

Single-source contracts, let's take, for example, our military plants, and there are two companies that make the engines, but we award to one single source. It's wrong. Competition is healthy; we need to do it. It's why I am proud to join the Blue Dog Coalition. This Congress, both sides of the aisle, needs to work together to bring some sense, some common sense and fiscal accountability back to these Halls so that we can go back to our districts, proud, Republicans and Democrats alike, saying we are spending your money wisely, we are spending it honestly and fiscally and conservatively.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Indiana, a new member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition for joining me this evening and being a part of this discussion on how we restore common sense, fiscal discipline, and accountability to our government.

Mr. TANNER said it very well earlier in the evening when he said the American people are sick and tired of all the partisan bickering that goes on at our Nation's Capitol. I can tell you those of us in the Blue Dog Coalition, we don't care if it is our idea or the Republican idea. We are looking for commonsense ideas, ideas that promote accountability, ideas that make sense for the people back home.

Now, there are others that will come to this floor and talk about the Democrats being bad on this or so forth and so on, and there are Democrats that will talk about the Republicans being bad on this or so forth and so on, but the American people are sick of that. The American people get it. They recognize that we are all Americans first and we are in this together.

Talking about accountability, this is a bipartisan issue that I would like to raise in the closing minutes of this Special Order. The United States is spending about \$9 billion a month in Iraq, which translates to about \$275 million a day or \$12 million an hour. However, even with all of this spending, many believe that the U.S. Army is not providing our troops with the most technologically advanced and effective body armor available.

If you ask 100 different people what they think about this post-war Iraq policy, you get about 100 different answers. But I can tell you that there is one thing that all of us, Democrat and Republican, should remain united on, and that is funding and supporting and properly equipping our men and women in uniform. This war has affected all of us. My brother-in-law is in the United States Air Force. He is in the Middle East region this evening.

Let me tell you that 2 weeks ago, one of my constituents, Mr. John Grant of Hot Springs, Arkansas, brought this issue to my attention. Mr. Grant has become an expert on the types of body armor that are currently available in the market due to the fact that his youngest son serves in the Army National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade. Arkansas' 39th was recently informed

that they could be deployed to Iraq by the end of the year. It will be their second deployment. I was there in Baghdad visiting them August 11, 2004, on their previous deployment, soldiers from my hometown, soldiers from throughout my district, people that I used to teach in Sunday school and people that, well, I have duck hunted with.

□ 2115

And they will be returning again, perhaps by the end of the year, and I believe that we owe it to this soldier, his family, and all soldiers and their families, to ensure that our troops are given the finest armor and equipment available.

This issue specifically involves the U.S. Army's recent testing and comparison of Pinnacle Armor's so-called Dragon Skin body armor and the Interceptor Body Armor, often referred to as IBA, currently in use by the Armed Forces. Because of equipment shortages in 2005, some troops purchased equipment at their own expense, including body armor, and Congress enacted legislation to reimburse these soldiers. However, months later, the Army issued a "safety of use message," which instructed all commanders to ensure that only IBA brand is used by soldiers, prohibiting the use of any other body armor.

The Army's "safety of use message" also dispelled recent reports that Dragon Skin was superior to the IBA, citing that Dragon Skin has failed various tests and therefore does not meet the Army's requirements for soldier body armor protection.

Military support organizations, such as Soldiers for the Truth, of which Mr. Grant is a member, along with Dragon Skin manufacturer Pinnacle Armor, argue that Dragon Skin did not fail any test. They have stated that the testing was biased, and they continue to stand behind their assertions that Dragon Skin is superior to the IBA.

They point out that Dragon Skin has also been approved and is used by the U.S. Air Force, the CIA, the NSA, the U.S. Department of Energy officials in Iraq, the U.S. Secret Service Presidential Protection detail, some Special Forces units, and various police departments and SWAT teams around the Nation. However, our troops cannot purchase or use this body armor. I have even been informed that, as a result of this message, if a soldier purchases and uses any armor other than the IBA, this action will be construed as though the soldier has disobeyed a direct order and could, could, jeopardize his or her family receiving service group life insurance if killed in combat.

It is not certain whether this is true, but if it is, I completely disagree with this policy and believe that our combat soldiers should not be denied the use of the latest and most effective body armor if it will result in the preservation of their lives.

Therefore, for the protection of our troops, I am calling for a full investiga-

tion into whether the U.S. Army is using the most effective body armor for our troops' protection. We need an unbiased external investigation to determine whether the IBA is the most effective armor available. And if additional testing reveals that Dragon Skin body armor or any other brand is the superior product, then it should be provided to our troops.

I am extremely grateful to Mr. Grant for bringing this issue to my attention, as there is no greater obligation we have to our troops, who risk their lives on a daily basis, than to supply them with the most advanced technology and resources available.

I believe that we must demand that the most stringent test possible be conducted to resolve whether our troops are being given access to the absolute best body armor available. What might have been good in 2003 might very well be outdated today. My only goal is to protect our troops in harm's way by ensuring that they receive the most advanced body armor on the market today as they carry out their mission.

May God bless our country, may God bless and keep our soldiers safe.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, thank you so very much.

Before I begin, I do want to just say that our hearts, our thoughts, and our prayers are with all at Virginia Tech and in Blacksburg, Virginia, today. As you know, Madam Speaker, an unspeakable horror visited their campus, and it is absolutely impossible for any of us to know what those who were directly connected to it are going through. We were so incredibly heartened by their convocation today as we watched it, and we noted that Hokie spirit is effervescent and incredibly supportive. We are all with the Hokie Nation today. We wish them the best and know that they are comforted by each other and by God's amazing grace.

Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to come to the floor again this evening. I want to thank the leadership for the opportunity to share some comments and to discuss an issue that our friends just finished talking about a little bit.

This is a remarkable day every year. Madam Speaker, as you know, today is once again the day when Americans reach deep into their pockets and they pay Uncle Sam. Many Americans may be filling out their tax forms right now, or they have just finished slogging through the maze of the Tax Code jargon and crunching numbers and filling out form after form after form. And today, Americans all across this Nation will once again trust Washington with their money, because today is tax

day. It is usually April 15; by a couple different factors it became April 17 this year. But nonetheless, Madam Speaker, it is tax day.

