

up with, say, 10 safe and effective compounds. The best one, after 8 more years of clinical trials, might receive FDA approval. And then, and only then can they begin to bring this medication to market.

This research is costly, but vitally important. At every step along the process the research might prove to be noneffective, and the process would have to start over again. It is not easy; it is not cheap. These companies spend more money on research and development than any other industry.

I often point out that we in the United States fail to invest sufficiently for research and development in every sector of our economy, with the possible exception of pharmaceuticals.

□ 1530

Let us not punish these companies for their very success and research that will be to the possible benefit of nearly every person in America.

While we must ensure that all Americans get the full benefit of that research, and that is part of what today's legislation was about, it is essential that we do everything in Congress we can to ensure that America maintains its innovative edge and continues to grow as a leader in research and development.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLEIN of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TIAHRT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Speaker of the House, Speaker NANCY PELOSI; our leader, STENY HOYER; our whip, JIM CLYBURN; our chair, RAHM EMANUEL; and our vice chair, JOHN LARSON, for allowing us this time to commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Mr. Speaker, like Dr. King, I love America. I love the ideals expressed in

the Declaration of Independence, all persons are created equal; and the Pledge of Allegiance, liberty and justice for all; and the Constitution, government of the people, by the people, for the people.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I stand here in the well of the United States House of Representatives as a proud American, and I pay tribute to a great and noble American, Dr. Martin Luther King.

Dr. King was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929, at a time when some Americans could buy a hat but they couldn't try it on; at a time when some Americans had to step off the sidewalk so that other Americans might pass; at a time when of the people, by the people, for the people did not include all of the people; at a time when liberty and justice for all did not include all; at a time when all persons are created equal, but some people were more equal than others.

So I thank God for Dr. Martin Luther King, because he refused to use the back door. He refused to sit in the balcony. He refused to drink from a colored water fountain. He refused to allow his name to be "Boy." He was a man among men.

He stood up for the least, the last and the lost. He stood for the least, those who were born into a legacy of poverty; the last, those who were the last hired and the first fired; the lost, those who were lost in poverty in a land of plenty.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. King and the many others who made it possible for me to be here. Because, you see, they fought for and secured the Voting Rights Act. Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act, we had five African Americans in Congress. This includes the House and the Senate. Now we have 43. We had four Hispanic Members of Congress. Now we have 30. We had three Asian Americans in Congress. Now we have nine.

Because of Dr. King and others, Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL has Ways and Means; he is the Chair of Ways and Means. Because of Dr. King and so many other countless faces, Homeland Security is securely in the hands of Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON. Because of Dr. King and those who fought for civil rights, Intelligence is intelligently chaired by Congressman SILVESTRE REYES, and the Judiciary Committee is in the hands of Congressman JOHN CONYERS.

Because of Dr. King and the great sacrifices that were made by the civil rights workers, women have made great strides, because the House is not only a woman's place, it is a place where a woman can be speaker. Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI is the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

So I thank God for Dr. King. I thank God that he was born, and I understand that had he been born in Europe, he could have been Pope. Had he been born Muslim in the Middle East, he could have been a prophet. In another

time, he could have been President. I thank God that he was born when he was, however, because had he not been born when he was, I would not be in the United States House of Representatives.

Thank God for Dr. Martin Luther King.

THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I appreciate the leadership, our House Republican leadership designating the time for us to be able to use today. We want to continue our discussion with the American people and put the emphasis on what has happened since we gaveled in for the 110th session of Congress.

It is going to be such an interesting Congress, we know that. There is a lot of work to do, and our constituents are depending on us to get the job done for them. We all look forward to that. We are excited about representing our constituents.

What we are not real excited about are some of the things that the majority has pushed forward and the way in which they have gone about it this week. What was to be openness, what was to be transparency, has devolved into a Rules Committee not being put into place, our regular order not being recognized, bills not going to committees, opportunities to amend those bills not being given, and it has made for quite an interesting 54 hours and 48 minutes as of this morning.

I am joined by a couple of my colleagues, and they are going to give some of their thoughts. I would like to recognize first, Mr. DAVIS from Tennessee, who is new to the House this year. He is a Member of the freshman class. He served in the Tennessee General Assembly, and we are so delighted that he did.

When I was in the State Senate in Tennessee, he served in the State House, and he has given to the process of open government, and to government reform and was a leader on those issues in this State.

