

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona 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 gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

THE REVEREND JERRY FALWELL

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor the memory of my constituent and my friend, the late Rev. Jerry Falwell.

Last week, the city of Lynchburg, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the entire country lost one of our dearest sons in the passing of Rev. Falwell. Today Dr. Falwell was laid to rest. I am sad that business here in Washington kept many of us from being able to attend today's services, but since we were unable to attend, we have joined here tonight to pay homage to this great leader.

Dr. Falwell's legacy is one that will not soon be forgotten. He was a man whose strong faith and vision were unshakable. He lived his life trying to strengthen the moral fabric of our great Nation.

In his crusade to strengthen family values, he was a frequent visitor to Washington, DC, he led many people to the Nation's Capital to demand that leaders here strengthen our country's moral foundation.

Jerry lived his life guided by a strong set of values and an unshakable moral compass. He lived by example, embodying the Bible's greatest commandments. He followed the words of Matthew 22 in his daily life: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbors as yourself.

Anyone who ever met Jerry Falwell knew that he took this commandment seriously and chartered his life by it.

One thing is for sure. Whether one was viewed as a friend or foe of Jerry Falwell, he loved them all. This love for the neighbor extended to everyone, even those who wouldn't expect it. I had many times heard Rev. Falwell say, "Love the sinner, hate the sin."

This was more than just a catch phrase. It was a way of life.

Many people have heard of the infamous Supreme Court battle between Jerry Falwell and Larry Flynt. But what few people didn't realize is that Falwell and Flynt actually became friends. I know Jerry did not approve of Mr. Flynt's business, but he separated his thoughts about the man from Flynt's activities.

□ 1730

To most people, Jerry Falwell is a national figure. But I also know him as a local guy who was always giving back to his community. He was a local preacher who worked to serve his congregation and the community. He started his church over 50 years ago in an old bottling factory. That small congregation has grown from 35 to the over-22,000 current members of Thomas Road Baptist Church.

Dr. Falwell, through his church, set in place many ministries to aid the community. In 1959, he established the Elim Home to help men dealing with chemical addictions. This home has transformed the lives of hundreds of men and remains a place to free men of their addictions.

Additionally, Dr. Falwell helped found the Liberty Godparent Foundation. The foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life for unwed mothers and provide a hopeful future for unborn children. The foundation maintains Liberty Godparent Maternity Home, which offers a safe haven for unwed mothers, and Family Services Adoption Agency, which helps place unwanted children in safe and stable homes. The reach of the church has touched many thousands and extends past central Virginia and across the United States.

The list of Jerry Falwell's many ministries and accomplishments is nearly endless. However, many people asked him of what accomplishment he was most proud. Without hesitation he would say, Liberty University. This university, located in my congressional district in Lynchburg, started as a small Baptist college. Today it has grown exponentially and serves over 10,000 students. Washington, DC is filled with Liberty University alumni. I have been pleased to have many Liberty University alumni serve in my office as staff and interns. In fact, L.U. alumni are all over Capitol Hill. I have heard them talk fondly of the education they received at Liberty, and they refer to themselves warmly as "Jerry's kids."

I have frequently been on the campus of Liberty, and they are, in fact, Jerry's kids. He loved those kids as his own. Rev. Falwell was very involved and engaged in university life. He always had time for the students. He was also a fixture at school events. Jerry was especially proud of L.U. athletics and he would, with the students, cheer the Flames on to victory. I have even heard stories of Jerry crowd surfing at

basketball games. Students would transport him from the bottom of the stands to the top.

There is no doubt that Liberty and the alumni that it produces will live on as Jerry Falwell's lasting legacy. These alumni carry with them the strong values and morals that were reinforced through their education at Liberty. The university and its alumni will remain a living testimony of the work and vision of Jerry Falwell.

You cannot talk about Rev. Falwell without also talking about the town that he loved, the city of Lynchburg. Jerry, though a national figure, never left his home in central Virginia. He led his spiritual network out of his offices in Lynchburg. The city of Lynchburg greatly benefited from Rev. Falwell's work. As Falwell's ministries, and especially Liberty University flourished, so did the city. The impact that Jerry had on Lynchburg's economy and culture is undeniable.

When word of Jerry's death came, the city of Lynchburg seemed to take a collective gasp and was filled with shock and sorrow. The loss of Rev. Falwell was a huge loss for Lynchburg. And today I tell the citizens of Lynchburg that the Nation mourns with you.