And I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that Americans are fed up with the status quo of today, and I and many of my colleagues believe that Americans deserve a different tomorrow. They deserve a tomorrow where they won't be taxed from the day they are born until the day that they die and at every single point in between.

Americans deserve a tomorrow where saving and investing are virtues, not vices. Americans deserve a tomorrow where taxation brings efficient and responsible representation, and they deserve a tomorrow where, when the American people do their part, they understand that paying their fair share is enough. And they deserve a tomorrow where the government respects their hard work and appreciates their sacrifice. Only then, Madam Speaker, will tomorrow be any different than today.

We are going to talk and discuss this evening the issue of taxes, the tax structure that we have in our Nation that supports so many, many things. We are going to talk about its fairness or lack of fairness. We are going to talk about the amount of money that is received and whether or not there are any options.

We are going to talk about positive solutions. And as we do so, we like, when we come to the floor, to talk about facts. I want to talk about facts. And I will remind my colleagues of one of our favorite quotes. One of my favorite quotes comes from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who said that "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts." And so it is, Madam Speaker, that as we come and talk about facts as they relate to taxes, it is important that we use correct figures, that we use accurate figures.

One of the figures that I ran across when looking at the tax issue and realizing how large our government has grown and how many taxes the Washington government takes, in 2005 the Federal Government took in about \$2.4 trillion. That is an awful lot of money, Madam Speaker, and it is sometimes hard to kind of get your arms around what that actually means. Well, in a relatively short period of time, less than 50 years, what that means, based upon accounting for inflation and accounting for growth, is that that amount of money is larger than the entire U.S. economy was in 1959. So in less than one person's lifetime we have grown the amount of tax revenue, and this is in constant dollars, real dollars, we have grown the amount of tax revenue larger than our entire government was and the economy was in 1959. So it is truly remarkable.

And what that brings about, Madam Speaker, is that we ought to be, as representatives of the people, asking questions. Is that appropriate? Is that an

appropriate policy for our Nation? Should we be modifying things? Should we be changing things? Should we be potentially more fair to the American people? What should we be doing?

And so we will be joined tonight by a number of colleagues. One of my good friends and fellow colleagues from Georgia is Congressman PHIL GINGREY. Congressman GINGREY is a fellow physician, represents a district right outside of the city of Atlanta. I served with him in the State senate, and it is a privilege to serve with him here in the United States Congress. He is one of the true fiscal conservatives, an individual who understands and appreciates the importance of tax revenue, yes, but also the importance of fairness on the part of our Federal Government.

So I am pleased to welcome my good friend from Georgia, Congressman GINGREY.

Mr. GINGREY. Congressman PRICE, I thank you so much for letting me join with you and the Truth Squad in talking about the real truth in regard to what burdens are on the American people, particularly on this day, tax day, April 17. And it reminds me that there is another date coming up pretty soon, and I think that is on April 22, and that is called tax freedom day. And that day gets later and later in the calendar year each and every year. That is how long a person has to work to pay their tax burden, not only to the Federal Government but to local and State and the entire tax burden. Almost a third of the year, Madam Speaker, people have to work to pay the tax burden.

So we in the Republican Party feel very strongly that we need to cut taxes, simplify taxes, lower taxes. And we can do that, and we have done that. We did it in 2001, we did it in 2003. And while we heard from our friends on the other side of the aisle in the previous hour, the so-called Blue Dog Coalition, in regard to the costs to the revenue stream of the tax cuts, saying that we only cut taxes for people making more than \$400,000 a year, when in fact, Madam Speaker, everybody who pays taxes got a tax cut under the tax cut provisions that this President and the former majority, the Republican Party, enacted for the American people.

And while, when you crunch the numbers, that was estimated to cost \$1.3 trillion, or \$130 billion each and every year over a 10-year period of time, because supposedly you would be taking in less revenue, in fact it stimulated the economy; and over a 2½ year period of time, the amount of revenue that came into the Federal Government actually increased by \$250 billion.

So our good friends, the Blue Dogs, play a little bit loose with the truth in regard to their calculus. And really it is not calculus, Madam Speaker, it is simple math. The gentlemen that spoke, the four or five of them in the previous hours, our friends, the Blue Dogs, they would make great red dogs. They come from States that the so-called Blue Dog Democrats are tradi-

tionally conservative, they are fiscally conservative. They are conservative on social issues.

And we had the gentleman from Arkansas, we had a Member from Tennessee, we had a Member from Indiana, we had a Member from Ohio. It doesn't surprise me that they would be sounding like Republicans, because many of them represent Republican-leaning, typically traditional districts. And when we earn back our majority, Madam Speaker, I think that the Blue Dogs that we are hearing from, the five by tonight, there are a total of 43, many of them would make great red dogs; and I look forward to the day that they join us.

But, Madam Speaker, in the meantime, I think that I need to talk to them about their math a little bit. They spent some time talking about the debt and the fact that all of this money that we have had to borrow, this \$3.8 trillion worth of debt, comes from foreign countries. The gentleman from Arkansas listed, I think, the top nine. And they want to imply that all of the debt is money that we have had to borrow from rogue nations, if you will. But they are not rogue nations.

□ 2130

But the point I want to make, Madam Speaker, is that only about 25 percent of that debt is held by any foreign nation, whether we are talking about Germany or France or Spain or Portugal or, yes, China or India. Seventy-five percent of that debt is held by my mom and my dad and our Blue Dog grandparents and corporate America and the United States citizens. Americans borrow or lend that money to the United States Government because they have faith in the full credit of this great country. So this implication that only rogue nations are willing to borrow money or lend money to this country is totally ludicrous.

And if the gentleman from Georgia, my good friend and colleague, Dr. PRICE, will indulge me for a few minutes, I want to also point out another very, very misleading figure. They take that debt, that \$3.8 trillion worth of debt that has accumulated over a number of years.

Don't forget, Madam Speaker, and my good friends on the other side of the aisle, they controlled this place for 40 years. And that \$3.8 trillion worth of debt didn't just occur overnight.

