

So I came here to work with you. As you all came here, so did I, to bring our country back to the basics. We have to get back to the basics in this country. And I'll just echo, not just what my patients have been telling me, but everybody along the parade routes, everybody I meet at the grocery store, everywhere I go, people say this: "Hey, KAGEN, I want my country back." They don't just mean a border that they can see. They don't just mean having a President that will obey the rule of law. They mean they want their morals back. They want their standing, their country to stand up tall and say we care about our children and we're willing to invest in their future.

□ 1945

This is Jenny's story, and I bring it to you and I share it with the Nation. We cannot turn our back. We cannot say no to Jenny. We cannot say no to Wendy and her children. They are working hard. These are hardworking people. The 47 million people that don't have health insurance today, two-thirds of them are hardworking people. They simply don't have the money to pay an insurance company for what benefits they may or may not get if they have insurance.

But this bill just makes sense. It's good for our Nation's health. It's good for our business. It's paid for. It's pay-as-you-go. Where do you want to spend your money if not on your children and their future?

I yield back to Mr. MCNERNEY.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Thank you very much.

I would like to ask a rhetorical question. What gives you the most joy in life? And the answer, of course, is your children.

You go to the mall. You are walking down. You've had a hard day. You see a child. You bend over, you talk to it. It brings a smile to your face. You're walking down the street in your neighborhood. A young mother comes along with a baby and cart. It brings a smile to your face.

And it's not just the United States of America. It's a worldwide phenomenon. People love children. They love to dote on their children. They love to spend money on their children. They love to do everything they can to give their children the best possible future they can.

So why can't we come together on a bipartisan basis and give our children the health care they need to be productive citizens in this country, in this world.

And that's a rhetorical question that I will leave with the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, it's not such a difficult question to ask, Whose side are you on? Are you on the side of Cassidy and her mother, Wendy? I am. I know my colleagues are. Whose side are we on? We will answer that question tomorrow.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, we have talked about the human

face of this problem, and I just want to briefly talk about the numbers that affect a single congressional district.

In my district, the First District of Iowa, 7,000 children are covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program. In the State of Iowa, there are currently 37,000 children who benefit from this program. This bill will allow 26,400 additional children to have the benefits of health care. But if we don't act, 37,000 children could lose the opportunity in my State to have the type of coverage we're talking about.

And one thing we can't do is we can't turn our back on those kids. We can't collectively fail to have that smile from doing something right that we all believe in, taking care of the most vulnerable people in our society, making sure they have their basic needs met. That is a responsibility we all have as parents. That is a collective responsibility we have as a Nation to the children of this country. And when we come into this Chamber every day, that should be the foremost thing in our minds: providing basic needs and making sure that they are met and empowering people to meet those needs on their own.

So with that I want to thank my colleagues for joining us here tonight.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I thank my colleagues. I thank you for your passion. I thank you for speaking out for those Americans and speaking out especially for those that are least able amongst us, the children, the children of those that are not as advantaged.

It doesn't happen often, but tomorrow we are going to get the opportunity. You hear a lot of politicians talk about family values. Tomorrow they are going to get an opportunity to cast a vote that really will affect family values. That ability to put that smile on that child. That ability to take that child in and give them the preventative care necessary to see that child grow up and be a productive member of society.

I am proud to be prepared to cast this vote to override this veto with my colleagues.

Mr. KAGEN. And together we will.

SCHIP AND EARMARK REFORM

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I thank my leadership for allowing me to lead the time during this next hour. And my intention, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, is to talk about something that is hugely important in this town, in this body, and across this country, and, of course, that is the issue of earmarks.

But, Madam Speaker, before I get to that, I couldn't help but hear my colleagues on the other side, the freshmen Democrats, who just spoke about the

SCHIP program. I will say this, Madam Speaker: they spoke well. They spoke in a very articulate manner. I commend them for their sense of presence in this body. They are all doing a great job.

But, Madam Speaker, talking about overstating and being over the top on some of the comments that were made that I just heard over this last hour listening to my colleagues, it's amazing.

The gentleman from Minnesota was critical of the President, overstating the issue of the SCHIP program in regard to covering children from families up to 400 percent of the Federal poverty level. I don't necessarily argue with the gentleman over that point. But then the doctor from Wisconsin went on to make a comment, and I think I am accurate in quoting him. He suggested that the Commander in Chief, the President of the United States, went to Iraq over lies. Then he went on to say that the country needs more than a President who refuses to obey the rule of law.

Now, you talk about overstatements and embellishing and really getting entirely off the subject. So I just want to remind my colleagues, let's do indeed stick to the facts.

The facts, Madam Speaker, in regard to the State of Wisconsin, my good friend, the good doctor, the allergist from Wisconsin, I would quickly point out to him that in his State, he showed that picture, that kind of heart-rendering, tugging-at-your-heart-strings picture of the mother and child, the mom, Wendy, and the child, Cassidy, and sort of making his point that we need to expand this SCHIP coverage by 140 percent to cover 6.4 million children that we are covering under the current program, but to increase that to over 10 million children.

Well, not only that, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, but the gentleman from Wisconsin, in his State 66 percent of the people that are covered under the SCHIP program are the Wendys, not the Cassidys. Mom and dad that have maybe one child that are in that income bracket, 100 to, I think, in Wisconsin it goes up to 180 percent of the Federal poverty level. Not only are the children covered but the parents are covered as well such that in that State, 66 percent of the total people covered are adults, not children at all. And Wisconsin is not the most egregious State, Madam Speaker. There are a number of others.

