

of the aisle would impose the largest tax increase in American history, nearly \$400 billion over the next 5 years. Their plan would institute a \$3,000 tax increase for every typical Michigander and put off needed entitlement reform for at least another 5 years.

Congress needs to pass a balanced budget bill without raising taxes. We need to make tax relief permanent for hardworking American families and reform unsustainable entitlements. The American people long for a Congress that puts our fiscal house in order on a Federal level, but they want this done without expanding the size and scope of the Federal Government.

I urge my colleagues to oppose any budget plan that proposes a "spend now, reform later" mentality.

PRESIDENT REFUSES TO CHANGE COURSE AND CALLS HOUSE ACTION POLITICAL THEATER

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, last week the Democratic House delivered on its promise to move the Iraq war in a new direction. We approved a very serious piece of legislation that includes the recommendations of the President, the nonpartisan Iraq Study Group and the Pentagon. The President responded to our action by describing it as political theater and threatening a Presidential veto.

How can this be political theater if we are putting some real teeth into the benchmarks that the President himself established for the Iraqi government earlier this year? Let's not forget the President's own words: "I've made it clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people," said President Bush. Those were his words.

This legislation passed last week puts in law the President's demands that the Iraqis meet his benchmarks. You would think the President would support such action. Instead, he calls it political theater. So much for holding the Iraqi government accountable. The President should reconsider his veto threat. It could be the theater of the absurd.

HOUSE OVERSIGHT OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS LEADING TO RESULTS IN THE U.S. ATTORNEYS SCANDAL

(Mr. Sires asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. Sires. Mr. Speaker, they say when you have bad news, get it out on Friday night. That's exactly what happened last Friday when the Justice Department released documents indicating that Attorney General Gonzales led a meeting of top aides to discuss

the firing of U.S. Attorneys. This document completely contradicts the Attorney General's own statement that he did not participate in any discussion and only had cursory knowledge of the U.S. Attorney dismissals.

The Attorney General's contradictions were followed yesterday by a Justice Department official taking the fifth and refusing to testify. This is unacceptable, particularly after Gonzales himself said that all Justice Department officials would be made available to Congress.

The administration needs to make Justice Department and White House officials available to Congress so that we can continue to provide oversight. This Congress will continue to ask tough questions so that we may ensure U.S. Attorneys are free from political pressure.

THE DEMOCRATIC BUDGET

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. George Bush and the Republicans have spent our country to the verge of bankruptcy. They have doubled our foreign debt. They have increased our national debt by 60 percent. George Bush has accumulated more debt than every President who preceded him in the United States of America and they have done it on the credit card.

And guess who is going to get the bill in their world after they eliminate taxes for the wealthy? It's going to be the middle class, and they're going to get hit twice. They're going to get the bill, and their kids and grandkids are going to get the bill. And the programs that middle-income Americans need like tuition assistance for their kids to go to college, the Bushies cut those. That's their sense of fiscal responsibility.

The other side over here, the gentleman from North Carolina is saying, oh, the largest tax increase in history.

No. We're allowing the tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, people who earn over \$250,000 a year, people who have estates worth more than \$5 million, we're asking that once again they pay their fair share. There will not be a penny increase on middle-income families. They can make up anything they want, but it's not true.

But, yes, the wealthy would pay a little bit more. That's why they're squealing so much, because the Republicans get their money from the wealthy to try and maintain control of our country.

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SALUTE TO CORPORAL FLETCHER

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, "hero" is not a label that should be employed

carelessly, and in a time when our country has many heroes serving abroad, I rise today to honor a hero at home: Corporal Ronald Fletcher.

A member of the Jefferson County Sheriffs Department, Corporal Fletcher was pursuing a burglary suspect into a home last month when he was shot twice in the chest and once in the arm.

At only 26 years old, he lay seriously wounded in the house with the suspect until his fellow deputies were able to remove him safely.

Today, just one short month after the incident, I am proud to share that Corporal Fletcher is home and well on his way to recovery. As a testimony to his profound sense of duty, he recently complained about being bored in his home full of fruit baskets and is eager to return to service.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the heroism of Corporal Fletcher and the valor of the Jefferson County Sheriffs Department. West Virginia is sincerely grateful for their service.

RESTORING FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, for too long, many of America's toughest challenges have gone unaddressed while massive debt was piled on the backs of our young generations.

Now, this Democratic-led House has proposed a budget that takes our Nation in a new direction and reaches balance in 5 years while lowering the deficit. By contrast, the President's proposed budget does not achieve balance at all, despite his promises to do so.

