

Civic Arts Commission for his philanthropy to this great community.

One of Ray's former teammates commented that he was, and I quote, "one of the people you could always count on." Ray took that attitude from the football field to the community of Cedartown, and his contributions to both will live on as his legacy. I send my deepest, deepest condolences to his wife, Claire, and to his whole family. I know all of Polk County mourns your loss.

Madam Speaker, as a younger generation looks to sport stars as heroes and role models, I hope they come across men like Ray Beck. He was committed to his team and committed to his community. He gave his all on the field and then gave back to the town where he was raised. He was generous with his time, his wisdom and his energy, and Cedartown, Georgia, is a far, far better place because of him.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring the legacy of Ray Beck.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 22 U.S.C 6913, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

Mr. LEVIN, Michigan, Chairman.

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. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to be here on the floor once again on behalf of the 30-Something Working Group. I am glad to be joined by my good friend, Mr. RYAN, from Niles, Ohio, who has joined me on a number of occasions here. We have joined one another.

□ 1615

We look forward to other members of the 30-Something Working Group joining us here on the floor.

There is a lot going on in the Capitol Building today, a lot of committees meeting, Madam Speaker. A number of bills are moving through the process, and the American people are being served, with a new attitude of the U.S. House of Representatives, especially 110th Congress, that we will work as every American does. We will punch in at the beginning of the week and punch out at the end of the week and work on the weekends sometimes. So that is a good attitude to have, especially when you have two wars going on. You have the President passing on a budget that the American people don't see eye to eye with, nor this Congress sees eye to eye with. But we will work those issues out, and we will talk about them a little further as we move along.

One of the other things that I think that we can touch on are some of the findings, that now these committees are meeting and we have some level of oversight, Madam Speaker, that we are going to find out some things that have been happening in Iraq or what has not been happening in Iraq.

We are also going to learn more about the President's budget as we move along. And I am having a copy of the budget brought to us here on the floor because I want to make sure that the American people and definitely the Members get an opportunity to see this big document. Yesterday and today the Ways and Means Committee held hearings and had the Secretary of the Treasury and now the Office of Management and Budget Director here before the committee today. And there are a lot of questions that are being asked, and very few are being answered. And we will talk about a little of that today.

But once again, I yield to my good friend Mr. RYAN from Niles, Ohio. I am glad that you are here and am looking forward to talking about some of the issues that are facing this Congress and the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is an honor to be with you, Mr. MEEK. And I appreciate that you were on the floor today passing legislation commemorating a fine citizen down in Florida, a leader in that community. And I want to thank you for taking the time to come out.

There are so many issues that we need to discuss today, Mr. MEEK. The President submitted his budget this week to the Congress, and we are going to have to go through that with a fine-tooth comb and recognize some of the mistakes that are in there and correct them.

And as I said the other night here, Madam Speaker, the only thing that stands between President Bush's budget, which would have been passed post the election, is Speaker PELOSI. And so we have got a real opportunity here to make things right and to make some real progress.

A couple of things that we want to talk about that are in President Bush's budget that we need to fix immediately as we go through the hearing process is the tax increase that is going to be placed on middle-class families. The President's entire budget is balanced on the backs of 33 million American families who will be forced to pay higher taxes through the alternative minimum tax. This was a tax that was put on years and years ago to make sure that wealthy Americans had to at least pay a base level, the minimum level, of taxes. Regardless of how much you make, you had to pay this much. And through that process over the years, that AMT started creeping and creeping and creeping into middle-class families now to the point where it may go past the \$100,000 point, meaning that if you make \$100,000 or possibly even less, you will be forced to pay this alternative minimum tax. The President did not deal with that. We are going to have to fix that because the alternative is it means a tax increase on 33 million Americans.

Cuts to health care and to our seniors, Madam Speaker. The President's budget cuts Medicare and Medicaid by over \$100 billion over 5 years, \$300 billion over the next 10 years. And these are two key components of our health care system in the United States of America that cover about 80 million Americans. There have also been cuts to home energy assistance for poor families. As cold as it is today here in Washington, D.C., and across the country, the President submits a budget that cuts that by about 18 percent.

There are a couple other things I want to talk about here, Mr. MEEK, and I am glad you are paying attention and asking me to help you out here today. We have seen this tremendous change in the economy over the past couple of decades where we went from basically a national economy to an immediate global superpower post-World War II. And with that there have been tremendous changes.

Here is one of the key components that have affected us, and as capital moves and globalization occurs, whether we like it or not, Mr. MEEK, here is what has happened. This is a chart that indicates the new global workforce. And the increase, from the left side, 1985 to 2000, the increase from about 2 billion people that were considered in the global workforce to almost 6 billion people. That means China has been added to the list. That means India has been added to the list. That means Central American countries have been added to the list. And now all of a sudden we have expanded the global labor supply, which has driven down wages for people here in the United States. This is a major issue that we have to deal with.

And, Mr. MEEK, as you know, Speaker PELOSI was kind enough to appoint me to the Appropriations Committee, and today we had a meeting with our chairman Mr. OBEY, and he said we

want our committee to be about the future, and we want our committee to solve future problems. And that is really what we need to deal with here.