When I heard of the passing of my good friend, Jerry Falwell, I was deeply saddened. My wife, Mary Ellen, and I had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Falwell for many years. He was a good man and made an undeniable impression on many lives. Two hours after his death was confirmed, an impromptu memorial service brought a standing room only crowd to Thomas Road Baptist Church, a church that holds 6,000 people. Since then, thousands have shown up to pay their respects, and thousands showed up today for his funeral.

While many people mourn the death of Rev. Falwell, no one experiences this loss harder than Jerry's family. Jerry was a devoted family man. He was dedicated to his bride and partner of 49 years, Macel. Together they raised three children. Jerry, Jr., Jonathan and Jeannie, who I have no doubt will build on the great legacy that their father leaves behind. Nothing can compare to the deep personal loss that they are experiencing, and our thoughts and prayers and hearts are with them.

After hearing the sad news of Jerry's death, I was able to call and offer my condolences to Macel. She shared with me how Jerry spent his last day. I don't think she would mind me sharing with you what happened, as I feel it fully embodies the man that Jerry was.

The night before he passed away, Macel and Jerry went out to dinner. As they talked to their waitress, Jerry found out that she attended the local community college. When he asked the young lady why she didn't go to Liberty University, she told him that she had applied and been accepted, but as a private school, it was too expensive. Jerry told her that he would find a way

for her to attend Liberty. The next morning, the morning he passed away, Rev. Falwell lived up to his word and found scholarship money for the young waitress. It was perhaps one of the last things he did before collapsing in his office.

This last act of charity and giving is a perfect example of the man that Jerry Falwell was. Right up till the end of his life, he was working to change lives.

There are many other stories like this one out there of how this extraordinary man touched and changed ordinary lives. Rev. Jerry Falwell was a loving and caring man. He led his life guided by strong convictions. He left an unquestionable impression on our country.

I will greatly miss my friend. I pray for his family and his congregation, and I join the Nation in mourning this great spiritual leader.

Mr. Speaker, at this time it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, sometimes when a man affects the world as much as Jerry Falwell does, there are all kinds of things that are said, both by those who remember him in different ways, and I, today, would like to just point out some basics about Jerry Falwell. I had the privilege of knowing him many years ago, and sometimes I wonder how many of us are in this place because Jerry Falwell lived and did what he did.

But just to recap some of the basics, Mr. Speaker, Jerry Falwell was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, to Helen and Carey Hezekiah Falwell. He married the former Macel Pate on April 12, 1958. He had two sons, Jerry, Jr., Jonathan, and one daughter, Jeannie.

The church that Jerry Falwell first started was in an abandoned bottling plant in 1956, and it grew into a ministry giant that includes the 22,000-member Thomas Road Baptist Church, the Old Time Gospel Hour carried on television stations across the Nation, and the nearly 8,000-student Liberty University founded in Lynchburg in 1971.

He built Christian elementary schools. He built homes for unwed mothers and a home for alcoholics. Through these venues, Jerry's legacy lives on in the lives of thousands of young adults whom he called champions for Christ. And they were American patriots in his heart as well.

Jerry Falwell launched the Moral Majority in 1979, and its purpose was to transform a politically sleeping Christian evangelical universe into a force to transform and preserve the very soul of America. It grew into a 6.5-million-member organization and raised nearly \$70 million, as it supported conservative candidates and campaigned to protect innocent human life, to work against the debasing of life and pornography and to fight for the religious freedom of students to pray in schools.

After a decade of catalyzing a wave of conservatism that culminated in the

election and the reelection of one Ronald Reagan, Jerry disbanded the Moral Majority, saying, "Our mission is accomplished."

Today, Mr. Speaker, approximately one of every four American voters is a Christian evangelical; and one in four American citizens, those that were the ones that Jerry helped awaken.

Not so long ago he said, what we've worked on for nearly 30 years ago, to mobilize people of faith and value in this country, and what we've done in those years is coming to a culmination.

The Pew Research Institute, a senior fellow there, John Green, to paraphrase him, he said, Falwell changed the way that evangelicals think about their political responsibility.