The House budget also puts in place pay-as-you-go spending principles, finally requiring our government to balance and prioritize spending the way all American families must do. Restoring fiscal integrity is not only good for the budget's bottom line, but it is also important in protecting our national security, since much of our Nation's debt is owed to foreign governments.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic budget resolution begins the process of restoring fiscal integrity to the leftover Republican mess of reckless spending and massive deficits. It is time for a balanced budget that meets the needs of American families without mortgaging our future to foreign interests.

DEMOCRATS' MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 110TH CONGRESS

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, over the last 3 months, this new Democratic House has paved the way for a new direction in America.

During the first 100 hours, we passed legislation increasing the minimum

wage, giving the Federal Government the ability to negotiate cheaper prescription drug prices, making college more affordable by cutting interest rates in half on student loans, and fully implementing the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.

We have provided valuable oversight of the Bush administration's failings at both the Justice Department and at Walter Reed Hospital. Had we not conducted oversight hearings of the horrendous conditions at Walter Reed, several incompetent administration officials would still be on the job.

Then, last week, we approved an emergency supplemental spending bill that provides critical funding for our soldiers and our veterans while holding the Iraqi Government accountable for taking control of Iraq.

And this week, we will pass a budget which is balanced within the next 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, the American people asked for a change and a new direction, and this Congress is delivering.

STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

(Mr. CARNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to salute the Pennsylvania National Guard, in particular the Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Fielding the Stryker Brigade has been the largest program undertaken by the Pennsylvania National Guard in modern history.

The Stryker Brigade Combat Team is a combat force that provides division, corps, or joint task force commanders a unique capability across the full range of operations.

On this upcoming district work period, I will be visiting Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, to have an opportunity to tour their Stryker program. The Stryker is a survivable and sustainable method of troop transportation. It can take soldiers safely into a range of environments, from war to humanitarian assistance. We must do everything we can to defend our troops from harm, and the Stryker provides that protection.

Pennsylvania has the largest Army National Guard in the United States, with the 28th Infantry Division being the premier division with a large number of soldiers in a high state of readiness.

I commend the Stryker Brigade Combat Team and the entire Pennsylvania National Guard for their fine service to our country and representing Pennsylvania with honor.

IRAQ BENCHMARKS

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, when hundreds of billions of dollars of

U.S. taxpayer money is being spent on a war overseas, it is important there be benchmarks and consequences if they are not met.

Last week the House approved an emergency war supplemental that will finally hold the Iraqi Government accountable by measuring its performance on standards that President Bush himself outlined earlier this year.

Under the plan passed here last week, the President must report to Congress this summer on the progress the Iraqi Government has made on these key benchmarks. If the Iraqi Government lives up to its promises, our troops will remain there until next year. If, however, they do not meet the President's own benchmarks by this summer, we will begin to redeploy our troops out of Iraq immediately. This accountability is particularly critical after the release of a Defense Department report showing that the Iraqi Government is not close to meeting any of these benchmarks.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that the Iraqi Government realizes that the American troops are not going to be in Iraq indefinitely, and that they have to begin seriously taking responsibility for their own nation.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 835, HAWAIIAN HOME OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 269 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 269

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 835) to reauthorize the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development for housing assistance for Native Hawaiians. All points of order against the bill and its consideration are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 835 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUTTERFIELD). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. For purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have up to 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 269.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 269 provides for consideration of H.R. 835, the Hawaiian Homeownership Opportunity Act of 2007, a closed rule providing 1 hour of general debate in the House, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services.

The rule waives all points of order against the bill and against its consideration except for clauses 9 and 10 of rule XXI. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak very long about this legislation other than to express my sincere hope that this body will move forward expeditiously with its passage.

As my colleagues know, the Hawaiian Homeownership Opportunity Act was placed on the Suspension Calendar last week after being unanimously voted out of the Committee on Financial Services by a voice vote. It was our hope, and the hope of so many Native Hawaiians, that the House would support it with as much enthusiasm as did the committee of jurisdiction.

Unfortunately, as we all now know, there are some in this body who believe that it is in their best interest to create a partisan divide where no such division should exist. They have in my opinion falsely accused my friends and representatives from Hawaii of ulterior motives, and in doing so, have delayed justice and fairness to some of our most loyal citizens.

Contrary to the false accusation made by its opponents, this bill is not a bill aimed at achieving Native American status for Native Hawaiians, no matter how important that issue may be.

This bill provides low-income Native Hawaiians access to the American Dream. They, just like all of us in this body, have had at one point in our lives a dream to own a home. This bill brings them one step closer to realizing that dream.

Shame on those who continue to paint this bill as anything other than what it is.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation which is so critically needed.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in opposition to this closed rule and the potentially unconstitutional measure that the Democrat