At this time I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS), for some comments.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Congresswoman BLACKBURN, thank you for your leadership, your friendship through down through the years. You have been a great friend of mine in the State General Assembly, and it is an honor to be on this distinguished floor with you tonight.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Good to share the floor with you.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. It is a great opportunity. As we get ready to conclude this second week of the 110th Congress, I look back over this time, and I think of the elections. We look

back at the elections that took place, and I think the American people voted for change. I think there has been a change, as the majority changed, but I am not sure it is the change that the American people voted for.

I tell you what I heard back in my district about change: Government had gotten too big. I think the American people voted for change to make sure that we brought some responsibility to the government.

If I look back over what has taken place in the last 2 weeks, we are not going towards the change the American people voted for; we are going just the opposite. I don't think the American people are going to be happy with that type of change.

One of my roles in life as a Tennessee State representative was to work with the Democratic majority in Nashville to open up government. When I first went in to the Tennessee legislature, I went in and I found out that you could go on to the House floor, in the committee system, the subcommittees, and take votes, and those votes were not even counted. That is just wrong.

I thought it is going to be nice and refreshing to go to Washington, where we have an open process, and we have a party that has just taken over the majority, and they tell us, it is going to be even better than it was.

When I look back at Tennessee, you could cast a vote in committee or subcommittee, and you could tell the speaker, Mr. Speaker, don't worry about me, I am with you. Then you could go back to your home district and say, don't worry about me, I am with you, and be talking about two different things.

I was hoping it was going to be different as I came to Washington. It was, until last week.

Last week, one of our first votes on the House floor was to close the House of Representatives and the Rules Committee to the American people. That is not openness. That is not transparency. That is just wrong. That is exactly where we have come to in this House of Representatives. We have come to a situation where Rules Committee Members can go in and decide on the American people's business and not have their votes counted. That is not right.

Then we look at some of the other things we have voted for on the House floor. Again, as we recall, the American people voted for change, and in my district, the first district, the beautiful mountains of east Tennessee, I think they were telling me, and I think as we saw change coming across the United States, they wanted the government to be more responsible.

What I found the first week we are here, we actually removed the rule that took a three-fifths majority to increase taxes, and we lowered that threshold in the majority rule down to a simple majority.

Now, Mrs. BLACKBURN, I don't know about you, but I certainly believe it

will be much easier to raise taxes. I don't believe that rule would have been changed had they not have foreseen a tax increase coming down the road.

That is not what the people of Tennessee want, I can tell you that. I think what it leads to is bigger government, bigger bureaucracies, somebody has to pay. Money comes from the people, and it comes from small business owners. It comes from people that are willing to work hard.

Another vote we have taken in the first two weeks, well, I don't know exactly where the first 100 hours starts or when it stops, but in the first 2 weeks, we passed a bill on this floor, without my vote, that threatens the life of the unborn.

I think we have done it under some deception, because if you look at embryonic stem cells, they have been researched for a number of years; it was not illegal. The bill that was passed on this House floor did not change that law. It was about taxpayer funding of destruction of human life. I don't think that is what the people of the First Congressional District wanted. I don't think that is the change the American people wanted.

Another bill we dealt with was a bill that would put our national security under control of the United Nations. I certainly don't believe that is what the people of the First Congressional District or the people of America wanted. We are a sovereign Nation, we should be able to protect ourselves without the approval of the U.N.

In my opinion, bigger government is not always the answer. At times, oftentimes, it is the problem.

What I find as I talk to real people back in my district and what I believe deeply in my soul is that the answers to American problems come from our families; they come from our State legislatures, our local governments, our business owners. Big government in Washington is not always the answer. Oftentimes it is the problem.

With that, I yield back and welcome your comments.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee. I welcome his comments. He is on target, Mr. Speaker, and just as he always has been in the General Assembly of Tennessee. Government is not the solution to many problems. Government many times itself causes the problem.

We all know that when you have a situation out there that if you put government into that mix to solve that problem, you don't get a private sector or a not-for-profit solution to that problem. You get a taxpayer-funded bureaucracy that is guaranteed to grow, guaranteed to grow, because they never go back to dollar one to build that budget. They go back to what is called baseline budgeting. Baseline budgeting says you take what you had last year and you build on it.

I tell you what, one of my constituents the other day, they were talking about this, compounding, and

compounding interest in order to build a retirement nest egg, and what a wonderful concept compounding interest is.

It came to mind, as he said, you know, that is what the liberals have been doing with that Federal budget. It is compounded spending, because every year you take what you had and you add to it, and you grow it a little more and spending always grows.