The State of Minnesota, the gentleman from Minnesota was leading the time. I think probably 70 percent in Minnesota are adults.

And if my colleagues want to come down, I will yield to them if they want to dispute those figures and we will talk about it. I would be proud to have them interrupt me and get in a colloquy, in fact, about this.

So I am here tonight during this Special Hour, Madam Speaker, to talk about earmark reform, and we will get to that. But I think this is just really

important because this is a historic vote tomorrow. This is a historic vote. And colleagues on both sides of the aisle will have an opportunity to say do we want to reauthorize a good program, you might say even a Republican program with Senators like Senator HATCH back in 1997 when this program was started. Not an entitlement program, Madam Speaker, no. Not an entitlement program. A block grant lasting 10 years, spending about \$1 billion a year on the program to cover 6 million children. And, yes, we Republicans, we fiscal conservatives, and the President of the United States have a compassion, and we understand that Biblical phrase "suffer the little children" that the Speaker likes to use over and over again in trying to make her point.

But we want to make sure that we cover those children that have the greatest need, those children between 100 and 200 percent of the Federal poverty level. And there are almost 750,000 to 1 million of those kids, those children, in those families who have fallen through the cracks. The States have not done a good enough job of finding them.

Madam Speaker, I am very, very proud of my State of Georgia. I represent the northwest part of that State, District 11. We have lots of children in this program. In fact, in Georgia we are covering about 280,000 children. And we still are missing a few. But they are not children and families making 300 percent of the Federal poverty level. That's \$63,000 a year. And if you allow that, as this new Democratic expansion does, as a matter of routine, and then you also say not only do the children, each child in that family, one, two, five, whatever, but their parents also get coverage, well, that's why I'm just trying to make this point.

I love my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. These four freshmen Democrats are outstanding Members, and they speak very well, as I said. They just speak facts that are not factual and they embellish their points, and I think that the truth needs to be told on this.

The truth is that we in the minority now, we want to expand this program. We voted for the continuing resolution so that it did not expire. We will vote to sustain the President's veto tomorrow because we don't need to raise the spending, Madam Speaker, on this bill 140 percent and cover 4 million additional children.

I think it was Mr. WALZ from Minnesota who had this nice poster showing the amount of money that we spend every day, every month in Iraq trying to defeat this Islamic extremism, to fight this global war on terror, and saying that, well, you know, if we had 37 days' worth of spending in Iraq and Afghanistan that we could use on this SCHIP program, we could cover 10 million additional children, give them health care, dental care, Cadillac coverage. Well, he is right about that. There is no doubt we could. And what

good would that health care coverage for those children do if some Osama bin Laden look-alike came into this country and blew them to smithereens?

So let's get our priorities straight here, my colleagues. Let's get our priorities straight. We need to protect the children. We need to protect the adults. We need to protect hardworking men and women in this country and not let 3,700 of them be slaughtered in a 20-minute period of time, in the blink of an eye, because we were not willing to defend this country against global terrorism and Islamofascism.

So this is not a matter of either/or here. And, again, numbers are great. You use your statistics and you make your points. But I hope, my colleagues and Madam Speaker, that I have made my point well in regard to priorities. So let's get this real. Let's sit down with the Democratic leadership. The President I know will do that after we sustain his veto.

Hopefully, there will be some Republicans, Madam Speaker, at the table. Our colleagues keep talking about the bipartisan bill and they keep saying Senator GRASSLEY and Senator HATCH. Well, okay, Senators GRASSLEY and HATCH. But we have got, I think, 47 other Republican Senators in the other body. And, yes, they may have a few Republicans on this side who they have scared into supporting this massive expansion.

But we don't need to do that. The President can sit down with, hopefully, our leadership, both Democratic and Republican. Minority rights here. Let Mr. BOEHNER in the room. Let Mr. BARTON in. Let Mr. DEAL in. Let our ranking members from the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. MCCREERY, let them in the room too and sit down with the President, with Democratic leadership, with the Senate, with the Republican Senators. I'm sure they will be there.

And say, look, we made a proposal. Initially, the President said we are going to expand this program 20 percent. You say it's not enough. All right. Well, let's get to the table. Let's leave our guns at the door, if you will, Madam Speaker. And maybe it does need to be a 35 percent increase, possibly even 40 percent. That would increase this program over a 5-year period of time by \$10 billion. But not \$35 billion when what you cover in those additional 4 million children are those whose families are making a pretty darn good income at \$63,000 a year and they are already on a health insurance program, a private health insurance program. But, Madam Speaker, wouldn't you, if you got the opportunity to drop your private coverage for your kids and those monthly premiums, say, Manna from heaven, we're now going to get on the government public trough? Wonderful. Wonderful.

□ 2000

And I go back to that, talking a little bit in response to, again, my physician colleague, I think most of my col-

leagues know that that was my profession, too, before coming to this body. But the doctor from Wisconsin was showing those pictures, that picture, again, of Wendy and Cassidy. Well, Wendy, if she needs public coverage for her health care, should get it under the Medicaid program. But guess what? The State has to pay more under the Medicaid program, significantly more, probably, I would guess that that's absolutely true in Wisconsin, than on this SCHIP program. So it's a better deal, obviously, to cover her under SCHIP than under Medicaid if she had a waiver, if Wisconsin had a waiver, could cover her income level. You see my colleagues, you get it? This is simply a matter of fact, the truth. Maybe sometimes the truth hurts, but connect the dots here, connect the dots.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Democratic leadership wanted to give the President a bill that he could sign because there's a lot of politics in all of this. And there is always, well, you know, "these cruel Republicans." These cold-hearted, they don't care about the children. They don't care about the veterans. They don't care about the hardworking men and women of this country, so let's stick it to the rich." And of course the rich is anybody making more than \$75,000 a year.

So, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't my intention to talk about this, but I think you can see, my colleagues, that the previous hour kind of stirred me up a little bit, and I wanted to get the facts out there. Because this is a historic vote tomorrow, and I plan to vote to sustain the President's veto.

Mr. Speaker, my main purpose tonight in this hour, and I think some of my colleagues will be joining me a little bit later in the hour, is to talk about something that I can talk about in a very, very bipartisan way, and that is, the need for earmark reform. This problem with earmarks, a lot of people say that's the reason, that's part of the reason. Maybe there are two or three things that you can point to, I won't spell them out. I think most people understand that we lost our majority. "We," I'm talking about now the Republican Caucus. We had the majority in this House for 12 years, and in November of 2006, obviously, we lost it. And a lot of people would say, the political pundits and folks back in my district, the Republican base, you guys, why in the world did you not rein in spending? You know, you had an opportunity, you had a Republican President, you had control of both the House and the Senate. Of course, control of the Senate, I think the Democrats are finding out right now that control of the Senate by two votes doesn't get you very far, and of course that was certainly a problem for us in the majority. But it is without question, in my mind, that this prolific spending really caused us some serious problems at the ballot box. And some of it has to do with these so-called "Member initiatives," earmarks, a lot of people just flat out call it "pork."

So, I think it's a problem. Clearly, it's a problem. The American public perceives it to be a problem; therefore, it is a problem. And if you ask people in red States or blue States, they'll tell you the same thing: It's not right.

Now, there are Members who will stand up here and very staunchly defend Member initiatives. They will make the argument that, well, each Member, 435 of us, 100 in the other body, knows our people, knows our State, knows our district, understands what the needs are. People come to us, whether it's a school or county or city government or an individual entrepreneur that's got a new product that can save the lives of our soldiers injured on the battlefield, and that's a good thing, that's an appropriate thing for us to point out. Maybe the departments that we fund in this \$933 billion discretionary spending pot that we divide up among all these different agencies and departments of Federal Government, that they can't know, they can't get into each and every State, although they may have regional offices. So, it's good, it's good that Members, Mr. Speaker, are able to bring that to the attention of the appropriators and make a request and get what's called by the general public and by the watchdog groups "earmarks" or "pork." We like to refer to them as "Member-directed initiatives."

And I'm a little bit torn about it. I do believe that Member initiatives can be a very good thing if Members do the right thing and there is no quid pro quo in regard to trying to grant a favor, if you will, for a constituent for a worthwhile, needy project that would ultimately help everybody, not just a very narrow group of people.

But this system, Mr. Speaker, has really gone amuck. Now, I've only been here 5 years; I'm in my third term. Have I asked for Member initiatives for the 11th District of Georgia? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, I have done that. I have learned how to do it, not nearly as successfully as some of my colleagues. Some people are absolute experts at it, but we all kind of learn the process. It's not part of our orientation, by the way. If it was such a good thing, it seems like they would include it in the orientation manual for new Members. But you just kind of learn this on the slide. You know, you talk to your senior colleagues who have been around here for a while and you find out how the system works. And so, you do. And I like to feel that I can shine the light of day, Mr. Speaker, on every single one of those Member initiatives that I've asked for; certainly not gotten them all. In fact, the ones that I have been granted, usually it's far less than the request. So, we've been doing this for a long time and we've talked about reforming it for a long time.

When we were in the majority, Mr. Speaker, and I say "we." You and I are Members of this body proudly, but I'm talking about "we" the Republican

Members. When we were in the majority, I think we finally recognized that something needed to be done and we tried to put some sunshine on the process. And we said, look, at the very least, let's make sure that when Members put these projects, these earmark projects in a bill, not just the appropriations bill, but also an authorizing bill, or maybe a narrowly drawn tax bill, all those tax bills, of course, originate in the House through the Ways and Means Committee, but if it's a tax advantage that affects just a handful of people, that's kind of a special deal, that's a special favor, and that has to be justified.

So, we recommended in our ethics reform package in the 109th Congress, let's make sure that all of those Member initiatives are written in the bill and in the bill's report. And it specifically says who the Member was making the request, from what State, what the project is, how much money is going to be spent. And that particular earmark could be challenged by another Member. Another Member, during an appropriations vote and discussion, a Member could stand up and say, "I have an amendment to strike such and such an earmark." I would hope that Members would do that in a bipartisan way and that Democrats wouldn't just attack Republican earmarks and Republicans attack Democratic earmarks. If you're truly sincere about the process, you would look at it without any view of whether the earmark has an "R" or a "D" behind it, Mr. Speaker, and you would challenge it on its merits and then would have an up-or-down vote. That's good, that's a good thing.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, when the new majority took over, that language in earmark reform was changed such that it's not required that the light of day shine on earmarks and authorizing bills or tax bills, just in the appropriations process. But that's not enough, that's not enough.

In the next few minutes I want to talk about something that I have introduced, a bill that I think would take us a lot further down the road toward, if you will, Mr. Speaker, cleaning up this process.