Here is another issue. As we have had the increase in labor, most Americans have been losing ground, Madam Speaker. And if you look at real median household income, and this comes from the New Democratic Network Web page, this is from the U.S. Census Bureau. Real median household income: In 1999, it was \$47,500, real median household income. It was, in 2005, \$46,500. That real median household income is dropping, not rising. And so this is an issue that the President's budget does not address, but we are going to have to address this, and we have already made great strides to do this.

Two other charts I want to share with Mr. MEEK, Madam Speaker, real quickly is people say, well, if you are productive, you will make more. The top line here in the red is the increase in productivity; the blue line is the median income. As productivity has increased by 15 percent, wages have actually gone down. So the tie between productivity and wages no longer exists because of this new global market that we are in, which is a major public policy issue, Madam Speaker.

And then, finally, the share of national income in 2003 and 2004. This is the change. The change. The bottom 99 percent, their share of national income went down 2 percent. The top 1 percent, they went up 2 percent. And the top .01 percent went up 1 percent. So you can see that the bottom, the 99 percent hasn't benefited from what is going on here, and the top 1 percent has. So the question is what do we do, and what have we already done?

If you look at what the new Democratic majority has already done, Mr. MEEK, they have already, in the first 100 hours, made strides to try to rectify this. Passed the minimum wage to try to give the American people a pay raise to \$7.25 an hour, and that means thousands of dollars a year depending on how many minimum-wage workers or how many minimum-wage jobs you perform. It could mean a couple thousand dollars a year. In addition to that, we have cut student loan interest rates in half for both parent loans and student loans, which will save the average person taking out a loan about \$4,400. So you add the minimum wage. And in addition to that, we were able, in the first 100 hours, through the leadership of Speaker PELOSI, to also repeal corporate welfare and invest that money in new alternative energy sources. We passed the stem cell research bill, and alternative energy and stem cells are going to open up two new sectors of the economy. And then in addition to that, we were able to pass and give permission to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate down drug prices on behalf of the Medicare recipients.

So this package, the first 100-hour package, has done a lot to try to ad-

dress some of these problems: Boost the minimum wage, cut student loan interest rates in half, and allow drug prices to be negotiated so that we will actually reduce the burden that is being placed on people.

So, Mr. MEEK, I think there has been a lot that has been done. There has been a lot that has been done here on behalf of the American people just in the first 100 hours, and we are going to continue to move on global climate change, global warming. We are going to continue to move on alternative energy. We are going to move on research and development. We are going to continue to provide the kind of oversight that the American people deserve in order to fix some of these problems.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Reclaiming my time, Mr. RYAN, I am just so glad you had those charts to really spell out what the President's budget wants to do to Americans versus for Americans.

And I think it is very, very important that we continue to march on and do the things that we need to do to represent the American people, Madam Speaker. The reason why we come to the floor to point some of these issues out, this is an unopened copy of the budget that we received this week here in the Capitol, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, and it is our job to look through this budget and see what is good and what is bad for the American people.

The American people delivered this people's House a change. The change for accountability, the change for oversight, and the change to be able to make sure that this country moves in the right direction. America said they want to move in a new direction. We said we wanted to move them in a new direction and that we were going to be a part of that atmosphere.

The reason why we are pointing these things out, Madam Speaker, is because we want to make sure the Members know the work we have before us not only on the Ways and Means Committee, but also on the Budget Committee. Every Member of this House, their said committees are having hearings now, need it be the Secretary of Education or the Secretary of Labor or even the EPA Administrator, to come before their said committees of jurisdiction to talk about why they submitted certain things in the budget, need it be the environment or education or justice or what have you.

But I think it is very, very important to point out how this budget continues to move in the wrong direction, the President's budget, as it relates to the growth of our country and the health of our local communities and States. I learned a term about 8 years ago when I was in the State legislature, and it is called "devolution of taxation." Cut the taxes at the Federal level, and pass unfunded mandates down to the States and local government. And in this budget I see the President continues to embrace that philosophy, devolution of taxation.

Let me go further on in that definition of "devolution of taxation." Here in Washington, D.C., we have made a paradigm shift in this House to use the philosophy of pay as we go. We want to show how we are going to pay for it if we are going to fund it, not pay for it and continue to work on this chart and borrowing from foreign nations and owing foreign nations money, as the Republican Congress did and the President did. What we want to do is do it in a responsible way.

But as we start talking about devolution of taxation, when you cut opportunities for local government, and some statistics have shown that as it relates to this budget, from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, they estimate the total aid to States and local governments will decline, has declined \$12.7 billion. So we pass this on to the States, and they have to fill the gap that we are not willing to fill, or obviously the President is not willing to fill, that we are going to try to do our best to fill here in this House of Representatives. They have to rob from Peter to pay Paul. Well, who is Peter? Nine times out of ten, it is a person that is trying to educate him or herself or their family, or grandparents that are trying to educate their children, that the tuition at the State university system is going to up.

□ 1630

The assistance for the elderly in a said State may end up being cut. Health care to children and other opportunities that States like to provide for the citizens of their State will end up being cut because they have to fill the gap that the Federal Government is not filling.