□ 1545

As the gentleman from Tennessee said, in their PAYGO rules, what they have done is make it easier to raise taxes without you knowing about it, without the American people knowing about it.

So the 110th Congress is going to be the hang-on-to-your-wallet Congress, because it is coming at you. They are after your wallet, and they are going to take more and more of your wallet, your money that you have earned, and they are going to give it to the government, to the bureaucrats, to solve your problems in a way you don't want. So hang on, it is coming.

But in order to get some help, we have got some great Members here on our side of the aisle who are going to be fighting for the American people every single step of the way. One of those great Members is the former lieutenant governor from the State of Oklahoma, and she joins us this year as a member of the freshman class. She has been such a stalwart for conservative ideas and for helping Oklahoma set its course toward a State that is dynamic, even developed some pretty good football players along the way, and we are absolutely delighted to have the gentlewoman from Oklahoma join us and share her thoughts on her first couple of weeks here in Washington.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that very kind introduction. It is a pleasure to be here with you today.

As a newly elected Member of Congress, I am very humbled by the opportunity to be able to serve in this esteemed body and to represent the people of Oklahoma. I have had the great opportunity to serve as a member of the Oklahoma legislature and, as the gentlewoman mentioned, as the lieutenant governor of Oklahoma for the past 12 years until I took this position. I have had the opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner with both sides of the aisle. In fact, when I was in the legislature and as lieutenant governor, there were many times that my Democrat colleagues helped me on various piece of legislation, even served as the author of some of the reform efforts that I led in our State. And I believe that many of those that ran for office this year ran on a platform of coming to Washington, coming to Congress and solving problems and making things happen and working on issues that we could find consensus on and doing good things for the people of America. And we also campaigned on platforms of transparency and openness and letting

the people of our States' voices be heard here in Washington, D.C.

I have to tell you that I think this past week, in the very short time that I have been a Member of this body, that we have missed some real opportunities here in Congress, and that is to let all the Members' voices be heard, all the voices of the people that we each represent, and to let the many talents and the knowledge and the expertise and life experiences that are shared among this body be allowed to participate in the process.

I have to be honest that after having the opportunity to be sworn in this past week and also participating in a historic moment of seeing our first woman speaker selected and elected as the leader of this body, I have been disappointed. I have been disappointed that many of our Republican Members have been excluded. Well, I guess you could say all of them have been excluded from many of the processes of this House and their voices were not heard.

I heard a debate or discussion a moment ago between our two leaders about our committee meetings and organizational meetings and that there have been a few organizational meetings held so far; yet, I ask if there had been any Members who had attended on our party's side any organizational meetings and couldn't find anyone yet who has been invited to attend one. And I know, as a freshman member, I haven't been invited to attend any of our organizational meetings yet.

Yet, I also heard the leader of the other side say that they are hopeful that we can all work together. I guess I just have a hard time understanding how you can work together when you don't allow amendments, discussion, when you don't allow the minority party's voice to be heard during a crucial time at the beginning of an opening session of Congress, especially when there are so many critical issues that are important to the American people being discussed. And, frankly, I think my years of experience in Oklahoma, 16 years in office, and along with the expertise of all the other Members represented in this body have a lot to contribute. And I felt like I was slighted of that opportunity, to not be able to contribute like the minority party should have been.

So I guess I just say that the public has asked us to have transparency, to have openness in government. I know I heard Speaker PELOSI say in her opening statements that she wanted three things: accountability, openness, and honesty. And I hope that as we move forward next week that all Members of this body will be allowed to have those things; that we will be allowed to have openness in our discussion, that we can get back to a routine, a process to where voices are heard in committees, where legislation is discussed, where amendments can be made to, where we will be honest with the American people about what is really transpiring in

this body and how we are going to administer this body, and that we will be fair and respectful and professional in how we operate in this Congress.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentlewoman from Oklahoma, and I thank her for the contribution and the insight that she is bringing.

One of the things that we have to realize with legislation that we pass is it is a partnership effort, whether it is the local, the State, and the Federal levels working together. And her expertise, with 16 years of State government, as a legislator, as a lieutenant governor, helping the State chart a new way forward into the 21st century, that is so vital to the work that we do to be certain that we don't gather in the power and keep it here in Washington; that we send it to the States.

And the gentlewoman speaks so eloquently of missed opportunities, of wanting to bring that expertise to bear, not only for the benefit of her constituents, but for the benefit of all Americans, to be certain that we respect this Nation, we respect this House, and that we respect the sovereignty which each and every one of us hold so very, very dear.

