

purchase, repair, or storage of their bicycles.

Now, my wife and I enjoy mountain biking. We have two bikes. I have a Harley Davidson motorcycle, two wheels, that I enjoy riding. I have a fuel efficient 30 mile per gallon family car that I use for getting around my district. But I also have a three-quarter ton pickup that I use for hauling my trailer, or last Sunday, in fact, in Michigan, hauling three people out of snow-covered ditches. That couldn't have been done by a Prius, my motorcycle, my bicycle or even my 30-mile-per-gallon car.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield? I just wanted to bring up a point. I represent in the Fourth Congressional District we have Airstream, some of the finest trailers in the world that people use to go camping. It's a wonderful, wonderful product. And you talk about the CAFE standards in this bill which would arbitrarily, some government-mandated standard that fleets would have to meet. It's tough. It's difficult to pull an Airstream with a Volkswagen. I mean, you need something bigger. And that's why we have to approach this. We all want to do things, but we've got to approach it in a reasonable way when we're thinking about the impact it's going to have on our economy, and as you point out on our districts and on our ag community as well. So I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Mr. WALBERG. I appreciate you adding that because that's practical advice and a good example. The American public has grown to associate with our lifestyle all sorts of conveniences that we shouldn't feel embarrassed about. You ought to use them appropriately. We have all sorts of opportunities that other people in other parts of the world would long for. But it's come as a result of ingenuity, creativity, hard work, effort, saving, risk all of that revolved around responsibility so that people can enjoy that Airstream trailer or can use that pickup truck to transport goods and supplies on the farm and to do good deeds of pulling people out of ditches and the snow-covered roads that we had this past weekend.

Nonetheless, we, as legislators here in the U.S. Congress, have the privileged opportunity of allowing that to expand and thus bless the world, 25 percent of the world's population here, with over 85 percent of charitable resources that we give to the rest of the world. That is unique.

And for that reason, I think that true conservative effort that says we will avoid responsibility and we encourage people to be further responsible, and we don't let government step in the way with taxes or energy-less energy bills that says things that don't work is the way to go. So thank you again for giving me the opportunity.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Well, I thank the gentleman, and I thank all the freshmen that have been able to join us tonight, because really tonight

was about bringing accountability and maybe some adult supervision because I think that's what the American public wants to see here in Congress, see that we are able to provide more free time, not take up more of your time to earn more taxes for the American Government.

I'll tell you tonight we're probably going to turn out the lights here in Congress in the next couple of days. But as those freshmen coming from the Republican Party, we all pledged that we would work in a bipartisan manner. We're eager to do that. We have a desire to do that, not to be a red and blue State but be the red, white and blue country. And we challenge the majority party here to change from the last year. It doesn't have to end a year from now as poorly as it ended this year. It doesn't have to end with the failure in setting new records, with the approval ratings so low with the lack of bills coming through, nothing but earmarks to try to get a bill through. It could actually end with common sense, with pride and, really, to be able to move it forward.

I'll tell the American people, I might get at times a little depressed sitting on this floor, but if anyone ever comes back to Washington, DC, I'd ask you to look up your Congresswoman or your Congressman and have them give you a tour because the greatest city in the world is right here and the greatest monument is this building, and the best monument inside this building are the stairs.

I will tell you, those stairs are made of marble. When you walk on those stairs those stairs are worn out from the feet that have walked before. And every day that I come over I take the stairs to go up the one flight just so I can walk on those stairs. And you know what? I get goose bumps each and every time I do it, because I believe that regardless of how big our challenges are, we will come together because the people before us and the challenges before us were much greater than we're facing today, that they came together. And if we can learn one thing through those stairs of marble it's that each and every one you take one step at a time. And I think we need to take one step, each at a time to come a little closer into the middle and find some common ground.

So I thank you for the time you have been with us tonight, and God bless.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). 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's an honor to be here before the House once again. And a lot has been done and I'm so glad that we're here and 30-something, once again, may be our last opportunity in this year of 2007. We appreciate the courage and the

commitment by those of us that are in the majority. And we talked about a number of things that we would do and that has actually happened, Mr. Speaker. And a lot has happened this year, and, Mr. Speaker, I know that your constituents and others as it relates to Minnesota and what has taken place there and the tragedies that y'all have dealt with and how this Congress has responded to that tragedy of the bridge falling, and so many of your constituents are in recovery as we speak, and being from south Florida, hurricane ravaged area, we know what recovery means. And it's important for us to respond in a bipartisan way.

But I can tell you, some of my colleagues that were on the floor just prior to me hitting the floor talking about earmarks, it's very interesting. I am, you know, it's one of those days, and I'm glad that I was able to make it to the floor and that we were able to take this hour, and we want to thank the majority leader and also the Speaker and the majority whip and our leadership as it relates to the Democratic Caucus and our vice Chair for getting here, because to talk about earmarks, it's very interesting because we've reduced earmarks by 40 percent. I mean, that is something that the Republicans did not do over a number of years. You wouldn't even know who put an earmark in if it wasn't for the transparency that the Democratic Congress brought to this process.

