Only 22 Republicans voted "yes." I don't understand that. So maybe it's an isolated incident. Maybe it's isolated.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let's just engage in a conversation here. I mean, the real issue is this: It's not an isolated incident, and that's the reason why many of our Republican colleagues that were here in the 109th Congress is now reading about what Congress is doing in their hometown paper in an involuntary retirement. It's not like they said, oh, I just don't want to be your Congressman here anymore.

No, they took votes that were unpopular, and when I say unpopular, one person may say, well, leadership, you're supposed to lead, but when you have a bill like the bill that is in question here, H.R. 3056, and I encourage the Members, staff and what have you because maybe there may be another opportunity.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I believe it's called the Tax Collection Responsibility Act.

Mr. MEEKS of Florida. Yes, that's correct, but they may have the opportunity to do the right thing.

We made the point, because even on the minimum wage bill, we had Republicans. Over my dead body, you know.

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That should not happen, especially when something is so good on behalf of the American people. That's the decision that folks have to make. I am not concerned. I am not concerned about decisions they are making. I am saying that we should shed light on what we should celebrate. We should celebrate the fact we are providing the leadership for such a bill to come to the floor. It wouldn't have even been heard in Ways and Means if it was under a Republican Congress.

When we look at it, when I say "Republican" and "Democrat," I just want to make sure the people understand that I am not talking about us versus them; I am talking about fiscal responsibility and doing what government is supposed to do. This is what we are supposed to do.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Again, for some more examples, Mr. MURPHY, you came in the new freshman class or majority-makers who were committed to this campaign to come here and help move this country in a new direction. The new direction we have been talking about is eliminating the consistent examples of Republicans talking about being fiscally responsible but doing exactly the opposite. The next time we should bring the numbers of the votes to the floor on how many Republicans voted for the PAYGO rules and how many Democrats voted for it, how many Republicans voted against the amendment that closed the tax loophole that allowed American companies to hide how much they were supposed to pay in taxes by headquartering them in a different country even if they were really American companies doing business here.

In that energy bill, we put a provision in that energy bill to make sure we could close that loophole. I would like to see numbers here on how many Republicans voted against it, allowing companies to skirt their responsibility. This is not about increasing taxes. That vote was about collecting the taxes that are due, that these companies owe.

So no on PAYGO, no on closing tax loopholes, no on debt collection responsibility and leaving \$50 million on the table. Who is fiscally responsible and who is just kidding?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. It goes to the very subject that we opened with in talking about here, which is the war itself, and we believe that there is a much better way to spend pretty much all of that money, whether it be rebuilding our schools, educating kids, giving health care to children.

But even, even given the vast amount of money that we are spending over there, there has been virtually no check, virtually no oversight by this Congress and this administration. A

great example is the Government Oversight Committee, which has done really yeoman's work in trying to make up for the complete absence of oversight during the past several Congresses. The Oversight Committee held a hearing, very well attended, very highly publicized hearing a few weeks back with the CEO of Blackwater, who came before Congress, Blackwater, the private security firm which has basically created a privatized military in Iraq today.

Blackwater came before us, the CEO of Blackwater came before us the other week, and we asked him simply this. We said, tell us how much profit you are making. Tell us how much profit Blackwater is making off of U.S. Government contracts and said, You know what? It's none of your business. I can give you an estimation. I think we are making about \$85 million a year in profits off of \$850 million in contracts. But, basically, it's none of your business, United States Congress.

There weren't a lot of people on the Republican side of the aisle, on that government Oversight Committee that blinked at that suggestion, because that has been the practice in this Congress over the past several years. That has been *de rigueur*, as a matter of course here, that we don't ask any questions, that it is okay that Blackwater security, a private military operating in Iraq, can make \$85 million in profit off of doing what we know the United States military could do themselves.