But they take 300 million people, man, woman and child, the population of this great country, and they divide it into \$3.8 trillion, and they come up with \$27,000 worth of debt for every man, woman and child in this country.

Well, Madam Speaker, what is the gross domestic product, the wealth of this country? I think 2006, maybe would be the last figure that I have, it was about \$13 trillion. So you divide that same number into the gross domestic product, you could say that the share of the wealth of this country of every man, woman and child is \$44,000.

So, like I say, they are playing a little loose with the numbers, and they go on and talk about this budget resolution that they have got and how they are going to balance the budget and have no deficit over a 5-year period of time and actually have a little bit of money in the bank in 2012.

How do they do that, Madam Speaker? They do it by letting the tax cuts of the Republican majority and our President expire. The decrease in the marginal rate for every person that is paying taxes, the increase, the doubling of the child tax credit, the elimination, and once again, reinserting the marriage tax penalty, and that is total, when you add up every one of those tax cuts that we enacted that they intend to let expire in 2010 and 2011, it is a total, I think, and my colleague from Georgia and my other colleagues that are here tonight will agree, almost \$400 billion. And I think that is the largest tax increase on the people of this country in the history of this country.

So here, again, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for bringing out the truth once again, as he does so well in the Truth Squad's discussions. And I thank him for letting me weigh in a little bit tonight. And with that I will yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my good friend and colleague from Georgia for your comments, for your perspective, and for the truth and the facts that you bring to the table, and you mentioned a number of them. I would just like to highlight two of them because they are incredibly important, Madam Speaker, for the American people to appreciate. The first is that Tax Freedom Day. We talk about tax day, but Tax Freedom Day has yet to arrive. Depending on what State you are in, I think the earliest State, Tax Freedom Day is April 22, which is next week. But what that means, Madam Speaker, is that every single American who has been working since the first of the year, on average, every single one, is continuing to work from January 1 until now, through at least April 22 to pay the taxes that they owe. They haven't even started to work for themselves or their family. Madam Speaker, that is a tax system that is broken and flawed.

The other fact that you brought out, my good friend from Georgia, Congressman GINGREY brought out, was that the proposal that was passed on this floor just a little over two weeks ago by our friends on the other side of the aisle, many of whom call themselves Blue Dogs. We are checking to make certain, Madam Speaker. We think they are probably lap dogs because of the bills that they have been supporting. And one of them was this budget that was passed that will result in a \$400 billion tax increase for the American people, the largest tax increase in the history of the Nation. That is a fact.

I want to mention a couple of other facts and then call on a couple of other

good friends who have joined me this evening. Oftentimes, Madam Speaker, you hear people say, well, the wealthy in this Nation don't pay any taxes, or they get a remarkable tax benefit, that they are given favored treatment. You hear that oftentimes by our friends on the other side.

This chart, Madam Speaker, really points out the truth. These are actual numbers and actual facts. And that is that the top 1 percent of wage earners in this Nation, the top 1 percent, pay 36.9 percent of the taxes. That is, the top 1 percent pay 36.9 percent of the taxes. If you take the top 10 percent of wage earners in this Nation, the taxes that they pay, the total revenue that they pay in terms of taxes for this Nation, 68.2 percent. And the top half, the top 50 percent pay 96.7 percent of the tax revenue that comes into this Nation. Madam Speaker, that is a fact. It is important to appreciate that because our good friends on the other side of the aisle so often want to play class warfare. They want to pit one side against the other. And what this shows very, very clearly is that individuals all across this Nation are paying their fair share and then some.

I have been joined by many good friends who will comment about various aspects of our tax system and tax policy, as well as the budget that has been proposed. And right now I would like to ask a good friend from Texas to join me, and look forward to his comments, Congressman KEVIN BRADY from Texas, who has a wonderful business background and appreciates the importance of appropriate government policy and making certain that we allow all Americans, all Americans, the greatest opportunity in this wonderful Nation. Congressman BRADY, thanks so much for joining us.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Well, thank you. And I appreciate joining the two gentlemen from Georgia who continue to look out every day for the family's pocket books, rather than Washington's pocket books, which I fear is too deep. And the point I always try to make, I am in my 11th year in Congress, serve on the Ways and Means Committee, have worked on all of President Bush's tax relief. And I am convinced that Washington has all the money it needs. It just doesn't have all the money it wants. And there is a big difference between the two.

And tonight, as you and I talk, millions of Americans are scrambling at the last minute to file their taxes, rummaging through cabinets and drawers and bank statements, anxious to try to comply with the complicated Tax Code. And they are willing to pay their fair share. But our code is so complex that they worry.

Paying taxes is bad enough. But the time wasted in figuring them is almost worse. You shouldn't need an accountant to do your taxes, and you shouldn't live in fear of just making an honest mistake. For our sanity's sake, and I think for our children's sake, we really

need to sunset this awful Tax Code and replace it with something far more simple, like a flat tax or my preference, a retail sales tax. And I love the retail sales tax because, can you imagine, can you imagine never having to fill out a tax return again in your lifetime? Never. Can you imagine the IRS being completely, totally out of your life forever?

And as we talk about how complex this code is, let's not forget we need to keep our taxes low. Tax Freedom Day for Texas families is this Thursday. And that is the first day since New Year's that Texans will start working for themselves and not for the government. For the rest of the country, on average, you have still got two more weeks, April 30. In fact, most families in America will get to the fifth month of the year. Can you imagine? The fifth month of the year before they stop working for the government and start working for their dreams, for their families, for what they want to accomplish in life. And I think most of us would feel better if we felt that Washington wasn't wasting so much of our hard-earned money.

My families are worried that the new Democrat budget allows President Bush's tax relief to expire, which would increase taxes on families in Texas \$2,700 a year; \$2,700 more for each, a typical Texas family.

I talked over the April work period with Kirk and Sandy Noyes of the Woodlands; visited with Marty and Ty Drake in their home in Livingston; Buck and Ava Anderson of Cleveland in their living room; sat down in the kitchen with Ed and Connie Heiman of Magnolia; Elmer and Pauline Hensley of Lumberton; Pat and Ashley Canfield of Huntsville. We talked about what that \$2,700 would mean to their families, and they talked about the medical bills for their young children because co-pays and deductibles add up so quickly. They talked about car insurance, how expensive that is. Marty Drake is a police officer. He said, You know, I will work overtime, all of my high school football games, use all that money just to pay that extra bill.