Now, I'm going to tell you right now, I'm very happy that I was elected to come to Congress and that I'm going to get the opportunity to go home and tell my constituents what I've done for them in Congress. That's what it's all about. Why are we here representing 600, 700,000 individuals, Americans? To not only represent them here in Congress, but to also, quote, unquote, bring home the bacon on behalf of your constituency, to make sure that they have what they need, to make sure when a county commissioner or someone that sits on a parish board has an opportunity to come to their Member of Congress and say we need something from the Federal Government, meanwhile back here in Washington, DC, we have Republicans that have voted in the last five, or four Congresses for tax breaks for billionaires. Their name's not attached to it. We come here, we bring transparency, we bring accountability. We bring accountability to this process. And then they come to the floor with the audacity to say, well, you know, oh, these earmarks. Well, you know, I don't know, but I'm pretty proud of the fact that the city of Pembroke Park is able to do something about the water treatment that they've been yearning for, struggling city. I'm very proud that the city of Miami is able to say thank you Congressman for representing us in the U.S. Congress.

Meanwhile, the Republicans, for years and years and years, have been able, Mr. RYAN, to give tax breaks to

the billionaires and gazillionaires. Here we are bringing government back to the people and being criticized by the other side of the aisle. So, Mr. RYAN, there's a lot that we have to talk about. This is a historic day. We passed energy independence and security act. That's a historic piece of legislation. And all our colleagues have in the minority to talk about, earmarks that have been reduced by 40 percent and have been highlighted by this Congress.

□ 2130

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

The thing is there's like hundreds of people on the other side of the aisle who are taking earmarks, who feel like that it's better that they make the decision for their own district as to where the money should be spent or some bureaucrat in Washington makes the decision as to where the money is spent. Somebody's spending the money. Now, it's either the elected Representative who's going to spend the money or it's going to be someone here in DC who's going to spend the money and has no idea of what the dynamics of the district are, what your long-term economic development plans are, what the health and safety welfare needs are of your district.

So I think it's best in a democracy for the elected Representative, who gets to have meetings in their office with different constituents, as to who will decide where this money is spent.

Now, is the autism center in Youngstown, Ohio, pork? I got three-hundred-and-some-thousand for that. Is the water line in a poor community to make sure that we have clean water, is that pork?

I love it when the Members from the western part of the country come to the House floor and talk about all this government spending. You know, in California, in Arizona, there are congressional districts that would not even exist if it wasn't for a Federal investment. There are congressional districts that they're in a desert. How do you think the water gets from the Colorado River to your congressional district? Through osmosis? No. There is Federal investment that is invested in these different congressional districts, you know, the Colorado River Basin Project and all of these different projects that bring water to your district and your constituents.

So I think it is absolutely absurd for people to come to the House floor, and we've done exactly what we said we were going to do. We made this process transparent. There's nobody here that thinks you should be able to hide something. So now when you make an investment or you claim an earmark, your name goes on it, and it says Rich Center for Autism in Youngstown, Ohio, at Youngstown State University, Congressman TIM RYAN, 17th District.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. MURPHY was running for office a year and some change ago, talking about if he gets to

Congress what he would do for his constituents, that he would provide the kind of representation that they deserve, turn this saga of Iraq and that other issue of Iraq back to domestic priorities, bring home the bacon on behalf of the district and his constituents.

I'm so glad that he's here tonight because we've been here three times. This is his first time. I'm glad that he's here because I want to know what's wrong. I mean, I just, Mr. Speaker, I personally want to know what's wrong with coming to Washington, DC, representing your constituents, and doing what you said you would do.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Fighting for kids with autism, fighting for teenage pregnancy programs, fighting for children's mental health, I mean, that's what's in these earmarks.

Why is the so-called pork spending that I'm bringing back to the Fifth District? For a children's mental health program in Danbury, for an after-school program in Torrington, for a teenage pregnancy center New Britain. You know why? Because the Republican Congress, along with this President, for the last 6 years and the last 12 years have gutted every single one of those programs that helps poor kids, helps poor families, helps the disabled, that helps poor, the disadvantaged, the dispossessed, all of those programs that are just trying to give people a little bit of a leg up, trying to give them access to the apparatus of opportunity that all the rest of us have, were stolen out from underneath them.

So guess what we're doing with these earmarks. We're going and funding basic social services to try to treat kids with autism, to try to cure children of a mental disease and mental disorder that they have. And we're forced to do that because we have been sitting through a Congress, and Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK have been talking about it for several years, that has made a choice over the last several years, has made a choice to fund a whole bunch of tax cuts for people at the upper, upper echelon of the income scale and at the expense of all the people that we are now putting first again, the folks that are supposed to be helped by government, that is, middle-class, regular folks who, through no fault of their own, might have had a little opportunity stolen from them. We're going to try to help them out again here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The issue here is that the earmarks are a very small percentage of the Federal budget. All of these bills have been bipartisan. If you look at all of the appropriations bills that have passed out of the House, there has been a significant number of Republicans who have joined with the Democrats to make these investments, especially Members of the Appropriations Committee that have looked at these issues very carefully to make these investments in a bipartisan way.

The energy bill, of which our friends on the other side, Mr. Speaker, have derided us and it's a Democratic this and a Democratic that, 314 votes; 314 votes, which is 70 or 80 Republican Members of this body have joined with us to try to increase CAFE standards, make investments in alternative energy, make investments in the middle America and the Midwest. This is on a bipartisan basis.

So it seems like those folks who come to the floor seem to be on the fringe level of the party that they're talking about these things. But I think it's important for us to talk about some of the investments that we have made here.

There has been a significant shift in priorities. Now, we haven't come anywhere close to achieving what we have wanted to achieve since we have taken over. We don't have 60 votes in the Senate, and the Republicans have done a good job of blocking a lot of our legislation that we've tried to pass.

The President has vetoed SCHIP, which is the State Children's Health Insurance Program, that we wanted to provide 10 million middle-class kids with health care, and the President vetoed it twice. And the fringe Republicans, many have joined with us. RAY LAHOOD, STEVE LATOURETTE, a lot of good Members of Congress have joined with us to try to override that veto, but the President was able to sustain it.