You know, my colleagues have mentioned some of the things that have taken place this week. And as I said at the outset, the Democrats brought forward what would be their 100-hour agenda, and they have talked about the things that they had wanted to pass. And we have heard some in the 5-minute and 1-minute presentations and the speeches on the floor that we have got some creative clock keeping going on around these parts. But, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, when I was in school in the 1950s and 1960s, they weren't teaching new math, so I just know how to do it the old way. And going by the old clock, it is 54 hours, 48 minutes, as of the time we gavelled in this morning, that had passed off the clock.

Now, the American people may be interested to know some of the things that have transpired in this 54 hours, 48 minutes. As I said, this is kind of the hang-on-to-your-wallet Congress, because it is expensive. And what we are seeing that they are doing in the first half of this 100 hours is passing legislation that our small businesses have told us, that the associations that work with many of these small businesses, the chambers, the independent business organizations have said would be crippling to businesses that create three out of every four new jobs in this country.

Now, you know, somebody may say, well, that doesn't sound that bad. You know what? When you go back to 2003 and you look at the fact that we have had nearly 7 million new jobs created since 2003, that is a lot of jobs. When you look at the fact that personal wages have increased over 9 percent in the past couple of years, that is a lot of money in the take-home paycheck. Then you see it makes a difference. Creating jobs, creating better jobs, cre-

ating 21st century jobs is so vitally important to have a robust economy that is going to work. And the body, the majority chose to pass a minimum wage bill that was an unfunded mandate on small business.

Now, I didn't come up with the total of what this is going to cost small business. I went to the Congressional Budget Office. The Congressional Budget Office says it is going to be \$5 billion to \$7 billion in unfunded mandates on small businesses to meet this one piece of legislation alone.

Now, I tell you, my constituents in Tennessee's Seventh District aren't willing to fork over another \$5 billion to \$7 billion out of their paychecks. They want first right of refusal on their paychecks. They don't want the Federal Government getting first right of refusal on their paychecks. The Federal Government takes too much as it is. And we all know government doesn't have a revenue problem. Goodness gracious, government has brought in more revenue than ever before in the past couple of years, and it happened because of tax reductions. Government has a spending problem, and it has a spending problem because of programs that have been put in place from the new deal, put in place from the Lyndon Johnson years, programs that have grown and grown and grown and have never been reduced. That is why we have a spending problem. And I have said many years, the bureaucracy in this town is a monument to the Democrats. They are the ones that built it through the 1940s, through the 1950s, through the 1960s, and it is like that plant in Little Shop of Horrors: Feed me, Seymour. Give me more money. It is what it is going to take to keep it going. So it is an expensive, expensive 54 hours, 48 minutes.

My colleague from Tennessee mentioned a little bit about the tax and spending, and I pulled an article out of the Wall Street Journal. There again, not the opinion of me, but the opinion of some of those that are watching this process. And he spoke a little bit about making it easier to raise taxes and the provision that was adjusted in the rules package. And I think this is so important for our constituents to know.

We have had a rule went into place in 1994 with Speaker Gingrich that provided that a three-fifths majority of the House was required to raise taxes. Well, our friends, our colleagues across the aisle have decided to put a loophole that you could drop that or waive that rule with a simple majority. That is very unfortunate. Very unfortunate. And it is disappointing.

The way we are going to reduce the size of government is to reduce the size of spending. And as my colleagues have said, that is what the American people want. Government is too big, too bureaucratic, too arrogant and too unresponsive. We saw it in Katrina. We see it any time we try to get through to a Federal agency and dial a number and

get put on hold and told to punch another number and then told to select a language we want to hear it in. Those are the problems that frustrate every single one of us, and the way we address it is to reduce what government has to spend. As I said, crippling small businesses with the legislation that they have passed, making it easier to raise taxes.

Also the majority party refused to acknowledge morally sound proven life-saving stem cell treatments that are going to spend your tax dollars. They are going to spend your tax dollars. American people, I hope you hear this one. They are going to spend your tax dollars on ethically controversial research that has never produced results. That is in our stem cell legislation. And then today we have had a vote on the Medicare part D. They are voting to revamp a very successful, highly popular Medicare part D, has over a 75 percent approval rating, and they have voted to revamp that.