Now, I'm going to ask our good, young page who is here tonight, as they always are, working hard for us late at night, to bring the easel up. I've got about three posters, and I want to share some quotes with you. But while he's doing that, Mr. Speaker, I see that one of my colleagues, my classmate from the great State of New Jersey, I believe that's the Garden State if I'm correct, is with us on the floor. And the gentleman I'm talking about, Representative SCOTT Garrett, is also my colleague on the Republican Study Committee, and I thank him for joining me tonight.

At this time, I would like to yield time to Mr. GARRETT.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

I want to begin by just complimenting one, two, three people. First

of all, compliment Dr. GINGREY for having this session here on the floor tonight to bring this very important subject once again to the well so that we can have this debate, have this dialogue to address an issue that the American public is rightfully concerned about.

Secondly, and I'm sure Dr. GINGREY will agree with this, we should always applaud the gentleman from Arizona, JEFF FLAKE, who has been, let us say, the "voice in the wilderness," if you will, for a number of years when it came to earmarks coming to the floor, repeatedly, time and time again, before you and I were even in Congress, bringing this to the attention of the Members from both sides of the aisle, trying to shine that light of day. Unfortunately, the process was not such that the information was going out. He did it sporadically, at best, because he had to literally go through the bills page by page to try to gather the information. And when he did, he would gather those infamous examples that he would then bring to the floor, outrageous examples, and try to get a majority of Members of either side of the House to support him in deleting those egregious earmarks. Unfortunately, in nine out of 10, actually, it's probably more like 99 out of 100 examples, he didn't get the support that he deserved.

And the third group of individuals that I think we should applaud is the American public, because they have been rightfully outraged from the very start, as soon as the information began to come out of this House, as to where their tax dollars are going. The American public saw that their hard-earned tax dollars that they work every week and send in their taxes to the Federal Government, to Washington, D.C., are going to absurd things: the rain forest in the central United States or "bridges to nowhere" and that sort of thing. It is only, I think, because their outrage has gotten to such an extent that Congress, especially from the other side of the aisle, the Democrat majority, is finally beginning to listen. And you and I also agree that they have not quite listened well enough because they have not brought through the sunshine and the adequacy of information that you and I would like to see and that the American public would like to see.

So I just want to start off by saying, let's applaud those and give credit, yourself and JEFF FLAKE and the American public, where credit is due.

I know you're about to talk about your proposal, so maybe I will cut my comments to a couple here because I would like to maybe discuss your proposal in detail so we can flush it out. But let me just raise this one point, and I think this is probably a good segue for where you're going to go into this.

When it comes to earmarks, when you think about earmarks, it is right to say that they are really a very small part of the overall expenditure of the

Federal Government. Unfortunately, I think some Members and lobbyists also spend, unfortunately, a disproportionate amount of their energy and time attaining those earmarks. I don't think that's why they sent us to Washington, to spend so much of our time trying to slice out a small percentage of the budget to bring back home.

We know that some Members probably spend more of their time than others. We also know that some Members have been more successful than others in bringing home those earmark dollars in perhaps a way that some would argue is not the most equitable and fair way. And I think that's what your bill will get to, to provide a more equitable and fair distribution of dollars.

□ 2015

How is the money being spent right now? Well, I understand that the average House Republican receives approximately \$8.7 million on average in earmarks. I think that is an average as far as described as being a mean, or median, as opposed to a mode, when it comes to averages because some of them are considerably less and some of them have considerably more. The average Democrat, though, remember the Republican is \$8.7 million, the average Democrat receives \$10.3 million in earmark funds. And you have to scratch your head and think, where is the fairness there? Just because someone lives in a Democrat district, he may be a Democrat himself or he may be a Republican, is he more worthy? Did he pay more taxes that he is going to get more dollars coming into his district? Conversely, just because someone lives in a Republican district and he may well be a Democrat, as well, why is he being shortchanged? He is receiving on average a couple million dollars less.

Now, I said a moment ago those are averages. Some are lower. I don't know where you or I stand on those numbers. But some are considerably higher than that. The Speaker received some \$67 million in earmarks in the last go around, and then there, of course, is the very cream of the crop, the very top, appropriations cardinal, Congressman MURTHA, topped the list at over \$179 million in earmarks to his district. \$166 million were in defense earmarks. Someone suggested that when you are collecting and spending \$166 million, you are no longer just a congressman, you are now a CEO of a mid-sized company at that point. Of course, the interesting thing there is you are a CEO of a mid-sized company that has been bankrolled by the taxpayers of the country. That is something that we should focus the light of day on: Why are some people being treated better than others just by who they are, what positions they hold and what ranking positions they have in various committees.

I think your legislation will possibly try to address those issues. And if it does, and as I understand it does adequately, it will go a long way to pro-

viding the equity and fairness that the American public has been seeking and has been outraged that we have not been providing them in the past.

I would like to touch on some other points as far as really the scope of where earmarks go and some of the other things we may need to do, but I think this is a great segue into what your bill is able to address, and I yield back to gentleman at this time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey. I hope he will be able to stay with us throughout the hour because I do want to segue back and forth with him as we delve more deeply into this issue. But at this point I want to ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle tonight, focus on these three charts, posters, if you will, that I've got because I think this is so telling in regard to why I said, at the outset, when we started talking about this problem, that this is bipartisan. This is a bipartisan problem. It needs a bipartisan solution.

When we were in the majority, maybe doing the exact same thing, business as usual in regard to what the gentleman from New Jersey just pointed out, and in the way these earmarks are handed out with sort of, first, if you are one of the fortunate 65 that sit on the Appropriations Committee, whether you are in the minority or the majority, especially if you are in the majority, you get a much, much, much, much bigger bite at the apple, the earmark apple, than some rank-and-file Member on either side of the aisle that is part of the "obscure caucus" that sometimes we refer to. That is not right. That is absolutely not right.