So we asked to cover health care for 10 million kids, \$35 billion over 5 years. President said we're spending too much money. Turned around within days and asked for \$200 billion more for Iraq that we're going to borrow from China. And so some of the investments that we're trying to make, I think it's important for the American people to know what we have done.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Tell them.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We've raised the minimum wage for the first time since 1997. We've cut student loan interest rates in half from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, which will save and increase the Pell Grant by \$1,000 over the next 4 or 5 years. We will save the average student or their parents, whoever's footing the bill, \$4,400 over the course of their loan that they take out. Those are significant investments to the middle class. We're going to fix the AMT, which would come in and zap 23 or 24 million people.

But I think it's important that we share with the American people, Mr. Speaker, the investments that we have made here, that are different than what the President wanted us to do, and we can go through this.

But medical research, \$607 million above the President's request. That's a lot of money, \$607 million to research Alzheimer's, cancer, Parkinson's and diabetes. Now, I think the American people want us to work together to try to fund some basic research.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this is one of these moments at the end

of the session, I mean we're like days from Christmas. We're still here in Washington, D.C. We've already started Hanukkah; Kwanzaa's on its way.

I think it's very, very important for us to point at the fact that this Congress has worked harder than any other Congress in the history of the Republic. I mean, I'm not talking about coming in number two or coming in number three or coming in number four, but we've taken more rollcall votes in the history of the Republic.

I think it's also very important, and I feel goose bumps by this whole thing. I pay attention to history. I also pay very close attention to the present. We're looking at a President right now that has made more veto threats than he's made in the last 5 years or 4 years, what have you, that he's been President of the United States to this Democratic Congress. We're looking at the AMT. We're talking about individuals being able to file their taxes, and we said that we were going to pay for it. This President is saying that he doesn't want to pay for it, that he wants to borrow the money. But the bottom line is that we're going to be here to make sure that we pay for it in the long run, in the second half of this Congress.

We're not going to allow the President to play this Congress as a fiddle. This President is talking about, Oh, well, I want Iraq funding a part of the appropriations bill that's going to pass and all. He has the veto pen. He also has 40 Republicans here in this Chamber to make sure that we don't override him on this issue of Iraq. We voted for appropriations for Afghanistan, and we had a number of Republicans that voted against it, some 200-plus. I don't feel in any way bad about the position that we've taken.

I'm so glad Mr. Manatos is on our side. You know, our colleagues who came to the floor right before our hour. I sent upstairs for this chart to make sure that we enter this chart into the RECORD one more time. I think it's important that we look at the 42 Presidents before this President were only able to borrow \$1.01 trillion. We're talking about the Great Depression. We're talking about World War I. We're talking about World War II. We're talking about Korea. We're talking about Vietnam. We're talking about Grenada; that's new. We're talking about a number of conflicts that have taken place. We're talking about economic downturns. We're talking about the S&L scandal. We're talking about a number of issues that have faced Americans over the years.

This President, President Bush, along with his Republican minority, thank God, but enough to be able to cause trouble over in the Senate with this 60-vote phenomena that we've learned about in this 110th Congress with Republicans saying, Well, you know, we're going to use procedural rules to be able to hold up what the Democratic Congress would like to do in this Congress.

This President was able to borrow \$1.19 trillion. That number is higher now. This chart is not updated, but I think it's important for our Democrats, Independents, Republicans to know that we believe in fiscal responsibility here on this floor. We believe in the American way.

We used to talk about our children paying this bill, but now we're talking about we are paying this bill, countries like China and others.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So I know Mr. RYAN is trying to get in the middle of this. He's always trying to get in the middle, and I'm just trying to make my point. I don't want you to take it personal. I'm just trying to make my point.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much.

I think it's important, and I kind of feel like a Baptist preacher on the first Sunday. You want to be able to make your point, and you want to be able to climax, but Mr. RYAN comes in and gets in the way, but it's okay. He has a good point. He's a great American.

I think it's important that we look at our responsibility right now and in the present for being able to stand up for those that have elected, woke up early one Tuesday for us, voting for representation, that we give voice to their cause and their need.

I think it's also important, especially as it relates to the diversity of our caucus, need it be Blue Dogs, need it be moderate, need it be to the left or whatever the case may be, it represents America.

I think the reason why Republicans voted for Democrats last time, Independents voted for Democrats last time, Democrats voted for Democrats last time is because they're looking for change. We're here to provide that kind of change, but we start looking at obstructionists here in Congress using procedural, using the rules of the House, using the rules of the Senate. The minority is protected in this process, standing in the schoolhouse door, if I may use that, of allowing us to stop from the report that we got today, November 13, or yesterday, November 13, total deaths in Iraq, 3,888; total numbers wounded in action and returned to duty, 15,832; total numbers wounded in action and not returning to duty, 12,829.

□ 2145

We pay attention to those numbers in the 30-something group because the American people are paying attention to those numbers, and I think it's very important, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to lift this issue up.

So as we look at what we are facing right now, Members, there's nothing wrong with us representing our districts and being able to bring dollars back because this is something that

has not happened over the years. We have been borrowing the money to be able to continue the war in Iraq. We have been borrowing the money as it relates to going after Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. We have been doing the things we need to do. But I think it's very important, Members, that we tell our story.

Today a very historic piece of legislation passed this floor when we look at the Energy Independence and Security Act. And I think we should not allow this day to pass without talking about the courage of Democrats and Republicans passing this bill.