And in the midst of all of this, we have Tunagate. And the Speaker had I understand has retracted her comments or has said that she is going to have this provision addressed. But we had the Del Monte Corporation that owns StarKist Tuna involved in this, and it seems that American Samoa is where they have their plant. And, Mr. Speaker, it was brought to our attention that they were exempted from the minimum wage law.

□ 1600

We do hope that that is addressed. But I have pulled a sheet, again, not my thoughts but this is coming out of Congress Daily, and I just wanted to read a comment that was in the article discussing this employer from the Speaker's district with the work that they do over in American Samoa with tuna. And they are talking about the competitiveness of the tuna industry and why they don't need a raise in the minimum wage.

And it was so very interesting to me because this company and this delegate is saying, well, we don't want the minimum wage raised because it would hurt our competitiveness. Now, I guess, Mr. Speaker that it is fine for Del Monte Corporation or for American Samoa to say that but it is not fine for my small business owners in the Seventh District of Tennessee to say that. It is not fine for small business owners around the country to say that. But I guess the majority thinks it is fine to vote for \$5 billion to \$7 billion, with a "b," worth of unfunded mandates on small businesses.

Now, these were the comments from the delegate from American Samoa today regarding the minimum wage, and I am quoting from Congress Daily: "The truth is the global tuna industry is so competitive that it is no longer possible for the Federal Government to demand mainland minimum wage rates for American Samoa without causing the collapse of our economy and mak-

ing us welfare wards of the Federal Government."

Mr. Speaker, every single business we have in this country is subject to global competition. It does not matter if we are in hardwoods or if we are in softwoods. If we are in hardwoods and producing furniture, we have got global competition. If we are in softwoods and we are producing pulp, we have got global competition. If we are in California growing tomatoes, we have got global competition. If we are a citrus producer and farmer in Florida, we have got global competition. If we are a shrimp farmer in Mississippi, we have got global competition.

Mr. Speaker, if it is good for American Samoa not to have a minimum wage, maybe we need to think about what we are doing to other small businesses and small business manufacturers. Do we really, really, really want to pass \$5 billion to \$7 billion worth of unfunded mandates on the producers of our Nation's jobs, three out of every four jobs, 7 million new jobs in the past couple of years? Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that that is a failed policy. It is a failed policy.

What we need to be doing is continuing to do what the Republicans as a majority did in this House, which was looking after the American taxpayers' pocket and making certain that they kept more of that paycheck at the end of the month; making certain that small businesses enjoyed tax relief, increased expensing, increased opportunities for depreciation; making certain that they had the ability to grow those small businesses and invest in those small businesses because that, Mr. Speaker, is how you grow an economy and that is how you grow jobs.

And as I said earlier, we have seen it play out, that when you reduce those taxes, when you leave that money with the taxpayer, they reinvest it, they grow those jobs, and guess what. The Federal Government ends up with more revenues. We had record years in 2005 and 2006 in Federal Government revenues, and it happened because of good tax policy that left more money with the taxpayer.

I mentioned also that the Democrats had refused to acknowledge morally sound, proven, lifesaving stem cell treatments and they are wanting to use your tax dollars on controversial treatments.

At this time I would like to yield to Dr. WELDON, the gentleman from Florida, who is, indeed, one of our foremost authorities on this issue. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I commend her for calling this Special Order.

We have concluded now the first complete week under the Democrat majority rule, and I think it is worth talking about what their accomplishments have been. And I am very glad you brought up the issue of stem cells.

I am a physician, as you pointed out. I practiced medicine for 15 years before

coming to the House. Indeed, I still see patients. Internal medicine. Many of my patients had Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease, the diseases that these folks claim they are going to cure with embryonic stem cells.

And to me I think it is really very unfortunate what they have been doing. It is really creating what I feel is false hope. Indeed, it is a deception to tell people that embryonic stem cells have that kind of potential.

And the reason I say that is embryonic stem cells have never been shown to be safe in animal studies. They have never really been studied in humans, whereas adult stem cells and umbilical cord blood stem cells have not only been shown to be safe in clinical therapeutics, but they have also been tested not only in animals and shown to be safe, but they have been given to human beings and shown to be effective and to work; whereas embryonic stem cells have a chronic problem, you might say. They form tumors, a specific type of tumor called the teratoma, in every animal study in which they have been used. And before embryonic stem cells could ever be used in any clinical application whatsoever, they have to first be shown to be safe. And for them to be shown to be safe, somebody has to turn off this property that they have to form tumors. And yet we saw person after person parading down to the floor saying these embryonic stem cells are going to cure this and cure this and cure that. And lo and behold, it is quite possible they will cure absolutely nothing.