So it's endemic when you talk about private tax collectors, it's endemic when you talk about the issues such as PAYGO that Representative WASSERMAN SCHULTZ raised and certainly in spending on the war. Time after time again we have seen no fiscal responsibility here, and time after time this Congress, Mr. MEEK and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, is shedding light on that misused taxpayer funds, but passing legislation like the bill that we passed today, which changes the course, and we start spending tax money wisely once again.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We are going to start closing out here, and this is something we don't ordinarily do. We are going to end up leaving 10 minutes left open. I mean, there is just so much information we want to share, but we know that the House has to continue, but I want to recognize Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. In helping to close us out, I do want to direct people to the charts and the other information that we have talked about here tonight. Our Web site can be reached by going to www.speaker.gov, and you will find the 30-something link right on that Web page, www.speaker.gov. I can only hope that the next time we meet, which will be the day before we cast that children's health insurance vote, to decide who is for kids and who is not, to override the President's veto, that we will be able

to report that we have picked up those 15 Republicans who have found their way and would be willing to do right by our Nation's kids. It has been a pleasure to join you here this evening.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I want to thank the Members for what they have done this far, the majority of the Members in this House, and that is including some of our Republican friends that have voted for a number of these measures that the American people want, Republicans, Democrats, you name it, those that are involved in other parties and those that are thinking about voting. We have to show that we are a functional House and that we can be able to provide the leadership, when necessary, to be able to run the country in a way that it should be operated, especially on appropriations and on the finance and tax hand.

I want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the hour.

HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate you letting me come to the floor tonight to talk, as I often do, about health care, the state of health care in our country.

This is a unique time in our Nation's history. We are kind of coming up on the 2008 Presidential campaign, and the reality of unfettered election-year politics intersects harshly with the perennial challenge, the perennial challenge we face in this House, how do we refine, transform, transform this Nation's health care system.

The history of health care in America over the last century and the very beginning of this century, it's a fascinating, fascinating subject. Medicine is a very highly structured, highly ordered, scientific-oriented, disciplined, scientific process, the scientific method. And then coupled with a number of governmental policies, we would like to think that they are science driven, we would like to think that they are fact based, but oftentimes they are more emotionally based, and how those policies interact with the scientific basis of the fundamental world of medicine and how, when we enact those policies and what seems like with every good noble intention in the world, how those policies then affect things decades into the future in ways that most people who enacted the policies would have had no idea what became of them.

Now, last century, in the 1940s, really a pivotal year in health care, medical care in America, both from a scientific aspect and from the policy aspect. From the scientific aspect, it was a time of great discovery and great excitement.

Mr. Alexander Fleming, the famed British scientist, isolated penicillin in

1928 in his laboratory, didn't quite know what he had or what to do with it. Certainly the substance produced by this mold in a petri dish inhibited the growth of the microorganism *staphylococcus*, a known cause of infection. For the first time, mankind had an agent to battle these unseen microscopic entities that plagued mankind for centuries.

Now, 1928 is not exactly 1940, and I referenced 1940. What happened in 1940 was American scientists, American scientists in this country, recognizing the value of this discovery, elucidated a method for mass production of penicillin. Penicillin, which had been a miracle drug before but available in very small quantities only for a very select few was now suddenly available for everyone, and available cheaply.

This affected our soldiers, who landed at Normandy on D-Day in 1944, the wounds that they suffered, which otherwise may have become infected and caused serious disability or even death were now even amenable to therapy with an antibiotic. Therapy with an antibiotic is something we now just take as almost second nature, just for granted. We get sick, we go to the doctor, they write a prescription for an antibiotic, we take it, we get well. In the 1940s, this was almost unheard of. So this was truly a breakthrough in the 1940s in the scientific realm in medicine.

Another discovery, that had actually occurred earlier, the discovery of cortisone. A very potent anti-inflammatory, cortisone was actually taken from the adrenal glands of oxen who were slaughtered. It was a very laborious, labor-intensive process to get small amounts of cortisone, so it really wasn't something that was amenable to treatment.

Then in the 1940s, a scientist that we, in fact, honored in this House during the last Congress, an African American gentleman, Percy Julian, who was a biochemist, not even a physician, a biochemist who worked heavily with soybeans and soybean products elucidated a method to mass produce cortisone, cortisol, which had not been able to be produced other than in very small quantities before, and now suddenly, again, it's available to very large numbers of people at a very reasonable price.

These two entities, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory, introduced in the 1940s changed forever the practice of medicine not just in America, but worldwide. What else happened in the 1940s? Obviously, World War II.

The Supreme Court made a decision in the 1940s that affects us to this day. During the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt, in an effort to keep down problems with inflation, it was a wartime economy, and he was worried about inflation taking hold and taking off, said we are going to have to have wage and price controls.

There was a lot of demand for labor in this country. We were producing materiel, things that were needed on the