But it was one of Jerry's friends and colleagues, I think, Mr. Speaker, that put it the very best. His name was Chuck Baldwin. He spoke the following words in tribute, which I think sum up the legacy of Jerry Falwell. He said, "America has lost a seasoned patriot. Thomas Road Baptist Church has lost a faithful and dedicated pastor. Liberty University has lost a visionary chancellor. The Church of Christ, collectively, has lost a dynamic preacher of the gospel. The Falwell family has lost a loving husband and father. And thousands of people, such as me, have lost a hero, mentor and friend. No matter what his enemies say, America is a better place because of Jerry Falwell. And those of us who were privileged to personally know him will never forget him."

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to add to those words. But just in the way that I could, I would simply say this, that Jerry Falwell was a man who loved God, who loved his country, who loved his family and who loved humanity. And more than we all realize, we are very blessed that he came our way. And now that he has stepped over the threshold of eternity, he has found a welcome place. He has looked into the eyes of his Saviour and heard those eternal words of victory, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman for his very kind and thoughtful words.

And now I'd like to turn to the gentleman from Virginia, Congressman GOODE. VIRGIL GOODE and I have the honor of representing central Virginia and share many of the members of Thomas Road Baptist Church. I have the City of Lynchburg and part of Bedford County and Amherst County in my district, and VIRGIL has Appomattox County and Campbell County and the remainder of Bedford. And we've both had the opportunity to work with Reverend Falwell on many, many occasions. And it's my pleasure to yield now to the gentleman for his words.

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Roanoke for arranging this special order. I rise tonight to pay homage to Dr. Jerry Falwell, whose funeral and visitation drew tens of thousands to Lynchburg, Virginia, this past weekend and today.

Jerry Falwell was a native of Lynchburg, which is next to the Fifth District, which I have the honor of representing. A devout Christian, Dr. Falwell began his first church 51 years ago, with 35 parishioners. In 3 years the congregation had grown to 800. During part of this period, Dr. Falwell ran buses throughout this region and south to the North Carolina line to bring persons to services.

Today, Thomas Road Baptist Church welcomes thousands to its sanctuary and all related services. The services and activities offered by Thomas Road are important to citizens of Lynchburg and to many nearby counties, including Campbell and Bedford and Appomattox, which are in the Fifth District. His broadcast ministry has touched millions all around the globe.

Dr. Falwell remarked in an interview 2 years ago that his mission remained the same, to train young champions for Christ. That training has extended well beyond the church.

Having an equally important impact on this area of Central Virginia is Liberty University. It is the product of Dr. Falwell's decision to launch Liberty Baptist College in 1971. This school has grown into a major university with an enrollment in excess of 10,000.

□ 1745

And projections are its distance-learning programs may reach 25,000 students in a few years. It offers 71 majors and specializations and boasts a growing law school. Liberty University is a significant contributor to the economy of Lynchburg and the surrounding area.

And while Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University may be considered the pillars of a legacy that will endure for generations, an equally important contribution was Dr. Falwell's determined spirit and unrelenting belief that Christians should stand forth proudly and be integral parts of all of American life.

To that end he urged all to be involved politically and to press those who would seek elective office to subscribe to strong moral principles as the guiding light of this Nation. Today we hear the candidates for national office professing their faith and its importance in their lives. This is due, in no small measure, to the trail blazed by Dr. Jerry Falwell.

To thousands in central Virginia, he was simply known as Jerry, and those individuals will sadly miss their friend, pastor, and mentor.

To his wife, Macel; and his children, Jerry Jr., Jonathan, and Jeanie; and to all in the Falwell family, my heartfelt sympathies are extended, and may God bless them during this time of sorrow.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

And it is now my pleasure to yield to another representative from Virginia, Congressman ERIC CANTOR, the chief deputy whip from the Richmond area, who I knew not too long ago stopped

off in Lynchburg and had the opportunity to spend some time with Reverend Falwell.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, my friend from Virginia, for yielding.

I, too, rise this evening to pay tribute to a fellow Virginian and a great leader in America's conservative movement.

Dr. Jerry Falwell made his mark as an outspoken, passionate advocate for conservative causes. More than any other 20th century Virginian, Jerry Falwell's passion and convictions sparked a new generation of grassroots activism.

Recently, as my friend from the Sixth District noted, I visited with Dr. Falwell in his office on the campus of his beloved Liberty University. During that visit, I gleaned a little more and had gained a little more insight into this impressive public figure.

Jerry Falwell, a man of faith, was a pastor who loved his congregation. He was chancellor of a growing university, a place that began just as a vision, but one that he built into a thriving reality that has become a major educational and economic force in Virginia.