I yield to Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Before the gentleman gets into the energy bill, Mr. Speaker, and we do have a lot to talk about because that's an historic vote that is going to change this country in the long term for the better, I did want to follow up on what the gentleman talked about earlier and was finishing his remarks that about the legacy that this Congress over the past 6 years has left for our children and our grandchildren, the legacy of debt. And I want to take a little walk down memory lane, and we have talked about this before, to think about what happened in the last 4 years of President Clinton's administration, where we had 4 consecutive years of budget surplus, a surplus that was forecast as far as the eye can see. In 10 years the estimated \$5.5 trillion surplus, according to CBO, from 2001 through 2010, that was the estimated surplus dollars that we were going to have. And you will recall back in the 2000 election between Governor Bush and Vice President Gore, what was the debate? The debate was what are we going to do with this surplus? We had this enormous surplus, \$5.5 trillion. Are we going to pay down the debt? Are we going to shore up Social Security? Are we going to do tax cuts? Are we going to create new programs? Everyone had an idea. You know what? We're not having that debate anymore because instead of having 10 years of budget surpluses, we have had 7 consecutive years of budget deficits, and those deficits are now forecast as far as the eye can see. And to make matters worse, the 10-year projection from 2001 to 2010 because of this administration is a \$3.5 trillion deficit, \$3.5 trillion dollars in the red. So that's a swing of almost \$9 trillion. And I would suggest to my colleagues if you had said to an economist in 2001 at the beginning of this administration's first term, if you had said, how could you possibly come up with the scenario where we would have a \$9 trillion swing from positive to negative in the projection of having a surplus to a deficit? Is that even possible? And any economist you ask would say, no, it would be impossible to mismanage the economy to such an extent over just 7 years that you would have a \$9 trillion swing. So I sat and listened to the group that came before us, a group that lectured us on fiscal responsibility.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. ALTMIRE, I think you just hit a point there.

Mr. RYAN, the 30-something Working Group. I can say, gentlemen, that we do our homework. As we talked about our colleagues on the minority side criticizing earmarks on the majority side, Mr. RYAN, would you please share with our illustrious support staff that we have here?

Mr. Speaker, this is the reason why the 30-something group exists, so that we can, some may say, push back. We say tell the truth.

I yield to Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, it's interesting that one of the gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, that was down here complaining about earmarks just minutes ago prior to our getting down here, and we are not here to play gotcha but we are here to reveal what has happened here, in this bill loaded with earmarks, loaded with all this pork, one of the gentlemen down here, Mr. Speaker, had requested 20 earmarks worth \$38 million but turns around and comes to the House floor and is critical of the Rich Center for Autism in Youngstown and dam safety projects and after-school programs and some of the other districts that are here and calling it pork and in one of the instances was trying to in some way disparage the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) in his project that he had that was named after him and the same gentleman is now supportive of the Thomas Road Improvement Program that is now under way that his predecessor, Representative Bill Thomas, submitted with his own name on it for the project but yet comes down and is critical.

So our point is not to play gotcha. Our point is to say that Members of Congress should be able to direct a certain amount, and it's only a small percentage of the budget. I don't even know if it's .5 percent of the entire budget.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Bill Thomas that used to be the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, for us to note that that's the case.

And, Mr. RYAN, I am going to kick it back to you and Mr. MURPHY was very kind because it was his turn, but I am going to tell you Mr. Thomas ran the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. ALTMIRE, and meanwhile had something named after him. And for Members on the minority side to come to the floor and talk about present Members that are bringing home the resources on behalf of their constituents, I can see if one did not put in a request.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I will yield, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have got more here. The gentleman from California, the previous gentleman, who just made fun of us for all the earmarks, had 20 earmarks worth \$38 million and is sup-

porting one now named after the former Chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

Another gentleman down here that was from Michigan got press releases, and you will love this one, \$3 million for an extended cold weather clothing system through the Army. He was just down here making fun of everybody, and he's requesting thermal underwear. And it's not funny because the reason we are here is to make sure that we are getting this all out. And for Members of Congress to come question the Rich Center for Autism. And I know Mr. ALTMIRE has a lot of issues. We have all got issues.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, the point is to make your case. If you want money for thermal underwear, come down and make your case in front of your colleagues. If you want money for autism, make your case. But the fact is you can't come down here and hold everyone else on one side of the aisle to a standard that you're not willing to hold yourselves to. It's a simple request here, Mr. RYAN, to be consistent. If you're going to be against earmarks, then be against them. But if you are going to make the case that there's waste and pork in the bill, sometimes you've got to look inward.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Reclaiming my time, Mr. ALTMIRE, I want to thank you first.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me just say this: let me tell you, as I was walking to the Chamber, I saw that the Speaker's vehicle was still here in the Capitol. I saw that the majority leader's vehicle was still here at the Capitol. This is now a little bit before 10 p.m. within the closing days of Congress. We have worked day in and day out. We are here away from our families, many of you away from your families, days before Christmas, to be able to work on behalf of the American people.

I think it's important for us to understand that we would not even be having the discussion about who got what if it wasn't for the transparency that this Democratic Congress brought to this process first. So for Republicans to come to the floor and start talking about who got what, it never would have happened, Mr. MURPHY, if it wasn't for what we have done. It never would have happened if it wasn't for your class and Mr. ALTMIRE's class coming and saying we want transparency, that we want the American people to see what we are doing, that we want to take more rollcall votes than any other Congress in the history of the United States. We want ethics; we want responsibility; we want fiscal responsibility; we want to make sure that the Veterans Affairs get more money than they have ever had in history, the veterans health care system, in the history of the Republic.