One woman, who is it? Connie Heiman in Magnolia, she works at a doctor's office just so she can pay the health care. And she said, We don't have any extra money. And her husband runs the flooring store in Magnolia. He said, I can't work longer. I work 6½ days a week as it is.

And my belief is that we are, despite what Washington thinks, we are an overtaxed Nation. And all you need to do is look at your own day to understand it. We wake up in the morning, get in the shower, we pay a water tax. We grab a cup of coffee, pay a sales tax. Drive down to work, pay a fuel tax. At work we pay, not just payroll tax but income tax as well. Get home at night, flip on the switch, walk in the door, turn on the lights, pay the electricity tax, pick up the phone, pay a telephone tax, turn on the TV, pay cable tax, kiss

our wife goodnight, pay a marriage penalty tax and we do that every day of our life. And when we die, we pay a death tax. We are an overtaxed Nation.

And in my belief, we need to continue, not just for our economy, but for our families, we need to continue President Bush's tax relief because our families can't take this extra hit. The marriage penalty will come back to life. That is wrong. In fact, Ways and Means, and I will finish with this, because we have other Members who need to visit as well. But we did the tax relief not for grins and giggles, but for two important reasons. One was fairness. The marriage penalty is unfair. The death tax is unfair. The State and local sales tax structure, it was unfair for other States to have an advantage. And another reason is to spur this economy. After 9/11, we took three big hits: 9/11, the recession and the wonderful Enrons and WorldComs of the world. Our economy took huge hits. We targeted tax relief, and we have had 40 straight months of job growth, created 7.5 million new jobs. We are going to risk that? We are going to risk this strong economy raising taxes on families and small businesses? It doesn't make sense. My belief is Washington needs to tighten its belt before we ask our families and small businesses to tighten theirs.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his wonderful summary of the remarkable taxes that each and every one of us are exposed to on a daily basis, everything we do. And that is why I say that the American people deserve more than that. They deserve a government that is more fair than that, especially in the area of taxation. The \$2,700 for each individual in Texas is about what they would pay, if the policies of the other side go through, about what they would pay in the State of Georgia as well. And the folks have a lot of ability to figure out what they ought to do with that money and a greater priority that they ought to do with that money, as opposed to what the government ought to do with that money. So as most people understand and appreciate, they know how to spend their money better than the Federal Government.

And somebody mentioned earlier today that the Federal Government, whenever they do anything on behalf of the American people, it costs three times as much as it would in the private sector. So that even gets to the point more about what the facts of the situation are and why they believe what we are doing, why they would draw anyone to the appropriate conclusion that we are taxed too much as a Nation.

I have got a few other folks who have joined me, and I appreciate it so much. And I am joined by my good friend from North Carolina, Congressman MCHENRY, who also is an individual who has served in the State legislature and knows well the importance of fiscal responsibility and the importance

of making certain that we don't overtax our Americans all across this Nation. I welcome you. I look forward to your comments.

Mr. MCHENRY. I thank my good friend from Georgia, Dr. PRICE. Thank you for your leadership and for being here on the floor and being so active. Your constituents should be proud of you. And I thank them for electing you.

Madam Speaker, here on Tax Day, in 2007, I hearken back to the words that Ronald Reagan said. He said, our Federal Tax Code is, in short, utterly impossible, utterly unjust, and completely counterproductive. It reeks with injustice and is fundamentally un-American and has earned a rebellion, and it is time we rebelled.

□ 2145

That is a quote from Ronald Reagan in 1983.

Well, I think it is high time we rebel. Today is one day in every American's life where they realize how complex and how horrible our Federal Tax Code is. The Tax Code stands at an astonishing 16,485 pages in length, and there are 1,638 different tax forms on the IRS's Web site. That is outstandingly horrible for the American people.

In 2006, the average taxpayer spent 37.8 hours crunching numbers to complete even the most basic tax form, Form 1040. That is nearly an entire work week spent in filing taxes. Even worse, small businesses spend about 80 hours in preparing their tax returns. That is a 2-week vacation for the average working American family.

And, in total, the American people in a recent poll think the Tax Code is obscene. Eighty percent think the Tax Code is too complicated while only 3 percent believe the Tax Code is just fine the way it is. I concur with that 80 percent, Madam Speaker.

Although just empowered a few months, the new Democratic majority in the House with our new Speaker, they have proposed the largest tax increase in American history. The largest tax increase in American history. They propose a \$2,066,675,000,000 tax increase. What does that mean for the average American? Well, the average American, a family of four making \$50,000 a year, will see a tax hike of roughly \$2,092 this year. What is worse is that my constituents back home in North Carolina will see an average tax increase of \$2,671 per year. That is money they could be spending on education. That is money they could be spending on their kids. That is money they could be spending in their community. Instead, the Democrats want that money to come here to fund the bloated bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.

Now, you understand the Republicans have cut taxes over the last decade, and that is very positive. Actually, as the Republican majority for 12 years, we proposed a tax cut every year. Every single year we proposed that. Now, Democrat President Bill Clinton

didn't support it, but once we got George Bush in office in 2001, he proposed a massive tax cut.

What has that done? Well, the Democrats say that it is not enough money coming into government. Well, they are wrong. They are absolutely wrong. The Democrats are wrong when they say government doesn't have enough money.

Just this last year, government income amounted to over \$2.4 trillion. Now, let's put this in historical context. That is the largest income to any government in the history of the planet. Now, let's think this thing through. \$2.4 trillion, is that enough to fund our Federal bureaucracy? According to the Democrats, the answer is "no." They want more. They want the American people to give more to the Federal Government.

Let's put that \$2.4 trillion in context. Well, there are only two countries on Earth that have economies larger than our Federal Government. Aside from ours, Germany and Japan are the only countries on Earth that have economies larger than our Federal income. Now, the scary part is that Germany only barely beats the Federal Government with its roughly similar size economy.