Then, on top of that, it continues to roll down, because, by constitution, by all State constitutions, they have to balance. They don't have the prerogative of saying, we will put it on a credit card or borrow from a foreign nation. They have to balance their budget. So they balance their budget on the backs of local government. Then the local government has to figure out how they are going to raise money, be it needed for education, school districts, or needed for local county or city commissions. Then they end up putting some sort of levy or penny tax or referendum on the local communities and voting for transportation needs or voting for parks and recreation.

The reason why that is happening more and more in U.S. cities is because of the kind of budget that the President sent to the Hill on the backs of the American people.

Now, what else is in this budget? You have to think about, this budget is standing for the individuals that are not even asking for tax cuts to be made permanent on behalf of wealthy Americans.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield, I think this is very illustrative of your point. Here we said earlier, the share of the national income

went up 2 percent for those people in the top 1 percent of the country. The bottom 99 percent, their share of the national income went down 2 percent.

Add on that what you are saying, okay, what you just said about the devolution of taxation. Okay. So now these are the same people who have to vote on property tax issues. These are the same people who have to vote on libraries. These are the same people that have to vote on the penny sales tax to keep their counties running. So I think they are getting squeezed from all sides.

Then, when you look at what the top 1 percent have benefited from the globalization of America and the ability to be in the stock market and benefit from that, and get tax cuts and the tax loopholes and everything else, the bottom line is, Mr. MEEK, the bottom 99 percent have not benefited from all of this.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, once again, thank you for your charts, sir, because we need to make sure the Members know exactly what was handed down from the President of the United States to this Congress and the work that we have cut out.

Some tough decisions are going to have to be made, Madam Speaker. Some millionaire may not get all of the tax break they have been waiting and counting on from the President of the United States. We have hard-working Americans out there looking for a break. We have small businesses out there looking for a break. Meanwhile, the President says, make my original thoughts permanent because I had a rubber stamp Congress in the 109th and 108th and so on, that did what I said do, continue that, and let's cut assistance to State and local governments. Let's cut the COPS Program. Let's cut Medicaid benefits. Let's make life harder for veterans as it relates to their benefits and the clinics that are open out there, that we just did something about in the continuing resolution. Let's continue that philosophy.

But for those individuals that are being driven and buying new cars every other year, let's continue to make life wonderful for them. And, by the way, let me send an escalation of more troops over to Iraq, where we just had a hearing just yesterday here in the House of Representatives that we are now getting down to the nitty gritty on what happened to \$8 billion that no one can account for that was cash money. Very little of it can be accounted for, very little. Eighty percent can't be accounted for. Let's continue to practice that philosophy in Iraq.

So, Mr. RYAN, the only, I guess, comfort that I have at this moment is the fact that the American people voted to move in a new direction, Madam Speaker, and we are willing to take them in that direction. But, at the same time, Mr. RYAN, the philosophy of the 30-Something Working Group, we want to make sure that every Member understands their responsibility.

We have Veterans' Day coming up. We have Memorial Day coming up. We have a number of holidays that are recognizing the contributions of Americans that allowed us to salute one flag. The least that we can do is break it down to the point that every Member understands his or her responsibility in the House of Representatives.

So, if you want to be on the side of the super, super billionaires and millionaires, you make that choice. If you want to be on the side of the American people that work hard every day, to give them some sort of break so hopefully they can pay for tuition to make sure their children can make it through college, and, as Mr. RYAN said, in the first 100 hours, we dealt with a lot of that. We dealt with the minimum wage, which is now coming back from the Senate that will be over here in the House either today or tomorrow, or is already here. We dealt with the issue of being able to make a reverse about face on the interest rates that the previous Congress put on students and their families. We rolled that back.

There are a number of things that we have already put through the process, pay-as-you-go principles here in this House, to put this country on the right track.

Yes, tough decisions have to be made. But, at the same time, we have to be responsible, and we can't just rely on sound bites as though, well, that will get us past the process.

I believe that we can make it to the promised land, not through doing the same thing expecting different results, but having the kind of oversight and having the kind of foresight and watching out for these individuals.

Weatherization. You mentioned weatherization, Mr. RYAN, as it relates to keeping our most frail and poor warm during the wintertime. The President is asking to keep a tax cut permanent for super billionaires but cut weatherization assistance for a lady on fixed income in Detroit, Michigan.

I am just trying to understand the balance here and the priorities as we start to look at this. The President is asking for a cut in a number of the Department of Justice programs, Madam Speaker, that assist local sheriffs and police chiefs in combating and preventing crime. The COPS Program, zeroed out.

The President last week, Mr. RYAN, had an announcement come out that we are going to move for the maximum Pell Grant. Then the budget comes out, and it is the same level of what he has recommended over the last 4 years. So, the words don't match the action.

So our job here in the House, Madam Speaker and Members, is to make sure that even if the President makes a commitment to the American people and we agree with that commitment, that we have to find some room in this budget, which I know that Chairman SPRATT and other members of the Budget Committee and members of

committees that have jurisdiction and oversight, will have some say in how we move in the new direction as it relates to America. So we are going to have a serious paradigm shift.