We want accountability as it relates to Iraq, and we want this President to know that this is not a rubber-stamp Congress. If it was not for you, Mr. Speaker, including yourself, asking for the kind of accountability the American people have been calling for, that have been yearning for, voting for and they finally got it, for the minority party to come to the floor and start criticizing things, where they make over 20-plus earmarks, to come to the floor and criticize, that's why I'm so glad, Tom and Tasha and Michael, that we are here tonight, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we set the record straight.

We talked about the hypocrisy of the democracy. This is a perfect example of what happens when things go unchecked. I am so glad that we exist. I'm so glad we have air within our bodies to be able to come to the floor.

I yield to Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman allowing me to speak out of turn.

I have the high order of being asked to do the Speaker pro tempore duties beginning in a few minutes here, and I do greatly appreciate our friend and colleague, Mr. ELLISON from Minnesota, for covering for me while I give these remarks, and then I am going to take the chair.

The gentleman hit it right on the head. We would not be having this discussion were it not for this Congress on the very first day we were in session adding transparency to the earmark process. In the past we couldn't have this discussion because earmarks were put in in the dark of night. Earmarks were not identified by sponsor. Earmarks were put in at each stage of the process unidentified. You didn't know where they came from. You didn't know the details of the earmarks.

Now we are able to have a discussion, and every Member of Congress who has an earmark in the bill that we are going to pass this week and send to the President has the responsibility to justify those earmarks. And if the gentleman wants to justify his earmark for cold weather clothing, he's able to do so.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. ALTMIRE, let me just clarify what you're saying. In the past if somebody had come down to this floor and had spent an hour railing against the massive amount of earmarks in the bill, we wouldn't know that that person had requested some 20-odd earmarks in the bill. We wouldn't know unless we had these rules in place.

Mr. ALTMIRE. That is absolutely correct. And you wouldn't be able to look at the final product, at the bill, and look at every single earmark in there. I think they said there were 9,000 earmarks in the omnibus bill that we were passing today compared to 16,000 total earmarks that were in the last Republican budget that was passed. I believe that was fiscal year 2006. And I am going to talk about why fiscal year

2007 didn't have any earmarks. But fiscal year 2006 had 16,000 earmarks unidentified. We couldn't have this discussion. We couldn't come to the floor and talk about who put in these earmarks, who has to justify the merits of those earmarks. But we can have that discussion today because this Congress, on the very first day in session, one of the very first things we did, one of the very first votes that Mr. MURPHY, Mr. ELLISON, and myself cast as Members of Congress was to add transparency to the process, to shine the spotlight and add sunshine to the earmark process. So now we know.

And I am more than willing to justify the money that I am sending back to my district to help stimulate the economy and create jobs in western Pennsylvania. I would assume that the speakers who came before us are willing to justify their earmarks in there. But don't come down to the floor and lecture us on whether or not there should be earmarks in the process.

And if the gentleman would just allow me to finish, because I do have to take the chair, and again I thank Mr. ELLISON.

□ 2200

In FY 2007, I think I said 2005 and 2006, FY 2007, the Republicans who controlled this House at the end of 2006 were unable to complete their work on nine of the 11 appropriations bills.

Now, we heard some rhetoric in the group that came before us, and we've heard for the past several weeks, even months, about how we are not doing our duty because we're putting all these bills into an omnibus bill and sending it to the President before the end of the year. I want to take a walk down memory lane on this, too.

One of the other first votes that Mr. MURPHY, Mr. ELLISON and myself took, our freshman class, was resolving those nine appropriation bills from last year that the Congress left to us. And that happened because after the elections that Congress said, You know what? We're taking our ball and going home. Forget it. We're not going to complete these nine bills. We're going to leave it for the next Congress. And that next Congress was this Congress. It was the Democratic-controlled Congress. And we finished all nine appropriations bills in a month. And those nine appropriations bills funding us right now, the current operations of the government, contain no earmarks, zero. So we went from 16,000 earmarks the year before last to zero for those nine of 11 appropriations bills that we have today.

So, yes, the omnibus bill that we are passing this week does contain earmarks, but let's not forget the fact that the current year's budget, which we passed in this Congress, had no earmarks. And we were stuck with that right from the start, specifically because the previous Congress failed their job and left it for us to resolve.

And at this point, I will yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. ALTMIRE, let me just take a quick guess, let me throw a hypothesis out there about why folks on the other side of the aisle and those that were talking tonight might be a little angry.

Everyone gets passionate down here, but when Mr. MEEKS talks, it's kind of like happy passionate. On the other side of the aisle it feels a little different. And listen, I would be too, I guess. And this is my guess, I would be, too, if I had spent decades building up a brand of my political party based around fiscal responsibility, and then, in the course of 1 year, in the course of 1 year the party that you tried to portray as the tax and spenders, the fiscal irresponsibles, that party, after having been in control of the Congress for less than a year, for the first time in 12 years does all of the fiscally responsible things that you couldn't do, passes a rule saying that every single bill that comes before this Congress has to be paid for. You can't pass anything on this floor that expands the deficit. First time that's happened since the Republicans took control of this Congress. That was Democrats that did that. Passes a balanced budget in 5 years, that's Democrats doing it. Leading a Congress that is shrinking, rather than expanding, the annual operating deficit of the Federal Government. That's Democrats; that's not Republicans.