There is a lot of talk about how the Chinese economy is booming and it is on the rise. Well, it is true and it is a big threat to our jobs here in the United States, and it is a big economic concern for us as a nation. But the Chinese economy, though booming, is only \$1.9 trillion, and that means it is a half trillion dollars smaller than our Federal income. The total gross domestic product of China is smaller than the income to our Federal Government.

So, Madam Speaker, if we look at a recent poll by Pew Research, people were asked what they thought was the best way to reduce the Federal deficit, and in that poll the result was pretty simple. Only 9 percent said that tax increases were the best way. A combined 69 percent said they would rather see government reduce spending. Now, not only do I agree with the 80 percent of the American people that say the Tax Code is too complex, that it is obscene; I also agree with that 69 percent that say the way to reduce government is to reduce spending. That is pretty simple. It is common sense to the American people.

Madam Speaker, I urge this Democrat majority to rethink their tax increase strategy, because it is going to raise taxes on every American who pays taxes. And, furthermore, those that are in the low income of our economy are actually going to see their taxes increase as well because they are going to roll back all the Bush tax cuts over the last 7 years. I think that is the wrong thing for the American people. It is the wrong thing for my constituents of western North Carolina. And I think that that is something that is going to harm our economy, the strength of our growing economy. So I

think the Democrats should rethink their tax increase strategy and do what is right for the American people. Reform the Tax Code. Cut taxes at the very least, but reform the Tax Code so we can actually inject more capital into the marketplace and allow people to keep more of what they earn because it is good for their families and good for our economy, and I think it is generally good for America.

With that, I thank you, Congressman PRICE, for hosting this important hour, especially on such an important day to the American people when they have to go file those tax returns. We know how frustrated they get because we have to file those same tax returns, and it is important that we remind our constituents that we are subject to the same laws that they are, and that is a very good thing and a great motivation for tax reform.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from North Carolina and I appreciate his perspective. And I think he said a couple of important things. One was that he pointed out that the average American spends almost 40 hours preparing his or her taxes. That is one whole week's worth of work. That is 2 percent of the productive time of each and every American spent just on the unproductive activity of preparing their tax returns. If that doesn't scream for reform, Madam Speaker, I am not sure what does.

I am pleased to be joined by another good friend, a new Member of Congress, a freshman Member from Tennessee, Congressman DAVID DAVIS, who I know has run a business and understands the importance of the economy's being vibrant, of the appropriate level of taxes not just for businesses but for individuals.

And I appreciate your joining us tonight and look forward to your comments.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding.

Congressman PRICE, you do such a great job. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your willingness to spread the truth.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to Americans on tax day. I know some of us, as we draw near to midnight here, a lot of people still working on those forms, trying to get them down to the post office. It reminds me of what Ronald Reagan said back in the early 1980s. Ronald Reagan said, "We don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough. We have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much." That seems like commonsense to me, and I think the people that are listening to us tonight understand that. They understand they have to sit around the kitchen table and decide how much money is coming in and how much money goes out.

Small business owners have to do the same thing. They sit around sometimes at a little break room table and decide,

am I going to hire that next person or am I going to have to lay somebody off? Am I going to be able to afford another machine to be more productive so I can grow the business and be good for the economy? We understand that as Americans.

Today, tax day, families across America are feeling the cost of the Federal Government. I know we feel it. I know the American people are feeling it. It is one of the reasons I decided to run for Congress. I did own a small business, and I have actually owned a couple. I grew up in a small community in a little county called Unicoi County in East Tennessee, up in the mountains near North Carolina. And I worked my way through college. I actually worked two jobs, went to school full time, and was fortunate enough from that to start some businesses. And I sold one of those businesses.

And one of the reasons I decided to run for Congress was because the government took too much of my money. And I really looked at it as being my money because I earned it. My wife and I started the business. We took the risk. We put our home up. If that business hadn't succeeded, the bank could have come and taken our home. And when I sold the business, I should have been able to keep the proceeds and take care of my two children. It shouldn't have gone to the government. And I decided that I needed to get involved.

According to the Congressional Research Service, President Bush's program of comprehensive tax relief was well timed to respond to a weak economy. Do you remember back in the early 2000s we had just been hit by terrorist extremists, and we had natural disasters. So those tax relief packages that he put in place have actually worked. Tax relief enacted in 2001 granted immediate tax rebates, reduced marginal tax rates, and lowered the marriage tax penalty. The tax relief of 2003 accelerated much of the 2001 growth which would ultimately strengthen our economy.

We are residing and living in a strong economy. The Republican tax cut relief has seen nearly 4 straight years, 21 straight quarters, of economic growth, while adding 7.5 million new jobs. Seven point five million new jobs, that excites me. And we were able to do that because people are allowed to keep their money at home.

You see, government really doesn't create jobs. Government takes money. But if you leave that money back in local communities, that money is put to work and it does good things.

The Congressional Budget Office confirmed that the tax cuts of 2003 have helped boost the Federal revenues by 68 percent. Commonsense again. If you allow people to keep their tax dollars at home, the economy grows. And this should be understood by both sides of the aisle. This actually works for Democrats and Republicans. It worked for President Kennedy, it worked for

President Reagan, and it has worked for President Bush. This is bipartisan. We all ought to understand that keeping taxes low, keeping spending low, the economy will grow and the coffers of government will grow. I think that is a good thing.

We should all work to make the successful tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 permanent. If they are not made permanent, which I am convinced that this new "hold on to your wallet Congress" has in mind, we are going to have a problem in our economy. For example, 84 million women will see their taxes increased by \$1,970. Now, we all say here for the low and middle income, but if you are a woman, with this new tax increase of \$400 billion, your average tax is going to go up \$1,970.

We are going to see 48 million married couples' taxes increased by \$2,726. It seems inherently unfair to me. Forty-two million families will see their taxes go up by \$2,084. And I thought we were here for the low and middle income. These are the people that are paying taxes.

Twenty-six million small business owners will see a devastating tax increase of \$3,637. The small business owner that runs the little store down the street or creates five jobs on the corner, who probably employs some of your friends in your local community, they are going to see their taxes go up over \$3,600. And where are they going to get that \$3,600 to send up to Washington? They are going to get it from you, the American people. They are going to either increase the cost of goods and we are going to see inflation, or they are going to decide they can't hire that last employee or maybe they have to let that last employee go.