Indeed, what is very, very interesting, and this just came out this past week, the week that the Democrats, in my opinion, are putting this deception forward on the American people, is it has been shown that amniotic fluid is filled with stem cells that have all of the properties of embryonic stem cells. They can do all the things and they behave just like embryonic stem cells, but they do not form tumors. And, of course, these cells are plentiful. They are noncontroversial. You don't have to kill a human embryo, which is what you have to do to get embryonic stem cells. You have to kill a human life. You have to kill a human embryo at its earliest stages to get those stem cells out, whereas amniotic fluid-derived stem cells behave just like the embryonic stem cells. They do all the things the embryonic stem cells do, but they don't form tumors. So they have tremendous potential application in clinical therapeutics.

So to me it was unfortunate, the deceptive messaging that went out from this body. And, indeed, it seemed to me like the bulk of the American press corps buys it hook, line, and sinker that these cures are around the corner. But in reality science is moving to a place where embryonic stem cells are not going to be used.

And the other thing is they have been studied for 25 years. There were many people who came to the floor and

said this research is just beginning. The Journal of Science had a cover story about 6 months ago on embryonic stem cells. "Twenty-Five Years of Study" was the cover. It was not 8 years. It is not a new field of study. It is actually an old field of study, and it is a field of study that, in my opinion, may yield knowledge and you may be able to write a Ph.D. thesis based on the material that you discover or learn from embryonic stem cells.

And, of course, we are funding it. We are funding it through the NIH right now. We are increasing funding each year, embryonic stem cell research, on the cell lines that exist at the NIH. And really all this study did was just to prove the destruction of more embryos, and that is really what the bill is all about. And this is a critical line in the sand, you might say, that our Nation's research establishment is moving across. We are now going to say that it is okay to take these forms of human life and exploit them in the lab, destroy them for therapeutic purposes, and we have never gone down that path before.

And that is not where it will end. They are saying now it is the "excess embryos" from the fertility clinics. They will come back next and say, well, there really wasn't that many available in those clinics and we really need to create human embryos for research purposes and we need to specifically create them through a process called cloning. They want to do human cloning. That is creating human life through the process of cloning for their "research," and this is what they always do in all the arguments, saying what it will cure.

So before I yield back, I just want to say they were deceptive not just in their stem cell arguments. You were talking about taxes when I came to the floor. To me it was so ironic, or deceptive, almost like a culture of deception, in my opinion. They passed PAYGO and said no more are we going to pay for things if we don't have the funds to do it, and then the next day they waived PAYGO on their homeland security bill. I mean they get up and they say they are going to do all these things, and the very next day they waived that rule requirement in their homeland security bill. Furthermore, they had absolutely no explanation of how we were going to fund the provisions in their bill.

The Washington Post, a liberal Democrat newspaper, speculated that the cargo-screening requirements that they put in that bill, which the industry says is unnecessary, could end up costing our economy hundreds of billions of dollars. That is the Washington Post. An anti-Republican newspaper said that. They put that in there, and they have no explanation of how they are going to pay for it.

And, of course, I guess the ultimate irony was all the talk about doing away with earmarks and then they pass a minimum wage bill through the

House that has a special earmark that was placed in there by somebody that benefited a company in Speaker PELOSI's congressional district, which, to me, is absolutely unbelievable.

But, anyway, I have covered a lot of territory. I really came to talk about stem cells, and I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

And if you will yield for a question, I want to be certain that I understood a couple of the comments that you made pertaining to stem cells and pertaining to the research because you have been such a leader on this. And I think we both would commend Dr. BURGESS, the gentleman from Texas, who crafted our motion to recommit yesterday and worked diligently on that to be certain that cloning could not possibly take place.

But I want to be certain that we are clear on this and my constituents are clear on what you were saying because finding answers to some of the debilitating illnesses that many of our family members and friends have is important to each and every one of us and it is something that we are committed to.

And the gentleman has practiced medicine for so many years. I have spent many volunteer hours working on different boards, not for profits, for health care associations, whether it is the Arthritis Foundation or the Lung Association or the Cancer Society, and all of them are interested in this issue.

But I want to be certain that I understood you correctly, that according to the Journal of Science, they have documented 25 years' worth of research that has been done on different types of stem cell research and stem cell therapies and that much of this is taking place at the NIH and that we are, indeed, funding much of that research at the NIH. And I think that is important for people to understand.