I see Mr. RYAN here has one of our favorite charts out right now just to illustrate what past budgets have done, Madam Speaker, and where it left this Congress in spending the majority of its money, not on the priority that the majority of the American people would like us to balance on but because of bad management.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate your insight, Mr. MEEK. You have talked about this, and we have been talking about this for a long time.

We would love to come in, as the Democrats did in January and swore in Speaker PELOSI, and come in and bump the Pell Grant up two thousand bucks and eliminate student loans altogether as far as paying interest on them and all kinds of other things we would like to do. But we are limited by the kind of budget that we have inherited from the President in a 6-year presidency and a 14-year Republican control of this Chamber.

Here is what they are doing: The 2008 budget authority says that the red on the left, \$230 billion or \$240 billion a year, is going to be spent just paying the interest on the money that this country has borrowed; not to pay down the debt, but just to pay the interest payments. We are going to have to spend \$230 billion because of that. Look how that just dwarfs other priorities in the budget of the United States.

The next one is education. The next one is veterans. The next one is homeland security. All pale in comparison to what we are forced to spend to pay the interest on the money we are borrowing.

As Mr. MEEK has said in his previous chart, this money, over \$1 trillion, has come from foreign interests. This President and the Republican Congress borrowed more in 4 years from foreign interests than all of the previous Presidents and Congresses combined. Combined. This is the net result, the interest that we have to pay on the debt.

So what has happened is that we have a huge number; \$2.102 trillion in 2006 is the amount of foreign held debt, \$2 trillion. That is unacceptable in the most powerful, wealthiest country on the face of this Earth.

So we have seen what has happened since the Clinton administration had some sanity. We had a \$5.6 trillion projected surplus. It went down \$8.4 trillion. Now we are in a \$2.8 trillion deficit. We have some real problems.

So when it goes to making the investments that we want to make in education, the investments that we want to make in health care, SCHIP, the COPS Program, making sure young kids are covered, have some form of health care coverage, Madam Speaker, we are limited by the budget that we have been handed.

Unfortunately, we can't start from scratch, but there are some decisions

that need to be made, and I can tell you that it is not acceptable to me, and I know it is not acceptable to my friend from Florida, to continue to allow people who make millions and millions and millions of dollars a year to continue to get a tax cut.

Some may say they earn it. Maybe they do. Some do. And some work hard. Just because you wear a white collar doesn't mean you don't work hard. But what we are saying is, that group of people benefit the most from the lavishness that this country has given them, the roads and the bridges and the safety and the security provided by defense, the stable markets in which to invest money, in which many, many do, into the stock market. This is all provided for by the stability that comes out of this institution, and therefore they owe a little bit back.

Now, even if you don't believe that, our alternative, we have a decision to make: Either we borrow this money from the Chinese, the Japanese and the OPEC countries, which gets us to that chart where there is \$2 trillion in foreign-held debt by this country, or we ask those people who are making millions and millions of dollars a year, Mr. MURPHY, to pay their fair share, to step up to bat and help us solve this problem that we have so we don't have to put the future of our kids and our grandkids in the hands of Communist China.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Ohio. As you dig deeper into this budget, Mr. RYAN, what you find is the financial gimmickry involved in the President's claim that this budget will be balanced by 2012 is accomplished by forgetting about this little thing that hides in our Tax Code called the Alternative Minimum Tax. That is a difficult concept for some people to understand, but it is not going to be so difficult for millions of middle-class families to figure out when, next year and the year after that, they are going to be hit for the first time with a massive new tax increase.

The Alternative Minimum Tax was introduced first to try to make sure that those at the highest end of income scales were forced to pay some type of income tax. But because we haven't adjusted that number over the years, more and more middle-class families are going to fall into that trap.

Mr. RYAN, you are exactly right. You and Mr. MEEK and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ have talked about the fact that, during a time in which we are expending vast amounts of money overseas while we have major overdue investments here at home, we are giving away this multi-billion dollar tax cut to the richest 1 percent of Americans. That is wrong. We need to reinvest that money back into our infrastructure, back into education and energy and all of the things that help regular families.

But what we need to tell people about is, this budget not only decreases

taxes for folks at the very top of the income echelon, but it also raises taxes on middle-income folks, because the President in this budget does nothing to address that looming Alternative Minimum Tax.

It is kind of a difficult subject to talk about, because it is complex tax policy, and you have to dig a little bit into that income tax form to figure out how much it is going to hit you. But it is going to hit you.

□ 1645

And unless we do something about it, we are not just going to have a tax decrease for those at the top, we are going to have a big tax increase for those in the middle. And as we know, this budget does nothing to help the costs that all the middle-class families are facing. Their premiums go up every year from their employer, as the cost of higher education spirals, as we know, a 41 percent increase since 2001. This budget does nothing, little if nothing, to help those families.

So, Mr. RYAN, this is a double whammy for American taxpayers. Not only are we sucking money out of the budget by giving away tax breaks to the very wealthiest, but we are then very explicitly hammering those in the middle income.

But here is the good news. We know what the good news is, is that, as you have said, in previous years that budget which stands in front of Mr. MEEK would have been delivered to Congress and would have had a little cursory look by the Members here and would have sailed out basically intact, at least when it comes to those priorities.