So, I guess I would be angry, too, if I was a Republican in this House and I looked at the party that I thought I joined, which was the fiscally responsible party, and found out that that mantle now lay on the other side of the aisle. So, that might explain something, Mr. RYAN. And I guess knowing that, maybe a little bit of it is justifiable.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You know, obviously there have been situations decades ago where, you know, everyone was spending too much money. And for us to put in the PAYGO rules that say you've got to pay for every dime you spend one way or the other I think is a significant step in the right direction. Nobody here wants to continue what has happened over the last 6 years.

And when you look at what's happened, over \$3 trillion in debt has been borrowed from China, Japan and OPEC countries. Our friends on the other side, when they were in charge, raised the debt limit five times in order to go out and borrow more money. And we see the situation that we're in now. So we're trying to, slowly but surely, rein all of this in and make very strategic investments.

And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that you can go to the Web sites for the Speaker and our caucus and what we're doing. We're making investments into alternative energy, research and development, so we can open up new sectors of the economy. We're making investments in education, saving the average family who takes out loans and utilizes the Pell Grants \$4,400 over the course

of that loan. That's a middle-class tax cut. What we're going to do with the AMT, the alternative minimum tax, we're going to prevent 23 million people from getting a tax increase next year. And that's a middle-class tax cut. These are people making \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year. We're going to prevent that from happening.

Significant steps in criminal justice. Cops on the beat. In communities like Youngstown, Ohio, the city doesn't have the tax base to keep hiring more and more cops, so it's harder to develop your economy if you don't have security. So, these are the kinds of investments that we're making.

So, in closing, as we wrap things up, because I think we're going to wrap things up here in a minute, first, Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit these two articles for the RECORD so that not only are these earmarks represented openly, as our rules have provided, but there are also press releases that some of our Members on the other side who have been on the floor detesting earmarks, their press releases can now be submitted for the RECORD.

[From the Bakersfield Californian, July 11, 2007]

GET AN EYEFUL OF EARMARKS

Earmark—a.k.a. "pork barrel"—spending has almost as dirty a reputation as its porcine namesake.

Earmarks are items from a pot of money—\$29 billion in 2006—from the \$2.4 trillion federal budget that is set aside from the complex federal appropriation process for congressmen to dole out for specific projects in their districts.

There are two problems with earmarks:

Some ideas are silly, flag-waving expenditures with little widespread redeeming value.

Good or bad, finding out what the money is for and who the patron congress member is can be a nearly impossible task for the public until it is too late to change the spending outcome.

That could be changing, and Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Bakersfield, may be among the 34 of 435 members of Congress who voluntarily released his list of requests in time for the public to comment. Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, has not.

Early disclosure is the key element to any credibility claim. With that in mind, why wouldn't everyone list their proposed earmarks the way McCarthy has done?

See the first bulleted item above. A good project gains stature, but a stinker may, like Dracula, die a deserved death when the light of day shines on it.

Thus, disclosure has the potential benefit of increasing the quality—and hence the justification—of earmarks.

But can earmarks be justified at all?

Yes. The federal budget process tends to look at the big picture—after all, it is measured in trillions of dollars. An earmark can focus on a small, highly localized need that is easily overlooked in vast appropriation measures.

McCarthy requested 20 earmarks worth \$38 million for the 22nd district (Kern and San Luis Obispo counties) and another \$142 million for Edwards Air Force Base and China Lake Naval Air Weapons Center.

He may not get any funds, but some examples include \$122,000 to help the Bakersfield Police Department deter gang violence; \$7 million for the Lake Isabella Dam safety

project; \$500,000 for Cal State Bakersfield to help nursing education.

A classic example is the Thomas Road Improvement Program now under way. In his final year in office, McCarthy's predecessor, Rep. Bill Thomas, provided desperately needed highway funding that otherwise would have been sucked up by politically powerful Southern California and Bay Area jurisdictions.

Whether an earmark is good or bad is up to the individual voter. But at least now you know what is being requested. (A full list of McCarthy's requests was published in the July 1 Californian.)

WALBERG SECURES HOUSE APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS PREVENTION

WASHINGTON, August 16.—U.S. Congressman Tim Walberg (R-MI) announced today that 2008 funding for Dexter Research Center, Inc. was approved in the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill that recently passed the House. The bill will now go to the U.S. Senate to be voted on as part of the fiscal year 2008 Appropriations process.

"The Department of Defense must have the capability to respond to chemical and biological attacks, and this important project will increase the safety and security of our men and women in uniform," Walberg said.

With this funding, the Michigan company will help develop a Total Perimeter Surveillance (TPS) system based on infrared technology able to identify and trigger an immediate response to chemical and biological attacks against Department of Defense facilities.

"We are excited to have this opportunity to leverage our science and manufacturing capabilities to help make our national defense sites even more secure," said Robert Toth, Jr., President of Dexter Research Center.

Funding details:

Dexter Research Center, Inc. (Washtenaw County) \$2,000,000—This project funding will go towards assisting in the development of a Total Perimeter Surveillance (TPS) system capable of identifying and responding to chemical and biological attacks. The TPS solution, based on novel infrared technology, can provide complete perimeter threat detection and identification with sufficient advanced warning to Department of Defense facilities to meet current threat requirements.

WALBERG SECURES HOUSE APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR SONOBUOYS

WASHINGTON, August 13.—U.S. Congressman Tim Walberg (R-MI) announced today that 2008 funding for sonobuoys, produced by Sparton Electronics of Jackson, was approved in the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill that recently passed the House. The bill will now go to the U.S. Senate to be voted on as part of the fiscal year 2008 Appropriations process.