Listen to what Ms. PELOSI, the minority leader in the 109th Congress, said, and I think she was absolutely dead on right when she said it. Here is the quote, Mr. Speaker, "If you are going to have earmarks and you are going to have transparency, you have to do it in the appropriations bill and in the tax bill, and in the authorizing bill. I would put that in writing." That is a quote from the gentlewoman, the distinguished current Speaker, then minority leader from California, Speaker PELOSI, minority leader at that time. She made that statement in September of 2006, exactly September 7. I guess campaign season. That was a good thing to say.

I think the public paid attention to it. I think it might have helped the Democrats regain the majority as they now enjoy in the 110th. I don't know what has happened with the Speaker. Right now, the minority leader, JOHN BOEHNER, the gentleman from Ohio who has been in this body since, well, I don't know when. He is still a young man. But he has never asked for an earmark. Do you think it is because Ohio or his district doesn't have the need? No. I think he thinks or he feels there's too much temptation for quid pro quo and corruption and he works very diligently to try to get through the regular process of applying for

grants and helping his district know how to do that, that that is the better way.

Well, he has dropped a bill in this Congress, in the House, to do exactly what we tried to do under the Republican leadership, Mr. Speaker, in the 109th, do exactly what Madam Speaker PELOSI said on September 7, 2006. Do you know where that bill is? It is buried. It could have a hearing. It could be brought to this floor. Gosh, we could do it this Friday. That was another pledge that the Democrats made, Mr. Speaker, that we were going to work 5-day weeks and I bet you we will be leaving here on Thursday night. Heck, we could bring this bill up. The leadership just has to agree to do it, and we could be voting on this very issue on Friday. But, no, it is buried. It hasn't seen the light of day. So we Republicans, maybe hopefully some like-minded, good Democrats, maybe the Blue Dog Coalition, maybe the Congressional Black Caucus who is sick and tired of getting the short end of the stick in regard to this earmark process would sign that discharge petition and let us get 218 signatures so that we can immediately bring that bill that Ms. PELOSI recommended to the floor. That seems pretty straightforward to me. Let's do what she asked us to do.

Mr. Speaker, the next line is another quote from our now current Speaker, and she said this, if she were to become Speaker in the next Congress, PELOSI said she would press to severely reduce earmarks. And this is a quote. That was what the reporter wrote in the Wall Street Journal. But this is a quote that the current Speaker gave to him. "Personally, myself, I would get rid of all of them," she says. "None of them is worth the skepticism, the cynicism the public has and the fiscal irresponsibility of it." That was in the Wall Street Journal.

Yet, Speaker PELOSI, she herself is on track to take home \$100 million this year in the earmark member initiative category.

That just astounds me. That just astounds me. What she said here, my colleagues, is so true. "None of them is worth the skepticism, the cynicism, the public has." Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleagues to pay attention to an article that was written today, USA Today, quick read, easy read, Wednesday, October 17, front page, should have been above the fold, below the fold, but here is the byline on this article, my colleagues: Timing of Gifts Stirs Earmark Debate. And then the subtitle: Donations Made After Funding Added to the Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to read the first paragraph. The article is short, but I am not going to read the entire article. But this is what it says in the first paragraph:

"Days after a Senate committee approved \$1 million for a Woodstock, New York, concert museum, the project's Republican billionaire backer and his family contributed \$29,200 to help the

Democrats who requested the money, Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer." A \$29,200 contribution from this billionaire and his family. Within the limits? Sure, within the legal limits. I am sure it probably was him, his wife and his kids, adult children who are permitted to make contributions. Maybe Senators CLINTON and SCHUMER have leadership PACs and they can get \$5,000 a chunk to those PACs.

Then the article goes on and says:

"It's neither illegal nor unusual for contributors to benefit from congressionally directed spending known as earmarks, but the timing of the June donations is grist for critics who see a link between legislative pet projects and campaign money."

Now, I am going to tell you, I don't want to say that that is the proof of the pudding, but it is mighty suspicious. And I don't think it passes the smell test.

I am not being overly critical of these two Senators. The problem is on both sides of the aisle in both Chambers. What really called my attention to it, Mr. Speaker, was an article about a month ago in CQ Weekly in the title, the front page, *Playing the Earmark Game and How It is Done*, and how certain Members get, as I pointed out earlier, a much, much bigger bite at the apple. I will tell you, my colleagues, you know this. I hope the American public knows it. It is going to be members of the Appropriations Committee. It is going to be the party leaders, possibly on both sides of the aisle, or it is going to be Members who have had a tough election in a very competitive district, and we run it every 2 years and they are going to have a tough reelect, be they Republicans or Democrats, and, therefore, those Members are going to be granted a lot more. Mr. GARRETT talked about the average of \$8 million. Maybe those are the ones that get \$25 million worth of a bite at the apple so they can appear to be doing more for their district. They are a great Member, so let's reelect them. They are bringing home the pork. They are bringing home the bacon.