This year it is very different. And by the grace of the American people that sent a new Democratic Congress here, that budget is going to have a very, very hard look, and it is going to look very, very different when it leaves here, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And you are right. In years gone by, they would have greased that sucker up, and it would have flown through the House and the Senate, who knows what kind of changes. It wasn't until in the last year or so that the Republican majority at that point couldn't even agree with each other. So we have had to come in and clean up with the continuing resolution, which we made some great advances with veterans and some other issues that we were able to deal with.

But when you look at it, we don't want to get into, and you are exactly right, there is going to be an increase in taxes if the President's budget over the next few years stays, because that alternative minimum tax is going to creep in and is going to creep in to average American families' lives, middle-income families. And so I appreciate you making that point.

We have been joined by a special guest who periodically jumps in and joins with the 30-something Working Group, the gentlewoman from Texas. I would be happy to yield.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished gentleman. It is a delight to be here with all of my colleagues, and I might say that it is a pleasure to jump in and to accept the glory of the 30-something once in a while, particularly on this very vital and important issue.

And I want to say to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio, having watched the Ohio election process; if there was a State that spoke loudly about a decided necessity of change, it certainly was Ohio, and the rest of us followed. And I can't imagine that we would be facing this budget but for mistakes and missteps that have been made in foreign policy, for example the Iraq war and funding that has been somewhat misplaced.

But the good news is, and that is what I wanted to just focus on for a moment, that we now have the opportunity; Speaker PELOSI, the leadership, Chairman DINGELL, Chairman WAXMAN on the health issues, we now have an opportunity to address the American people and to, frankly, make sure that we listen.

I want to start very briefly on tracking the reauthorization of the Ryan White bill that was authorized in the last Congress. But an authorization goes nowhere unless there is, if you will, the funding that is necessary. And so I just wanted to briefly highlight the fact that we have a continuing AIDS crisis in the United States which really requires a focused and concerted effort at funding. And I don't believe that with the President's budget, these enormous tax cuts, we will be able to address the fact that there are now over 1 million people in the United States living with AIDS, and that particular communities, African Americans and Hispanics, are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, and they account for nearly 50 percent of the people living with HIV/AIDS.

That means that we need more Federal funds made available to help in the minority health initiatives, the AIDS initiatives, and we need more funds to encourage testing for as many people as possible. So I cite that as a challenge to this budget that is going to impact many of us extremely negatively.

Then I would encourage my colleagues from the various States, 50 States, to take a litmus test or to take a thermometer and measure the temperature of the President's budget against the health of your State.

Let me just share with you what is going to happen to the State of Texas. We have a sizable young population, the State of Texas. Most of our population is under the age of 25; we have an extensive population of under 5, and we need, if you will, a refocus on the domestic agenda for this country.

I am looking forward to Chairman SPRATT's, the Budget Committee's reforming of the President's budget because this is what will happen to Texas: Two million Texans could see

retirement benefits cut under the President's privatization proposal that is in his budget. And I would simply ask the question, how many times do we have to say that privatization of Social Security will not work? And it will not work.

The President's health care proposal will squeeze Texas middle class of more cost and less coverage. So the President's health insurance proposal, which is opposed by my public health system, Harris County, who says, "Are you trying to close our doors?" We will see a squeeze on the middle class; 5.5 million uninsured in the State of Texas will be impacted.

Let me give three other points. Huge Medicare cuts which we are seeing in the President's budget would endanger 2.5 million Texan Medicare beneficiaries' access to quality care and impose new taxes on seniors. The one thing our seniors said on the prescription benefit part D, no more burdens, no more doughnut holes. And that is what the President's budget gives us.

In addition, one of the greatest tragedies of the President's budget is the cut in the State grants for children's health insurance could add some 1.4 million children to the uninsured ranks in Texas. Now, they say that they are going to leave this to the States. The States need to find out how to handle this. This is, this is, this is comedic. This is joking. This is completely impossible. I am lacking for words. We are fighting in our State to be able to insure children who need to be insured, and you are telling us we will give you, the State, a certain amount of money, and it is how you do it. It is not how we do it. We can't do it without the funding. So you are going to deepen the hole of health disparities by suggesting that we cut off 1.4 million uninsured children in the State of Texas.

I would ask my colleagues to check the temperature of their State by taking a thermometer and measuring the President's budget against the needs of the American people. In Texas, 1.6 million veterans could be hurt by VA funding shortfalls. And I spent time with homeless veterans in my community at stand-down. I have homeless veterans in shelters in my community, as many of us do, but I see many of my homeless veterans under our bridges. We can't afford any more cuts in veterans health coverage because they are already paying the maximum amount.

Let me conclude by suggesting that we likewise have made a commitment, 30-something and 30-something-plus, have made a commitment to America's youth. We want to ensure that the doors of our institutions are open. And just today I heard the fact that in our own community in Houston, we don't enough seats in colleges to be able to help educate young people. This may be a phenomenon across American in many communities, and that means we are closing the door to higher education to our children. Well, the budget that the President has put forward, aid

for Texas college students, may be whacked again; and, therefore, tuition increases may go up almost 100 percent, because under State laws that we have in the State of Texas, we give that latitude to our universities. Our students cannot be whacked again, and they can't take the burden again.