"Funding for sonobuoys, produced by Sparton Electronics, is important for the security of our naval personnel and Jackson County," Walberg said.

Funding details:

Sparton Electronics, (Jackson County) \$2,500,000 increase—This project funding will go towards procurement of sonobuoys for the Department of the Navy. The sonobuoy remains the Navy's primary sensor for detection and localization of submarines by air anti-submarine warfare (ASW) platforms. Sonobuoys provide the only means to rapidly sanitize large areas of water prior to fleet units arriving in the area.

WALBERG SECURES HOUSE APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR PECKHAM INDUSTRIES PRODUCTS USED BY MILITARY

WASHINGTON, August 17.—U.S. Congressman Tim Walberg (R-MI) announced today

that 2008 funding for Peckham Industries was approved in the Departments of Defense Appropriations Bill that recently passed the House. The bill will now go to the U.S. Senate to be voted on as part of the fiscal year 2008 Appropriations process.

Peckham produces Fleece Insulating Liners, a Cold Weather Layering System and a Multi Climate Protection System all used by United States military personnel.

"These three projects greatly benefit our brave men and women in uniform and Eaton County," Walberg said.

"It's a privilege to provide our soldiers with the equipment they need," Peckham CEO/President Mitchell Tomlinson said. "These contracts represent much needed jobs and opportunities created for persons with disabilities. We're proud to continue providing the highest quality, high performance cold weather gear available to our military."

Funding details:

Peckham Industries, \$3,000,000—This project will go towards the production of Insulating Liners for Extended Cold Weather Clothing System for the Department of the Army. This product was created in direct response to soldiers' complaints of bulkiness and lack of breathability in previous attire.

Peckham Industries, \$3,000,000—This project will go towards the production of a Cold Weather Layering System for the United States Marine Corps. The CWLS is part of the Marine Corps' Mountain and Cold Weather Clothing and Equipment Program, which provides lightweight, durable combat clothing that allows Marines to operate in all kinds of cold weather environments.

Peckham Industries, \$2,500,000—This project will go towards the production of a Multi Climate Protection System (MCPS) for the Department of the Navy. The MCPS is a modular ensemble that provides total performance by layering thermal protection and shell garments.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I would just like to say, go to our Web site. Look at what we've done for K-12, student aid, rural development, the farm bill. All of the things that we've passed out of here have been investments, actually met the President's budget numbers, so it's just a shift in priorities.

So, I'm saying I think we've made significant progress this year, and we hope to expand it next year.

And with that, Mr. MEEK, I yield back to you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. RYAN, I want to thank you and Mr. ALTMIRE, and also Mr. MURPHY and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and others who have been very active in our 30-Something over the year. I want to thank those that are involved in preparing not only material that we meet on on a weekly basis, but also what we bring to the floor.

I want to thank all of the staff and those that are involved, the Speaker's office, the majority leader and the whip's office, the majority whip and the Democratic leader, and also the Vice Chair for everything you do to make our 30-Something hour possible.

I don't know if we'll have the opportunity to come to the floor tomorrow, which some project may be our last night on the floor, but we want to thank Mr. Michael and also Mr. Tom, Ms. Natasha and Mr. Adam and so many others that have spent time on this.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot done this Congress. We're going to be talking about it more. And like Mr. RYAN said, go onto www.speaker.gov to get information on 30-Something.

I want to commend those Members of the minority party that voted with the majority party to be able to make it so for many of the things that Mr. RYAN has talked about.

We look forward to the President's State of the Union that will be coming up in January. Many of, I'm pretty sure, his talking points will come from what has already been accomplished by this Democratic Congress or has been brought to the President by force because of the vote that we have here and the will of the American people.

We know that this is the holiday time of the year, and we would like to also recognize not only the contributions of our religious communities out there, but also those that work within our charities that have made it so for those to be able to not only have warm meals, but also to have gifts at this time of year.

Also recognizing those Members that served in the first half of this Congress that did not make it to the second half of this Congress, those Members of this House and also the Senate that have moved on to a higher place. We ask for blessings for their families, and also for their loved ones that have been left behind. We try to provide the kind of representation that they tried to put forth on the Democratic and also the Republican side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful, and all of us in the 30-Something are very grateful for coming to the floor.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. MEEK, if you would yield for just a moment. I just wanted, on behalf of Mr. ALTMIRE, who sits in the Speaker's chair today, to just thank you and Mr. RYAN for allowing two new guys into the 30-Something. This has been just a wonderful year for us, made even more wonderful by being able to be closer to the good graces and large brains of both you and Mr. RYAN. So, I mean that sincerely, by the way. You did not have to open up the 30-Something Group to both Mr. ALTMIRE and myself and some of the others that have had the opportunity to come down and be part of these discussions that we've watched on TV for years before we came here. And I would like to extend our thanks to you and Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. MURPHY, we definitely appreciate it. And I'm going to take that part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and put it in the foyer of my office here in Washington, also the large brains part, put it in the foyer. But if it wasn't for the support of our leadership allowing us to come to the floor. But also, I think, Mr. Speaker, those individuals that are in harm's way and their families, two wars going on, we appreciate their contributions.

We appreciate those veterans, since we're giving what we call "shout-

outs," giving those veterans that allow us to salute one flag, we appreciate them, those folks that put it on the line and some that did not make it.

But we look forward to coming back in the second half of this Congress and finish the unfinished business. We want the American people to have faith in this House, have faith in this Senate, and also a level of respect for the Commander in Chief, that we're going to work this thing out here in Washington, D.C., on behalf of those that have sent us up here to represent them.