And I will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Well, you are absolutely right. Adult stem cell research in humans has been funded for about 25, maybe even 30 years. Embryonic stem cell research in the mouse began about 25 years ago.

□ 1615

In the mid-1990s, the House and Senate passed and President Clinton signed into law a provision that said no Federal funds would go to any research that involved the destruction of a human embryo.

Shortly after that a doctor by the name of Jamie Thompson, I think it is, at the University of Wisconsin was successful in extracting embryonic stem cells from a human embryo. People had been doing that in the mouse, but I guess nobody had either the technique or the hutzpah, as my Jewish friends like to say, to actually destroy a human embryo in his lab. But he did that. He successfully isolated the human embryonic stem cell. And then researchers wanted to get Federal

funding. This has always been about Federal funding.

We don't have a law restricting embryonic research. People can do it. I think a lot of it is unethical, but there is no law barring it. This is all about getting the government to fund it.

Under the Clinton policy, because we had a law in place saying you can't get funding if you are destroying an embryo, what the Clinton people did is they destroyed the embryos in an outside lab, and then sent the embryonic stem cells over to the NIH and they funded the research. I and several other Members wrote the Clinton administration a letter saying you may not be violating the letter of the law, but you are certainly violating the spirit of the law. That is what President Bush inherited in 2000 when he became President of the United States.

What President Bush said, which I think is a reasonable thing, all of these embryos have been destroyed and all of these cell lines are being studied at the NIH. We don't want to throw them away. The embryos have been destroyed, but we don't want to keep destroying embryos, so we will continue to fund research on these embryos, we just won't destroy any more embryos. That is really what this debate has been about. The people on the other side of the debate have been saying this has so much incredible promise so we have to fund it. Even though, by the way, the biotech industry won't fund it; venture capitalists won't fund it. We want Uncle Sam and taxpayers to fund it, 50 percent of whom are pro-life and are opposed to this kind of research, because it "has so much promise," quote/unquote, is what they have been arguing.

When you actually look at the data, it really doesn't bear up to scrutiny. That is the fundamental point of my argument. If you look at the science, the science shows a lot of potential with adult stem cells, cord blood stem cells, and now these new amniotic fluid derived stem cells. The embryonic stem cells form tumors. Their potential application to therapeutics, I think, is very small, remote, unlikely. You have to turn off their ability to form tumors before they can be used.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I appreciate the gentleman's comments. This is something that has been funded here. There is funding that is there for the adult stem cell lines, the cord blood lines, and the amniotic fluid lines with the research that was presented last week from the scientists and researchers from Wake Forest and Harvard that are all proven. They are proven with results.

I thank the gentleman for the clarification on that and for the excellent work that he does for this body in making certain that the deception is peeled away and people realize where the commitment of the Republicans, the minority in Congress, lie in being certain that we protect the American taxpayers and we protect the morals

and values on which our Nation stands. I thank the gentleman.

Now I want to talk about the Medicare vote that took place today. There is a saying when I was growing up, Mr. Speaker, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

This is a program our seniors will tell us over 75 percent are fine with this. If any of my colleagues were to say I get 75 percent of the vote when I go to the polls, that would be a landslide of monumental, monumental proportions.

But they want to take this program and change it for the sake of changing it. They have been asked by the American Legion not to do this, by the ALS Association not to do this. Epilepsy, don't change this, it is working. It is working.

The thing that I thought was so unfortunate was with our veterans and changing the pricing and price controls going into place, we have to realize the VA system is very different from the Medicare system. The VA system, it is comparing apples and oranges. The VA system is a direct provision of those health care services. Medicare Part D is an insurance plan, and we know that the prices come down on that. Some States have plans that are under \$20 a month. The plan is about \$200 billion less than was estimated when it first went into place.

So it is so interesting that the Democrats decided they wanted to change this plan. Let me just read some of the quotes from some of the groups that oppose the price controls that were put in place today. Groups that oppose, and I have heard estimates as high as \$750 million extra that it is going to cost VA on this plan. Let me read the comments from some of these groups.

The American Legion, a group everybody knows, it is a veterans service organization, has nearly 3 million members and yesterday they sent out a letter opposing H.R. 4 asking for a "no" vote saying, "It is not in the best interest of America's veterans and their families."

Again quoting, "Every time the Federal Government has enacted pharmaceutical price control legislation, the Department of Veterans Affairs experiences significant increases in its pharmaceutical cost as an unintended consequence."