So I am hoping that, in addition to cutting the Department of Homeland Security, which we will obviously not tolerate because we are certainly not, we have not met the test of the 9/11 Commission Report, this budget needs fixing, it needs a fixing, and we need to rally around the American people's voice of health care, education, security, and the environment and affordable energy before we allow this budget to come to the floor of this House. And I hope that we will have the opportunity to be able to work our will, the will of the American people, and work our will on behalf of seniors, on behalf of those suffering with AIDS in minority populations and other, on behalf of the working middle-class families that struggle every day, that we would choose them over outrageous tax cuts that have been proposed by this President's budget.

And I thank the distinguished gentlemen for allowing me to participate and to acknowledge that these policies are not family-friendly. And I look forward to a budget coming to this floor that we pass, the majority, Democrats, with our friends on the other side of the aisle, that will be family-friendly, children-friendly, those who are suffering from various diseases, education-friendly, environment-friendly, and certainly a new day in energy by the budget that we put forward on this floor.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We thank the gentlewoman. As we have been saying in the last few weeks here and the last few days especially, that years ago that budget would come and get greased up and come right through this Chamber and on to the other side of Capitol Hill and get signed into law, with the tax cuts for the top 1 percent and cuts to the kids. And now NANCY PELOSI stands between that budget and the American people, and we are going to make sure, and our friend from Florida. So we thank you for joining us. It is always a special treat for our friend to come down from Texas. And I would be happy to yield to our friend from Florida, who is standing to be recognized.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN, for yielding to me. And I just think it is important that we have this dialogue here on the floor, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, just to make sure that we prepare the Members for the decisions that have to be made.

We talk about bipartisanship a lot, and I have my information here to talk about some of the votes that we have moved on this floor in a bipartisan nature, and I know I will have it in a minute, that kind of set a tone through this Chamber that we can work to-

gether, Madam Speaker, when the ideas are good and when they are sound.

And I know that the budget is probably one of the most partisan votes that we have taken in past Congresses, especially the last two that I have been involved in, Mr. RYAN. But the way the President's budget has been drawn up, with cuts of 20 percent to first responder grants and high-threat and high-density areas, and a cut in State grants as relates to training and buying equipment and conducting exercises for their first responders by 64 percent, for many of the Members on both sides of the aisle that talk a lot about the war on terror, we have to make sure we are prepared.

All of these things, all of these speeches that people come to the floor and make, Members of Congress, this budget is not in the spirit of those speeches. And I think it is important that those Members on both sides of the aisle, and I would say mainly with my Republican colleagues, that they start preparing their leadership now on the things that they can vote for. And I know that making tax cuts permanent for the superbillionaires is not something that is going to fly back home.

Now, I was thinking about staying in the majority always, which is not a bad idea, but if that was my paramount reason for being here on this floor, then I wouldn't say out loud that they need to start telling their minority party, on the Republican side of the aisle, that there is things that I have to vote for. I am not willing to cut veteran benefits. I am not willing to not do the things that we need to do for the children of America. I am not willing to not give the middle class a tax cut or give billionaires a tax cut. I am not willing to cut local government assistance, especially in the area of homeland security and other areas of law enforcement. I am not willing to do those things because I don't think my constituents will send me back to Congress.

That is the kind of discussion they need to be having with their leadership, because one thing that I have seen, Madam Speaker, especially with the past votes that we have taken on the minimum wage, on taking big-time subsidies from oil companies, on the whole issue of cutting tuition, on the issue of a few of the other packages that we passed, but on the main issue as it relates to how we are going to move from this point of pay as you go, I have noticed that the leadership on the Republican side have voted opposite of the majority of the Members of the House, with some Republicans joining us on those votes, or we are voting together. I hate to say joining us, because it seems like it is something that was a last-minute thought.

□ 1700

No, they were great ideas, and they need to be passed, and they were passed overwhelmingly.

But as it relates to this budget, this is going to be one of the most important documents that we pass in the 110th Congress' first session, and I think it is important that Members start talking to their leadership now and saying this to the Republican side about the votes that they cannot and the votes that they will take.

Now, I have watched in the 109th Congress the moderate Members on the Republican side who went to their leadership and tried to make things happen, and you know something, if the leadership would have listened to some of the moderate Members of the Republican Party on the other side of the aisle, maybe, just maybe, the majority on the Democratic side would not be as wide as it is.

Now, the American people want us to move as one, not just as Democrats and Republicans. They want us to move in a responsible way that will lead this country in a new direction; not in a Democratic direction, not in a Republican direction, not in an Independent direction, but in a new direction.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. For America.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Which is good and as American as apple pie and Chevy trucks and what have you. But I think it is important that we say this out loud, because when we get around budget time, there is a lot of interesting things that are said on the floor. Some Members are even gaveled down for some of these statements because they try to justify a good or bad vote.

With the continuing resolution that was passed, we saw a little spike in Members having to reflect back on to the rules, the Parliamentarian running around the floor saying, you cannot say that, you cannot do this. Before we get all animated and excited about this budget, I just want to make sure that the Members understand that you have to start having that discussion with your party leaders, especially on the Republican side of the aisle.