Five million low-income individuals and couples will no longer be exempt from Federal income taxes.

□ 2200

This is going to hurt the very people that we say we are trying to help.

Again, we should work in a bipartisan manner, Republicans and Democrats, to make sure that the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 are made permanent. I am very concerned if we don't do that, that we are going to see our economic growth go into a slide, and we are going to have a problem that we are going to have to deal with.

Just two weeks ago, Washington Democrats passed a fiscal blueprint that raises taxes on Americans in one fell swoop. As part of this ill-gotten budget, taxpayers in Tennessee, my home State, will not be allowed to deduct their sales tax from their Federal income tax, which is only fair because we don't have an income tax. It makes us equal with all the other States. Taxes on small businesses in east Tennessee will go up. The child tax credit will decrease from \$1,000 to \$500. The marriage penalty is coming back. Residents of the First District of Tennessee's average expense in taxes is going up over \$2,000. The definition of a

small business will decrease from \$400,000 to \$200,000. Dividends will no longer be taxed at the personal gains rate, thereby increasing double taxation of dividends by as much as 62 percent. People all across America voted for change, but they are not getting the change they voted for.

We have a choice between bigger economy or bigger government, and the majority party has made it their choice to have a bigger government. And if anyone tells you that Americans aren't paying their fair share for a civilized society, they must remember that Americans pay more in their taxes than they do for housing, clothing and heating combined. And also remember that Americans this year will have to work until the last week of April in order to pay their taxes. That is over 114 days just to cover their tax bills. So on tax day, today, when we feel it the most, everyone needs to remember, we need to hold the line on spending, reduce earmarks, and pass line item veto, and crack down on worthless pork barrel spending and be good stewards of the taxpayers' money. And again I remind you, Ronald Reagan said, "We don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much."

And with that, I yield back.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend from Tennessee for his eloquent comments and for really bringing perspective to the issue.

It really befuddles me as to how our friends on the other side of the aisle can say that they need to raise taxes to raise revenue, because if you look at this chart, Madam Speaker, what you appreciate is that as revenues were going down in the early part of this decade, what the solution was, as it is always a solution, is to lower taxes and you allow people to keep more of their hard-earned money. You put more money back in the pockets of American people and what happens? The economy flourishes, and lo and behold we have a record \$2.4 trillion of revenue to the Federal Government because of decreased taxes.

I am so proud to be joined by my good friends tonight to talk about this issue. And we are pleased to welcome once again Congresswoman MARSHA BLACKBURN from Tennessee, an individual who also knows and appreciates the importance of fiscal responsibility and the importance that allowing individuals to keep more of their hard-earned money means to their own freedom and their own liberty. I welcome you and look forward to your comments this evening.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Georgia.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to be on the floor tonight and talk a little bit about what the hold-on-to-your-wallet Congress is doing to Americans as we come to this tax day. You know, we circle April 15 on the calendar every year. I tell you,

everybody knows that. They look forward to that day with dread. And I have said so many times I think the only thing good that happens that day is my nephew, Chip Wedgeworth, has a birthday every year on April 15. So that is the highlight of our April 15.

I think the reason that Americans look at April 15 with that sense of dread is because they know, our constituents know, that we are overtaxed. They know that the government is overspent. It is plain and simple to them. They know that the government does not have a revenue problem, they've got a spending problem. And they never take the time to go through the disciplines that are necessary to reduce what the Federal Government spends. Those are things that American men and women who are working know. They know that government is overspent; they know that they are overtaxed. They know that the government doesn't have a revenue problem, that it has a spending problem. And Americans do mark this date on the calendar. They resent what it stands for.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia for what he is doing on this issue.

Madam Speaker, it is so nice to be on this floor and be joined by my colleagues who are real people, who live real lives, as the gentleman from Tennessee was talking about his business; people that understand what it takes to start a business, to run a business, to maintain a business. They are not part of the liberal elite. They are part of real people, this wonderful American middle class that makes this Nation run.

You know, I think another thing that kind of gets to people as they are sitting there trying to get those taxes in the mail tonight and figure these forms out, these thousands upon thousands upon thousands of pages of the tax form, you know, I had one of my constituents in a town hall meeting say he couldn't read the Tax Code, it was bigger than the King James version of the Bible and he has never been able to get through the Bible, and so he definitely couldn't get through the Tax Code. That is how big and unwieldy this thing has become.

But they look at this and they know that what we've got is a bureaucracy that is out of control. It is unresponsive; it is out of control. And the liberal elites who have created this bureaucracy think they are smarter than everybody else. They think that they know what should be happening for and to the rest of the country. And you know, I am right in there with them, don't like that very much.

I think that our constituents all know, too, that just as we are talking about, they know that they are overtaxed and government is overspent. They know that government is never going to get enough of their money.

And my colleague from Tennessee mentioned sales tax deductibility. Madam Speaker, I think it is just real-

ly so very sad that this Congress chose to let those tax deductions expire, which in effect will enact the largest tax increase in history on the American people, all to put more into the coffers of a government so that the liberal elites get their hands on it and they spend it. There again, the people know that they are overtaxed and they know government is overspent.

As we talk about what is before us today, I think that it is important. I was looking at one of the gentleman's posters that he has down there about mandatory spending growth. Isn't it amazing that we see this mandatory spending growth? The budget that our colleagues across the aisle, the Democrats, have chosen to pass makes our tax reductions temporary, makes tax relief for all of our families temporary, and makes spending permanent.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I would gladly yield.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I brought along a number of charts. And we are not getting to a lot of them, but some of them we will.