I look forward to the second half of the Congress. I want to thank the staff, thank the folks in the Clerk's office for doing all that they've done, even the staff over in the minority office for sticking in there over many hours in this first half, because we have not only made history, but we have also put in more hours than any other Congress in the history of the Republic.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we encourage people to go to www.speaker.gov, and we yield back the balance of our time.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BURGESS. We probably won't take the entire 60 minutes because it has been a long week and it's been a long year, but I did want to come to the floor of the House this evening and talk a little bit about health care and talk a little bit about some of the things that are going on in Medicare, some of the things that are going on in Medicare as it affects our Nation's physicians workforce, and what, perhaps, I see over the horizon for the next six to 12 months. It's going to be kind of an interesting year. It's an election year in this country, and that means we never want for drama during that time.

This is, of course, the special time of year at the end of the year where we all pause and kind of give a little thanks for living in the greatest country on the face of the Earth, the greatest country the world has ever known. We're blessed with many, many benefits from living in this country. Sometimes we take many of those for granted. Our health care is one of those benefits that I think we do take for granted, we overlook too often.

It is appropriate to perhaps have a little checkup on that little tiny segment of the health care market that is controlled by the Federal Government. Of course, I'm being facetious because the Federal Government has under its direct control and grasp probably close to 50 cents out of every health care dollar that is spent in this country. That is, 50 cents out of every health care dollar that is spent in this country originates right here on the floor of the House of Representatives when you configure or figure the expenditures on

Medicare, Medicaid, the VA system, the Indian Health Service, the Federal prison system, the federally qualified health centers around the country, 50 cents out of every dollar starts here on the floor of the House.

But Medicare does have some operational problems with its physician workforce, it has some distributional problems. There are some areas that need attention in our Medicare system. And the problem, Mr. Speaker, is not just money. We've heard a lot of folks talking on my side, folks talking on the other side about the issue of money, but the issue is not just about money, although the money is extremely important. It's not just about money. It is the policies that we create here on the floor of this House and the rules that are written in the Federal agencies under our direction. It's the policies created in this House that actually lead to most of the direct problems in that part of health care that is paid for under the reach and grasp of the Federal Government.

Now, Medicare was created a little over 40 years ago, the mid-1960s. And it was created to make a connection between patients and their physicians, patients and their hospitals and places where they needed to go for care, care that was becoming very expensive, and for some of our seniors was care that perhaps would be out of their reach.

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Now, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, I was not in practice at the time Medicare was instituted. My dad was. And I remember very clearly when Medicare was started in this country and some of the concerns revolving around that. I don't think anyone would have really thought that we would have just done an appropriations bill where here some 43 years later after the enactment of Medicare, I don't know what the total line expenditure for Medicare was, but it is topping \$300 billion for a year in Medicare. You add the expenses of Medicaid to that, and the two together with what is spent at the Federal level and what is spent at the State level when you involve Medicaid and we are well over \$6 billion a year for what we pay for that. So, again, it is really not so much a question of money. It is a question of policy.

But the lifeline that was created between seniors and their doctors, seniors and their hospitals, that lifeline that has been depended upon by really two generations of Americans now, almost two generations of Americans, that lifeline is frayed. Almost every day there is a little nick, a little cut. It is death by a thousand scalpels, if you will, since we are talking about health care. And it is that constant nicking, it is that constant pressure on that lifeline that is causing the lifeline to fray for many individuals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have said on the floor of this House before and it bears repeating tonight, Alan Greenspan, the former Chairman of the Federal Re-

serve Board, when he left his office as chairman just a little less than 2 years ago through one of his sort of exit speeches when he came through to talk to various groups, one of the things when he came to talk to a group of us one morning back in January of 2005, I think it was, and talked about the, well, he was asked about the cost of Medicare, how in the world is Congress ever going to keep up with the ever increasing cost of Medicare; how is Congress going to deal with what is basically an unfunded obligation going into the future. And the Chairman thought about it for a moment, and as always he is very careful about what he says. He said, I think when the time comes Congress will find the courage to do what is necessary to keep the Medicare system up and running. He said, what concerns me more is will there be anyone there to deliver the services when you require them?

Because, Mr. Speaker, January 1 of 2008 will be the year the first baby boomers reach the magic age of 62. They begin entering their retirement period, their retirement time; and as a consequence, we are going to see a lot of pressure put, not just on the Medicare system but on the Social Security system, on our system of long-term care, which is basically the Medicaid system under the current construction.

So there is going to be a lot of pressure put on those Federal programs as more and more people of my generation reach retirement age and again to seek and ask for and collect those benefits that they believe that they have been paying into over time.

But what happens if the supply-demand equation in regards to America's physician workforce, and nurses too for that matter, but what if the law of supply and demand has been drastically skewed so that there is not the supply, we are not keeping up with the supply of doctors and health professionals who are going to be required to take care of those patients as they enter their retirement years?

At the risk of getting too technical, let me just share a few facts. Mr. Speaker, I am sensitive to the fact that I must only address the Chair and not address people who are here on the House floor with us, Members who might be watching from their offices. I know I am not supposed to direct my comments to people who might be watching on C-SPAN so I will confine my remarks solely to the Chair and, Mr. Speaker, this is a poster that I have used in the past, and many people have seen this poster used on the floor of this House. This is a cover from the periodical put out by the Texas Medical Association. Every year they come out with a publication called Texas Medicine. And this is from March of this past year, March of 2007. And the title article was, "Running Out of Doctors." It is a concern, certainly a concern of my professional organization, the Texas Medical Association back in Texas. And it is a concern, I think, or