Now, let us just look at this. On the 9/11 Commission, 68 Republicans voted with 231 Democrats to do what the bipartisan Commission said we should do in protecting America, but the shocking part is that 128 Republicans decided not to vote with the majority of the Members of the House, Republicans and Democrats. What is going on there? The American people cannot understand that overwhelmingly.

Minimum Wage Act, 82 Republicans voted with the majority of the supermajority and every last Democrat, 233, voted to give the American people a pay raise after years and years and years, and as you can see here, Madam Speaker, over the years under the Republican Congress, Member of Congress did not have a problem in giving themselves a pay raise until the Democratic majority put a stop to it, saying that we will not agree to a pay raise until the American people get one. But 116 Republicans voted against it for people who were making \$5.15 an hour. It reminds me of the President saying, let

us make those tax cuts permanent for superbillionaires, and let us forget about the middle class, and let us cut programs on the local level for the most fragile Americans.

Stem cell research, again bipartisan vote. A number of Republicans voted against it. Medicare prescription drug price negotiating, 24 Republicans joined 231 Democrats; 170 Republicans voted against it. College Student Loan Relief Act, 232 Democrats voted for it, 124 Republicans voted for it, supermajority Members of the House, 71 Republicans, hard-core holdouts, on the bipartisan spirit. Held out again on creating long-term energy alternatives for the Nation Act; 228 Democrats voted for it, 36 Republicans voted for it, 159 Republicans voted against it.

I am saying all of this, and I am not trying to speak fast on this, Madam Speaker, I am just saying that if we are going to come together as a country, and we are going to work in a bipartisan way, now here I am in the majority saying that it is important that we work in a bipartisan way.

Madam Speaker, I know the officers of the House who have witnessed many of these 30-something sessions that we have had in the minority. They were like some of them Tivo'd it when we were on break because they just heard it so many times, and they wanted to hear it again. If I have said it once, I have said it 30 times: Bipartisanship can only be allowed when the majority allows it.

Now we have the will and the desire by the Speaker of the House of Representatives that has said that she wants to move in a bipartisan way, and we still have Republicans that are saying, no, we do not; we want to be different, even when we are wrong. And that is not the philosophy that the American people have embraced. I do not care if it is a Republican voter or Independent voter or Democratic voter, the American spirit will prevail, and that is what happened last November.

So we have some individuals that are saying, we are willing to continue to hold on to the old way versus moving in a new direction. I am not trying to be offensive. I am just saying, I am reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and the vote chart. I am trying to encourage folks to work in a bipartisan way. So let us have the discussion now in the Budget Committee, in the Ways and Means Committee, and discussions in committees of jurisdictions standing. Let us have those arguments, but let us come together on the fiber of the budget and for us to be fiscally sound and for us to be able to move this country in a new direction.

That has nothing to do with what the Republican leadership may believe what is right or the Democrat leadership believes what is right. It is what is right for America.

So we are willing to do that. Pollwise, the American people are on the side of doing things that we are trying to outline here and that we are

speaking against in this budget, and as we move through that process, I look forward to not only fruitful debate, but I look forward to a paradigm shift in the minority side, in a number of double-digit, hopefully triple-digit, Republicans voting for a budget that comes before this floor that this House hammers out.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I am not sure that I believe the people were Tivo-ing, but if they were, it was only because of your eloquence when you talk about issues like bipartisanship, because you should be right to crow.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Please mention Mr. RYAN's name. He gets a little jealous when folks started mentioning the fact I make a good argument on bipartisanship, so, please.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I hear people talk about him as well.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield? I have family members who have Tivo'd, okay.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. So here is what those of us who are new to this Chamber sort of see from the outside, and I think it probably matches up with what Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK keep seeing from the inside.

What used to happen here was that the agenda that came before the House was decided essentially by folks sitting in the third floor of the Republican National Committee, a bunch of Republican Party insiders who decided that they were going to put a Republican agenda on the floor. They were going to put a party agenda on the floor at the exclusion of the minority party.

So what you saw, for those us that turned on C-SPAN late at night when we were not watching the 30-somethings, we saw votes go up on the screen. And everybody sees those C-SPAN votes where they have got Republicans in one column, Democrats in the other column. You see all the Republicans voting one way, all the Democrats voting the other way, vote after vote after vote, because what was being put before this House was a Republican agenda. Occasionally you would have some people slide over, but by and large that is what you saw.

Here is the difference. The agenda that was part of the first 100 hours and the agenda that was behind the continuing resolution, as Mr. MEEK says, if we have anything to do with it, the agenda that will underlie the budget that finally arrives before this body is not going to be a Democratic agenda. It is not going to be a Democratic budget. It is going to be a people's agenda. It is going to be a budget that comes from the voices and the concerns and the hopes and the fears of people back in all of our districts, Republicans and Democrat.

That is why you see on the 100 hours agenda and even on the continuing resolution, which is probably maybe the most controversial piece of legislation that came before that, even on the continuing resolution, the bill that kept the Federal Government going for the

next few months, you have Republican votes, because no longer is the legislation that gets put before us a partisan agenda. It is now a people's agenda.