But you know what happens with that process, Mr. Speaker, and there are several articles in this magazine. This one is titled, *Gaps Along Racial Lines*. What happens to Members of this body who may be from minority majority districts or Latino districts or inner city districts and they easily get elected. They are very popular in their district. So they don't need any shoring up to get reelected. So they get maybe \$1 million instead of \$8 million, and somebody else, some powerful Member gets \$180 million for their district. That is flat wrong. Because, Mr. Speaker, those Members that I just described, whether they are members of the Congressional Black Caucus or the Latino caucus or they represent a rural district in Georgia, they have 670,000 people that they represent, and they have poor towns and poor counties and

poor school systems that need the money, that need the project, and they don't get it. It goes to the fat cats. That is just flat wrong.

We are going to try to change that. Some Members think that the solution to this problem, Mr. Speaker, is a nuclear option, and that would be to totally eliminate all earmarks tomorrow. No more earmark Member initiatives and we stop all this temptation that any Member could fall prey to, any Member, including myself.

□ 2030

So I can concur and understand that feeling that we might need to completely, totally stop the earmark process. But then, again, many Members have pointed out to me that, you know, Congressman, we don't mind putting our earmarks out there for the light of day, we don't mind them being challenged, but don't take them away from us, because we are doing it right. Don't ruin a process that could be good because there are a few rotten eggs in the basket. I understand that argument as well.

My proposed legislation, and I appreciate Mr. GARRETT from New Jersey still being with me because I want to yield some time to him and get into a colloquy about the bill, Mr. Speaker, but what it does is this. It says, look, in 2006, the high water mark of earmarks, when \$29 billion worth of discretionary spending, about 3 percent of the overall discretionary spending was earmarked by House and Senate Members, well, let's do this in my bill. It says to cut that amount by 50 percent.

Mr. Speaker, that is also almost a Pelosi quote. What was called for by the Democrats when they were in the minority trying to seek the majority, let's cut these earmarks by 50 percent in one fell swoop. So that is what my bill does; it cuts that \$29 billion to \$14 billion. Then you do a little arithmetic, not calculus, but a little bit of arithmetic, and you divide 535 into that \$14 billion number and you come up with a figure of \$27 million. The bill says no Member, no Member from Pennsylvania, no Member from California, no powerful Democrat, no powerful ranking member, no appropriator, nobody who needs help propping up them for the next election, nobody can get more than \$27 million worth of earmarks for their district.

Now that doesn't mean they have to take them. If Members like Mr. GARRETT and Mr. FLAKE and Mr. BOEHNER and Mr. HENSARLING and a total of 12 Republicans stand strong on principle and say that earmarking is wrong and I want to say that my \$27 million should go back to the taxpayer and subtract that number from the 302(A) allocation, as we call it, that is some real money. The first thing you know, you might have 100 Members doing that, or 300 Members on both sides of the aisle saying "I want to end this process." That opportunity is there. The money wouldn't be spent by somebody else.

Mr. Speaker, but, on the other hand, if a Member had something that they felt very strongly about, whether it was a road project or repairing a bridge infrastructure, obviously the State of Minnesota knows what I am talking about, or widening a port so that these large container ships can come in that are now going to be able to come in through the Panama Canal, there's merit. So a lot of Members would say, you know, I really need this. Maybe one year \$15 million; possibly the next year, the max; maybe the next year nothing, in which case the taxpayer would benefit from that as well. That is what this bill is all about. It's about putting some fairness, restoring some integrity to the process, and also controlling spending.

Mr. Speaker, my thinking on this is really twofold, controlling spending, and also ending this climate, if you will, of corruption, where Members on both sides of the aisle, and I don't think there is a Member of this body that comes here without a great deal of integrity and honesty. I don't believe they could look people in the eye in their district and get elected. It is hard to get elected to the Congress, to the House or the Senate. I think people come here with good character. But I think, unfortunately, the process will adversely affect a few. We can name some bodies that are littered and strewn about this place, that actually some of them are now spending time in the Crossbar Hotel, as my dad used to say.

So this bill, I think, would help. It would be a great start; not just a little move, but a fairly draconian move. A lot of Members are not going to like it. I have already begun to accumulate cosponsors, and every day we get several more, and hopefully this is something that we can accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield back to my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) at this time for further commentary.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as I sit here, and here we are in October, the question that always first comes to my mind is 10 months into the 110th Congress under now the new Democratic control, and what has that 10 months wrought: the largest tax increase in U.S. history, the creation of a budget by them with slush funds where there's no accountability; and, finally, the lack of transparency that was promised to us. That last point I think is what Dr. GINGREY is talking about here this evening. I am glad to join him to illuminate that issue a little bit more, the lack of transparency.

The Democrats ran the election of last year saying that there was not enough transparency and openness in the prior Congresses and that if they were elected and put in a position of power, they would bring that transparency, the openness, the sunshine, if

you will, to this floor. That is what they campaigned on. That is even, as Dr. GINGREY says here with the charts, the quotes from Speaker PELOSI, what they promised even after they came into a position of power. Of course that has not occurred.

Mr. Speaker, some who may be listening to us here right now say why didn't the Republicans do this when they were in charge? The fact of the matter is, as you may recall, we did. We did pass legislation in the 109th Congress to bring transparency to reform the earmark process. Unfortunately, not all those reforms were carried over with us into the new 110th Congress, and, I should add, some of the changes that have occurred in the 110th Congress only came about because of people like Dr. GINGREY, JEFF FLAKE, and other people, JEB HENSARLING from the RNC, coming to the floor and compelling and forcing the additional reforms that we have seen so far in this 110th Congress.

Let me just make this point. In earmarks right now, and it only applies basically to appropriation bills, which of course you have already spoken as far as the discharge petition, but in the rules of the House right now you would think that the American public would have the information now at hand that they have been asking for all along: Who's sponsoring the earmark, what the earmark is for, and how much money that earmark is allocating. You would think that is the case because that is the reform we compel the other side of the aisle to implement.