This chart is an important one because this shows the mandatory spending growth, something I like to coin actually "automatic spending growth" because it is not mandatory. The Federal Government has determined that that is where we are going to spend money. And it automatically increases. These are the automatic programs, which are basically Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; and unless they see reforms, what we will have seen from 1995 to 2017 is an increase from 48.7 percent to 62.2 percent of our economy.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I would be happy to yield.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I think what we see here is so important, and what you've just said speaks to the issue. Because a budget should reflect not the priorities of the government, but the priorities of the people. And what we have seen in the budget that our friends across the aisle brought that eliminated the tax reductions, that increased the taxes, that adds to that, knowing that people are overtaxed, knowing that government is overspent, is the fact that all of these automatic increases, mandatory spending growth, not addressing entitlement reforms that are needed, but allowing that to be put on autopilot, and increase and increase and making that spending permanent while you make the tax reductions temporary.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I will yield.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. This chart really points that out, "Ignoring Entitlement Reform," which is exactly what occurred 2½ weeks ago when our friends passed our budget.

When the Republicans were in charge, with the Balanced Budget Act

we passed in 1987 we saved nearly \$130 billion. With the Deficit Reduction Act just a few short years ago in 2005, about \$40 billion. With the budget that was adopted 2½ weeks ago, none, zero. No entitlement reform. No automatic spending reform. And consequently, what you know and what I know is that we are on track to spend that 62.2 percent in a few very short years.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The gentleman is exactly right. That is why we have to look at that budget document on this tax day and say, they laid the marker down. They showed us what their priorities are. Their priorities are a bigger government and higher taxes on the American people.

I would invite all of them to join us, join us in reducing taxes. Join us in making these tax reductions permanent. Join us in making sales tax deductibility permanent. Join us in being certain that middle-class Americans get first right of refusal on their paycheck, that it is not the Federal Government that gets first right of refusal on that paycheck. Before those deductions are taken out, let's be certain that the American people have the opportunity to sit down at that kitchen table and decide how they are going to spend those hard-earned dollars, because it is their work.

You know, American families, individuals in my district in Tennessee, we talked a lot about taxes as we went through this district work period. I had one of my constituents stand up in one of our meetings and he said, MARSHA, I've got sweat equity in my paycheck; I've got a lot of sweat equity in my paycheck when I get it. And it just galls me every time I see a little bit more of that paycheck going to Washington, D.C. for programs that don't work. He talked about the spinach farmers and the fisheries and the peanut storage people and Katrina relief and all these things that were the waste; and the additions and the additions and the pork barrel spending that got put into the bill that would have funded our military.

On this tax day, as people are going to the mailboxes tonight, they know that they are not undertaxed, they are overtaxed. They know that government is not underspent, it is overspent. And they know that the Democrats laid down a marker. They made a choice when they did this budget. That budget choice was, do you want to stand with the American families and let them have first right of refusal on that paycheck, or do you want to give first right of refusal to the bureaucrats and the liberal elites in Washington, D.C.? And they made their choice.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman for her perspective and for her passion for appropriate policies here out of Washington on behalf of the American people.

And you've heard a lot about what our friends on the other side of the aisle have proposed. And it is important to the look at the numbers,

Madam Speaker, the numbers on what has been proposed by our good friends on the other side of the aisle when the clock strikes midnight on December 21, 2010.

They have proposed and they have enacted a budget that will result in increasing the ordinary income rates from 35 percent to 39.6 percent; increasing capital gains from 15 percent to 20 percent; increasing dividends from 15 percent to 39.6 percent; increasing estate taxes from zero percent to 55 percent; decreasing the child tax credit from \$1,000 to \$500; and, amazingly, increasing the lowest tax bracket from 10 percent to 15 percent. A remarkable \$400 billion in new taxes, a remarkable display of, frankly, lack of appreciation and lack of respect for the American worker.

Now what is the solution? A lot of things can be done. What we would propose and have proposed is something that respects American values and I believe results in increasing American vision, and that is a taxpayer bill of rights, a Federal taxpayer bill of rights. Many folks will recognize the sound of that because there are some States around this Nation that have indeed enacted a taxpayer bill of rights. The problem at the State level, however, is that all they can address is State revenue, State money.

□ 2215

But, Madam Speaker, because of the actions of our friends on the other side of the aisle and because they want to dig deeper, we believe strongly that a taxpayer bill of rights is appropriate for the Federal Government. We believe that taxpayers have a right to a Federal Government that does not grow beyond their ability to pay for it. That means that the Federal Government ought not grow more than the population grows or more than the cost of living increases, and that can be put into law and that is what part of the taxpayer bill of rights does.

We also believe that Americans have a right to receive back every single dollar that they entrust to the American people for their retirement. That is the Social Security issue, Madam Speaker. Right now the Federal Government, right now Washington spends money that the American people send to Washington to cover for their Social Security compensation, and what does Washington do, oftentimes it spends it on other programs. That is not right and it is not fair. I hear about it when I am back home, and I suspect you do as well.

We believe taxpayers have a right to a balanced budget without raising taxes. You can balance the budget in one of two ways. You can raise taxes to try to increase revenue, which doesn't actually work, but you can have it work on paper. You can increase taxes and say, well, we will balance the budget that way, which is what our friends on the other side of the aisle have done. They say we will increase taxes

\$400 billion, and that is the way we will balance the budget.

Madam Speaker, there is another way you can balance the budget, and that is by decreasing spending, and that is what we would propose through a taxpayer bill of rights.

Fourth, we would propose fundamental and fair tax reform. My good friend from Texas mentioned earlier the proposal for a flat tax. That is one way to do it. I support the fair tax, the national retail sales tax, something that would do away with the IRS, do away with that organization that so many Americans dread and results in so much pain and heartache on the part of the American people.

Finally, a taxpayer bill of rights that would require a supermajority for any increase in taxes for our Nation, something that was in effect until the very first day of this Congress when this new majority said, "no," we ought not have a supermajority to increase taxes, we ought to let a simple majority do it which results in a huge opportunity for an increase in taxation and has resulted in, by this new majority, policies which will significantly increase taxes.

So, Madam Speaker, what we have done tonight is outlined the problem, outlined the history, talked about what kinds of solutions can be proposed and what we would propose in the way of an appropriate Federal taxpayer bill of rights.