And for someone who spent the last 2 years in my district campaigning to come here, talking to people that were so utterly frustrated with what was happening in Washington, yes, people were angry about the agenda here from issue to issue. They were upset that people were not listening to them about their concerns on rising energy prices, rising health care prices, why they could not send their kids to college. But they were maybe more overarchingly concerned with the tone this place had taken, and I think that is our lasting legacy, because, as I think I said the first time that I got to talk with you both on this floor, our legacy as a Congress may be that we have some small role in restoring people's faith in government.

When we go around and talk to elementary schools, we are talking to some of the most cynical 10-year-olds you have ever seen, because all they think government is is a bunch of people fighting with each other, yelling at each other, disagreeing instead of agreeing.

So what we do here is we are going to start putting those middle-class families first. That is what this budget will be about. If we can do it with Republicans, and when you do it with Democrats, in the end we make people believe a little bit again in government.

And for those of us who are in this 30-something caucus who might be around long enough to hopefully see government do a few more good things over the next 10, 20, 30, 40 years, that could be one of the most important things we can do.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that. As we are wrapping things up, I found it interesting, I saw as we are talking about budget priorities and the kind of investments that we want to make as a country, looking at what the Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has to say and what he said yesterday and was quoted in the Wall Street Journal and a lot of other media outlets.

Focusing on, and I will say, and I will quote, he said, Ben Bernanke said, The best way to narrow the gap between high-income and low-wage workers in the U.S. would be to strengthen education and training programs.

That is our call, and that is the mission for us, to make sure that average people have the skills and the tools and the opportunity with the increase in the Pell Grants, with what we already did by cutting student loan interest rates in half for both parent and student loans, cutting that in half and giving thousands of dollars back to those families. Those are the kinds of things that we need to continue to do, and No Child Left Behind and everything else.

So we need to make sure that as we reform these systems, we also provide the resources, as we started this, for

the local level to make sure they can get the job done.

We are just wrapping up. We only have 1 minute. I want to give out Speaker PELOSI's e-mail, 30-Something Working Group e-mail, 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov, or you can come to our Web site, www.speaker.gov/30something.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I thank Mr. RYAN for doing such an outstanding job. I thought Mr. MURPHY had the assignment, but I can see you have taken responsibility to do that.

Madam Speaker, we would like to thank the Speaker and the majority leader and majority whip and others for allowing the 30-Something Working Group to come to the floor once again. It was an honor to address the House of Representatives.

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

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

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this first moment to recognize my colleague from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. CAMPBELL for yielding to me, and I appreciate Mr. RYAN sticking around after the Special Order and the work that you have done. Over the last 2-plus years, we spent a lot of hours here on the floor together. It occurred to me as I arrived on the floor—

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Not necessarily together, but on the floor. Not necessarily together.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would concede that point that not necessarily together, but on the floor. We have been together in some other things as well.

But the point that occurred to me as I arrived here on the floor this afternoon is we often do not commingle our policies. We have an argument that is set separate on this side and on that side, and it occurred to me that Lincoln and Douglas had some effective debates that were very, very instructive, and it helped the people understand the distinctions between the policies.

So as I mull this around in my mind, it occurs to me to offer an invitation that if our side could set aside an hour Special Order, and if your side would be interested in setting aside an hour Special Order, we could merge those together and then perhaps three from your side, three from our side, and we could spend 2 hours with an open debate type of a format so that we could have a free exchange with the best of attitude and comity. I think that would be a very good thing to do for the people across this country as they review what is going on here on the floor.

I would ask your opinion on that.

□ 1715

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate the gentleman's opportunity. Those decisions are made above my pay grade, but I can honestly say that we have numerous debates on this floor, which I think have been significant and monumental, especially in the first 100 hours, as we have talked about here. I don't exactly know how to respond to you. I think we do have adequate debate here, depending on what the issue of the day is, both sides getting an opportunity to do that.

We get our hours and talk about the things that we want to talk about, and you get your hour to talk about what you want to talk about. There can be, I am sure, some discussion. If there is room for us, as we push certain policies, that is what we are here to talk about. That is the issue of the day.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You are welcome to respond to that.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time. If the gentleman would be interested, I would suggest you take it up above that pay grade and see if you come back with a positive response. I didn't check with anybody above me. I happened to be able to claim some time on the floor and make that decision.

I offer that openly with the best intentions. I think 2 hours would be a very good thing for all of us to have that discussion. The offer is there. I leave it on the table, and I thank the gentleman.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate the gentleman making the offer. Last year or 2 years ago, we were asking for opportunities to speak on the floor. We weren't given that opportunity, but I will take it to the leadership, and we will take that under consideration.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I would point out that, as we have had exchanges here during special orders, I am one who has yielded, especially to Uncle BILL from Massachusetts. I would point that out. That is a matter of record. We can continue in that vein, I would hope.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In spite of your age discrimination, we will take it under consideration.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you very much, Mr. RYAN.

I yield back to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Thank you, Mr. KING.

We are talking about the budget this evening, and a number of things about the budget. The problem out there: We have a deficit. The problem is not that people are taxed too little; it is the government is spending too much.

I didn't just make that up. I didn't come up with that now. I am paraphrasing the words of President Ronald Reagan and comments he made several decades ago. But it is every bit as true today as it was then. The reason that we have a deficit, the issues with our government budget, are not that people