Mr. Speaker, those are not my words, those are the words of the American Legion on behalf of the 3 million veterans they represent asking that this not be done.

So in addition to passing \$5 to \$7 billion of unfunded mandates on to the Nation's small businesses, in addition to passing hundreds of billions of dollars worth of extra cost to our shippers because of the homeland security provisions, you also are going to put nearly three-quarters of a billion of extra cost onto the Veterans Administration health services.

I tell you what, as I said, Mr. Speaker, this is hang-onto-your-wallet Congress because in the first 54 hours and

48 minutes that is where we have gotten. It is a lot of money, and the tote board just seems to be adding right on up.

The ALS Association, Lou Gehrig's disease, voiced strong opposition to H.R. 4 saying, "Legislation that authorizes the Federal Government to negotiate Medicare prescription drug prices will significantly limit the ability of people with ALS to access the drugs they need, and will seriously jeopardize the future development of treatments for the disease." Those are not my words, that is the ALS Association in their opposition to the legislation that this body passed.

Epilepsy Foundation, and I am quoting from their letter, "Access to the right medications for epilepsy can make the difference between living in the community, being employed, and leading a healthy and productive life. The consequences of denying the appropriate medication for an individual with epilepsy can be life threatening and can include injury, emergency room visits, hospitalization or other types of costly medical interventions."

Mr. Speaker, that is the Epilepsy Foundation asking that the bill the majority passed today, H.R. 4, not pass because of the implications for those who suffer with epilepsy in securing the medications that they need.

Now here is the National Alliance for Mental Illness. They have had reservations and concerns about this legislation. I am quoting from their letter, "NAMI is extremely concerned that placing this new legal mandate on the secretary would directly result in loss of the all or substantially-all guidance in the six protected classes and therefore poses a significant risk to Medicare beneficiaries with mental illness."

Mr. Speaker, these again are not my words. They are concerns that have been expressed. They have been expressed by individuals that were concerned about what they saw happening in the first 100 hours in this administration.

What people thought they were going to see was transparency. They thought they were going to see openness. They thought they were going to see a willingness to step towards bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that what we have seen is missed opportunities. We have seen a closed process. The Rules Committee has not functioned. Legislation has gone straight to the floor. No debate in committee. No open process, and that has been unfortunate for the people of this Nation.

As I close, I will once again say that one of the things that does concern us is the impact on the American taxpayer and figuring out who is going to pay for this. Mr. Speaker, it does appear, it absolutely does appear that it is going to be the American taxpayer that is going to see government grow, government expand and government is going to continue to expand in the 110th Congress.

THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am always delighted to have the opportunity to follow my distinguished colleague from Tennessee. She has a breadth of assessment that provides insight, but I respectfully disagree with much of the commentary that has been spoken to in the last hour.

That challenge that the American people gave to us on November 7, 2006, was to go in a new direction. It was to fix the broken and improve the conditions of livelihood and life for the American public.

So I thank Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HOYER, Majority Whip CLYBURN and Chairman EMANUEL and Vice Chairman Larson for recognizing that for almost 4 years large populations of individuals, your parents, your grandparents, have languished in the confusion of Medicare Part D, when they have fallen, sunken into a hole, and the enormous cost has overtaken them.

The veterans know that we have stood fast on their behalf. Therefore, any disparity, disparate treatment to our veterans will be immediately fixed.

I know that it was the Democrats who fought consistently to ensure that veterans hospitals were not closed by promoting, if you will, the veterans health care bill that was passed in order to give the veterans' hospitals more money.

So I am grateful of this democracy. And I came to the floor to cite the leadership of a giant of an American whom we will honor on Monday. This Congress in a Special Order that I will lead will honor him again on Tuesday evening, January 16, for Members to join us in commemorating and celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King.

□ 1630

I raise his name in the context of my good friend from Tennessee, because his whole legacy, although not admired during the time he was working, was to try and help America, to promote America's conscience.

I am reminded of his letter from a Birmingham jail, and I encourage my colleagues to join us in the third hour on Tuesday, the 16th, when he was in essence thrown into jail for his work of advocacy in Birmingham. Bull Connor ruled, dogs and hoses were used to attack human beings, and the clergy of America wrote and asked why this pastor had gone to Birmingham to be disruptive.

This is both eloquent, but biblically grounded, but really secularly teaching words that he said. He said, "I am taking the time to write this letter to you because I knew it was important. Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I