I would like to close with a quote from Thomas Jefferson who had a perspective on taxation. He said: "To take from one because it is thought his own industry has acquired too much, in order to spare others who have not exercised equal industry and skill is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association, the guarantee to everyone the free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it." That was Thomas Jefferson, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, each and every one of us is remarkably privileged to serve in this House of Representatives. It is an honor to represent my constituents, as I know each Member feels it is an honor to represent theirs. We live in a wondrous and glorious nation, the longest surviving democracy in the history of the world, a nation that has resulted in, because of its actions, more freedom and more prosperity for more individuals than any nation in the history of mankind.

It is commonsense and responsibility on behalf of the Members who represent all of the constituents across this Nation that have resulted in those policies. I, as I know my colleagues who have been here this evening, look forward to working with Members on both sides of the aisle to bring about that accountability and responsibility, and to bring about the kind of credit and honor to our constituents that they so richly deserve by their labor.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to making certain that we hold each other accountable to establish the

kinds of policies that are appropriate and the kinds of policies that will result in the greatest amount of prosperity and freedom for future generations of Americans.

REMEMBERING VICTIMS AT VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY AND HONORING HISPANIC WORLD WAR II VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASITOR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, tonight we will be highlighting the courage and honor of our Hispanic World War II veterans.

But before we begin tonight, I would like to take this moment to honor the victims of the unbelievable tragedy at Virginia Tech University. We have only just begun to hear the incredible stories of the heroism and tragedy, and begun to learn the names and faces of those who died and those whose survived, but whose lives will forever be changed.

Today we have also seen how remarkable and how resilient they are. To the Virginia Tech University community, the students, the staff, the family members and the loved ones who are suffering today, please know that you are in our prayers and thoughts tonight.

I ask for a brief moment of silence.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order tonight.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening, joined by my colleagues, to honor and pay respect and tribute to the contributions of the Latino and Hispanic soldiers who served so valiantly during World War II.

World War II was a major turning point for the United States Latinos, changing the world views of an entire generation. Approximately half a million Hispanics served in the Armed Forces during World War II. Unfortunately, many Latino soldiers who returned home found the same discrimination they had left behind, a system that held Latinos to a lower status.

Latinos and Latinas who worked in military installations and in other jobs previously denied them also questioned the status quo.

Understanding the importance of getting an education to better adapt after their tour of duty, many veterans used the GI bill to earn college degrees. In the years following World War II, those

men and women made astonishing civil rights advancements for their people through school desegregation, in voting rights, and in basic civil rights.

Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the American GI Forum founded by Dr. Hector Garcia of Corpus Christi in 1948 to advocate for veterans' rights.

Another organization that came out of the World War II generation of Latinos was the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund in 1968. This came about after Mexican American World War II veterans, including people such as Pete Tijerina; Gregory Luna, a Senator from Texas; Ed Idar and Albert Armendariz, among others, found that their clients, mostly low-income Mexican Americans, were being denied justice in the legal system.

For Puerto Ricans, World War II brought new questions in which the United States came to appreciate Puerto Rico's military importance in the Caribbean. The United States maintained that it needed to keep its sovereign power over the islands for reasons of national security, and World War II strengthened that position. However, over 53,000 Puerto Ricans served within the United States military with dignity. Soldiers from the island, serving in the 65th Infantry Regiment, participated in combat in the European theater in Germany and central Europe.

World War II was also the first conflict in which women other than nurses were allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces. However, when the United States entered World War II, Puerto Rican nurses volunteered for service, but were not accepted into the Army or the Navy Nurse Corps, and it was not until 1944 that the Army Nurse Corps decided to activate and recruit Puerto Rican nurses so the Army hospitals would not have to deal with language barriers.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, the stories of these men and women have been virtually untold either in the mass media or in the scholarly writings, and that is why my colleagues and I are here this evening to begin sharing the stories of the Hispanic and Latino World War II veterans, so all Americans can learn about and appreciate their contributions.

Within our own body of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus I am proud to honor, to recognize the service of four of our own who have served the military with dignity: Chairman SILVESTRE REYES, Chairman SOLOMON ORTIZ, the Honorable JOHN SALAZAR, and the honorable chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, JOE BACA.

Chairman JOE BACA, who represents the 43rd District of California, was drafted in 1966 and served in the Army as a paratrooper with both the 101st and the 82nd Airborne Divisions from 1966 through 1968.

I want to take this opportunity to yield to our chairman, and I thank him for being here tonight.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank our Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on Veterans Affairs for addressing this important issue of those men and women who served during World War II, and that is our chairman, Ciro Rodriguez. It is important that people realize the contributions of many of our Hispanics who served during that period of time, that we are visible and that we were not invisible during that period of time and that we made many contributions to this country during that period of time.

So I rise today in honor of the over 500,000 Hispanics who bravely served our country during World War II with honor and with integrity and were proud to wear the uniform. And for those of us who wore that uniform, men and women who were willing to ultimately sacrifice for this country, it is an honor for us and our family members when we put on that uniform and fight for this country.

Madam Speaker, 65,000 Puerto Ricans also served during that period of time. Thirteen Medals of Honor were given out, 11 were Mexican American, two were Puerto Ricans. So when you can look at the contributions of these individuals and many others, as a veteran, I am proud of our heritage and our long history of continuing to fight for this country.

More Hispanics fought for this country's freedom and security during World War II, and I state that is an important fact to understand, and it is important that it be included in part of our history of the contributions that Hispanics have made. More Hispanics than any other minority group have served this country with distinction.

Just one example is Company E of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Texas Infantry Division. This company was made up entirely of Hispanics, bilingual individuals who were willing to serve for this country. After 361 days of combat in Italy and France, the 141st Infantry Regiment sustained 1,126 casualties, 5,000 wounded and more than 500 missing in action.

In recognizing their extended service and valor, the members of the 141st were awarded three Medals of Honor, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legions of Merit, 492 Silver Stars, 11 Soldier's Medals, and 1,685 Bronze Stars. We were, and are, visible and participated and gave our lives during World War II. And that is an important fact for many of our children and others to know the contributions of many of our men and women who served us, who sacrificed for this country.

Hispanic women also made a huge contribution to the American war effort. Madam Speaker, 200 Puertoriquenas served during the Women's Army Corps, which was one of the first service opportunities for women in American history.

□ 2230

Bilingual Hispanic women also worked in important positions within