Well, they passed the rule, but they are not implementing the rule. What they did was quite clever. You take a piece of legislation that can be literally this thick, as far as a bill is concerned, an appropriation bill, or even thicker than this as well, and that information is in here, who sponsored it, how much it's for, and what the project is, but it's not in one place. Instead what they did was put it in two places. So you go to one page where it has the sponsor's name and the project, then you go 100 pages later on and there will be the project and the amount.

Now you have to search through literally thousands of pages, thousands of lines, and to put the two together to find out that, well, Congressman MURTHA, for example, had this particular project in his district. You have to spend literally hours and hours and days and days to put it together to get that number that we gave before, \$166 million in Defense Appropriations.

I commend "Congressional Quarterly", because that magazine did spend the time to put together that data and has published the report, and it was an outside organization that actually did much of the spreadsheets on that. Finally, the American taxpayer has that information, no thanks to the other side of the aisle, because they put it together in a convoluted and basically in an orchestrated manner to make sure that the information they

were required to reveal to the American public was presented in a way that you could not see it.

The proposal that you are presenting to us tonight is a good one. I believe it is a step in the right direction, and I think the gentleman from Georgia would agree that it is a step in the right direction, and that we can even eventually, if we can get this step done, we can go even further, as you illustrated, to get even more information and to rein this in even further.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, yes to the gentleman's question in regard to maybe this being a good first step, and almost a giant step, not a baby step.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I didn't mean to say it wasn't a good first step.

Mr. GINGREY. And we should go further. But I would tell my colleague, Mr. Speaker, that in a way it is analogous, and forgive me for using medical analogies, but I spent 31 years of my adult life doing that, of trying to wean someone off heroin, a drug addict. Mr. Speaker, you can't do that cold turkey. It would kill the drug addict, so they go through a detoxification process, if you will, and that is not a pretty thing to see. Then they are gradually weaned off and switched over to a drug called methadone. It is a heroin-like substance, an analog. It can take sometimes a couple of years, even when a drug addict is cooperating and wants to be cured of their addiction.

I think I am not overstating it. I don't think I am embellishing here when I say this Member-initiative earmark process has become an addiction. I truly believe it has. And it is tough. So to cut it in half in one fell swoop and put caps on it, and, as Mr. GARRETT, the gentleman from New Jersey pointed out, shine the light of day on it so that you can see it and you can find it, obey not only the letter of the law, but, for goodness' sake, obey the spirit of the law and not make it difficult for watchdog groups or other Members or John Q. Public to look in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD or read these bills and find out what is in there.

So there is no question that Mr. GARRETT is right, that after we get this done, go through the detoxification process, if you will, we will then try to wean this body off of this process, because I think we ultimately need to do that.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Just a point that comes to mind. One of the issues that we will be dealing with this week is SCHIP. There is a piece of legislation you wouldn't think would be prone to earmarks. If you listen to the other side, they would tell you, hey, there are no earmarks in there.

That is one of the peculiarities of the rule, the way the Democrats have written it as far as providing transparency. All you have to do is take your bill, that could be chockfull with all of your favorite pet earmarks from the car-

dinals and the chairmen of your committees and all your other friends, and the ones requested by lobbyists and what have you, and all the Democratic majority has to do is say, we hereby say there are no earmarks in here, and that is it. You and I can come to the floor and rail about it all we want and say, yes, there are. Look at page 72, line B. Here is an earmark.

That is exactly what happened with the SCHIP legislation. They said there are no earmarks here. Lo and behold, there are. There are literally billions of dollars in earmarks in that going to special projects and special hospitals across the country, and you and I would not know about it if we were just to trust them and take them at their word.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. As we talked about earlier in the hour, as we are approaching the culmination of our time, this earmark that is described in the USA Today on the front page talks about \$1 million for some Woodstock museum.

Some of us who grew up in the deep south who remember reading about Woodstock and seeing the video clips were somewhat appalled about what went on there, Mr. Speaker, so I am sure that that would be an earmark that Mr. FLAKE or Mr. HENSARLING or Mr. GARRETT or myself would like to stand up and say, I don't care if it is to some billionaire Republican making the request, and then the next day writing a check in the aggregate of \$29,200 to the two Senators from New York. Maybe that is within the legal rights to do that, but it sure doesn't pass the smell test.

That is where we are. I have talked to my colleagues about, well, how could we possibly take this a step further, those colleagues who really agree with me that this process is totally out of hand, and maybe phase out earmarks over a 3- or 4-year period of time.

□ 2045

Obviously another way to approach it would be to say drop a bill that says we totally eliminate, or drop a bill that says we are going to have a 1- or 2-year moratorium. I could support either one of those.

But if Members still feel very strongly that a Member-directed initiative done correctly have merit and value, then the bill, I think, I am presenting will put some fairness into the process.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. None of these things, as good as all these ideas are, are going to happen unless the majority party, the Democrat Party, Speaker PELOSI agrees they are actually the right thing to do and are willing to move the legislation.

Your bill that would move in the direction that the American public wants us to move, to rein in excessive spending, to rein in earmarks, to put a clamp or a lid on them, to move in the direction of moving them out entirely

or at least scaling them down, will not move unless the Speaker, Speaker PELOSI, says that is a good idea and she will post the bill.

The legislation that you spoke about at the top of hour regarding the discharge petition that the Republican leader has that would expand earmark information to not just appropriation bills but also to authorizing legislation, to clean up some of the areas that have given them the latitude to actually continue to hide this information from the American public. That piece of legislation will not move unless the Democrat Party and Speaker PELOSI finally hear from the American public and realize this is what the American public wants us to do and wants us to move that legislation.

It is still early in the evening. It is only a quarter of 9. I am sure Speaker PELOSI is in her office or somewhere in the Capitol as we speak. I would invite her to come to the floor right now and join us with either one of those pieces of legislation. Maybe you could recite the words right back to her that she said some time ago, and remind her of what she said when it comes to the issue of giving transparency and openness. I would invite her to come to the floor and join us in this debate this evening, to say she will move these, will move these things in the next days, weeks. Just before the winter holiday so when we leave here in the next several weeks or months, they, we can say in the first session of the 110th Congress we finally gave the American public what they were promised when the Democrat majority came into Congress. I will eagerly await her arrival here.

Mr. GINGREY. The gentleman is exactly right. The Speaker could say forget about Minority Leader BOEHNER's discharge petition, we are going to bring it up under regular order. We are going to do the right thing. We are going to do what I, Madam Speaker, said she would do in September of 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight and I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) for taking this hour and to say to colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I think most of my colleagues would agree, even though I had to rebut the four outstanding freshmen Democrats that had the previous hour regarding the SCHIP program.

I think most of my colleagues would agree that I am not a real partisan Member, and I enjoy comity. That is the way I think it should be. But we have a problem here in River City, whether it is Republican leadership or Democratic leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that the party, if it becomes partisan, the party that will take hold of this idea and pledge to the American people that we are going to do something about it once and for all, and as Mr. FLAKE has said to me often, it is one thing to air out our laundry, but we need to clean it. We don't need to just air it, we need

to clean it up. I agree with him completely. Again, I think the party that will adopt that or fight for it is the party that either deserves to keep their majority or regain their majority.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House. My good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY), we have traveled together and served together. I want that chart that he has. I keep asking him for it. About how when Democrats take control, pork barrel spending is cut in half. I appreciate it. I am glad for his accuracy.

It is so good to serve with my colleagues up here in Washington, D.C. I am here with my good friend, Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Our districts neighbor each other in south Florida. We have been good friends for a long time. We are here tonight part of the 30-Something Working Group.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we come to the floor once, twice, and when we can three times a week to share with Members issues we are working on here.

We want to make sure that all of the Members are fully aware of what is happening in Iraq. As of today, October 17, 10 a.m. report, there have been 3,824 deaths in Iraq. The total number wounded in action and returned to duty is 15,604. The total number of wounded in action not returning to duty is 12,674.

We want to make sure that is not only a part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, but that every Member of Congress understands the sacrifice those who are in harm's way are making. And those of us who are policymakers, that we make sure that we take the appropriate steps to do away with that number continually going up on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn it over to my colleagues that are here, but tonight I just want to take a point because the President today had a press conference. We did some good things. We gave out a Congressional Gold Medal today, and the President decided to release a press release driving over to the Capitol here.

It was very interesting. In his statements he said that the 110th Congress, Democratic-controlled Congress, whether it be House or Senate, they need to go to work. That is interesting because I have record-breaking information here. We have taken more roll-call votes than any other Congress in the history of the United States of America. We are working 5 days a week in many cases. We have deaths or what have you. We have to pause for that. And national holidays and religious holidays that need to be recognized because there is sensitivity towards that.

But I can't understand, we start talking about going to work. Let me read down the list of things we have done. The 9/11 Commission recommendations, all of them, to protect America from terrorism, passed. And the President said he wasn't going to sign it, but the American people pushed him and said they wanted to be safe, and he finally signed it.

The largest college aid expansion since 1944, the GI bill, saving the average American \$4,400. The President said he would never sign that bill. Because of the hard work of Members that voted for that bill, and these are bipartisan votes. I want to make sure that those who are paying attention to what we are saying here on the floor, those Members and Americans, that they understand this is not a Democratic message, this is a bipartisan message on behalf of the people of this country.

The minimum-wage increase which raised the minimum wage for some 13 million Americans, passed and signed into law. The President said he wasn't going to sign that, but it was such a good piece of legislation. People wanted it to happen for many, many years. We said we will not allow the Members of Congress to receive a pay raise until we give the American people a pay raise.

Innovation agenda to promote 21st century jobs, passed and signed into law. All of this was signed into law at like 7:30 on a Friday evening as the President is leaving to go to Camp David.

Again, tough lobbying and ethics reforms that many of the independent reform groups are so happy that finally passed off this floor, through the Senate, and signed into law.

Reconstruction assistance for the gulf coast disaster hurricanes, never would have happened, Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for the push of this Democratic Congress. Actually, I remember when they had two amendments that came to the floor, one to give assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, and one to continue the funding for the war for 3 months, they came in two amendments, never would have happened if it wasn't for a Democratic-controlled Congress pushing it through.

Expansion of life-saving medical research stem cells, passed on a bipartisan vote, vetoed by the President. Okay.

Again, health care for 10 million children and working families, passed by a bipartisan vote. A bipartisan vote which tomorrow, and we are going to talk about that here tonight, the Senate has the votes to override the President and there are some Republicans that are saying that they are going to take that vote. We have a problem here in the House because we don't have some of our friends, and I do mean some of our friends because some of our friends on the Republican side of the aisle are going to be voting with Democrats. Not with Democrats, but just to