Jerry Falwell was a husband, father, and grandfather who actively engaged in the affairs of this Nation because he, like all of us, wanted to leave behind a country better, more hopeful, and filled with greater opportunity than even the one he inherited from his parents.

The people of the Commonwealth of Virginia have lost a son and the American people a true patriot.

To his family, I extend my deepest sympathy during this time of sorrow.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his words.

We will be joined shortly by another speaker, but before we are, let me tell a little bit more about Dr. Falwell.

At the age of 22, having just graduated from college in June of 1956, Jerry Falwell returned to his hometown of Lynchburg, Virginia, and started Thomas Road Baptist Church with just 35 members. The offering that first Sunday totaled \$135. Falwell often said about that first collection, "We thought we had conquered the world." Today Thomas Road has over 22,000 members, and the total annual revenues of all of the Jerry Falwell ministries total over \$200 million.

Within weeks of founding his new church in 1956, Falwell began the Old-Time Gospel Hour, a daily local radio ministry and a weekly local television ministry. Nearly five decades later, this Old-Time Gospel Hour is now seen and heard in every American home and on every continent except Antarctica. Through the years, over 3 million persons have communicated to the Falwell ministries that they have received Christ as Lord and Savior as a result of this radio and television ministry.

In 1967, Falwell implemented his vision to build a Christian educational

system for evangelical youth. He began with the creation of Lynchburg Christian Academy, a Christ-centered, academically excellent, fully accredited Christian day school providing kindergarten, elementary, and high school. In 1971, Liberty University was founded. Today, over 21,500 students from 50 States and 80 nations attend this accredited liberal arts Christian university. Falwell's dream has become a reality. A preschool child can now enter the school system at age 3 and, 20 or more years later, leave the same campus with a Ph.D., without ever sitting in a classroom where the teacher was not a Christian.

Falwell is also publisher of the National Liberty Journal, a monthly newspaper which is read by over 200,000 pastors and Christian workers; and the Falwell Confidential, a weekly e-mail newsletter to over 500,000 pastors and Christian activists.

In June of 1979, Falwell organized the Moral Majority, a conservative political lobbying movement, which the press soon dubbed the "Religious Right." During the first 2 years of its existence, the Moral Majority attracted over 100,000 pastors, priests, and rabbis and nearly 7 million religious conservatives who mobilized as a pro-life, pro-family, pro-Israel, and pro-strong-national-defense organization. The Moral Majority supported California Governor Ronald Reagan as their candidate for President in 1980, registered millions of new voters, and set about to inform and activate a sleeping giant: 80 million Americans committed to faith, family, and moral values.

With the impetus of the newly organized Moral Majority, millions of people of faith voted for the first time in 1980 and helped Ronald Reagan be elected President, and many conservative Congressmen and Senators.

Since 1979, about 30 percent of the American electorate has been identified by media polls as the "Religious Right." Most recent major media surveys have acknowledged that these "faith and values" voters reelected George W. Bush in November 2004.

Though perhaps better known outside Lynchburg for political activism, Jerry Falwell's personal schedule confirms his passion for being a pastor and a Christian educator. He often states that his heartbeat is for training young people for every walk of life.

Falwell and his wife of 49 years Macel have three grown children and eight grandchildren.

While we continue to await for our next speaker, let me read from a report in the Lynchburg News & Advance from last Tuesday:

"Jerry Falwell was born in 1933 in Lynchburg and lived here all his life. He married Macel Pate of Lynchburg in 1958. They had three children: Jerry Falwell, Jr., an attorney who represents the Falwell ministries and is vice chancellor of Liberty University; Jeannie Falwell Savas, a Richmond

surgeon; and Jonathan Falwell, the executive pastor at Thomas Road Baptist Church.

"Falwell founded Thomas Road in 1956 in an old soft drink bottling plant after graduating from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. That same year he started his weekly television broadcast, the Old-Time Gospel Hour.

"The church moved into a 3,200-seat sanctuary on Thomas Road in the Fort Hill area in 1970, with services broadcast around the world. Falwell founded Liberty University, then known as Lynchburg Baptist College, in 1971. He always hoped the school would be one of his lasting legacies.

"He started the Moral Majority, Incorporated, in 1979, conducting 'I love America' rallies at 44 State capitals.

"The rise of the Moral Majority coincided with the Reagan Presidency, and Falwell rose to national prominence as well."

Falwell and his ministries faced many challenges through the years.

"In the late 1990s, Falwell reemerged on the national stage in a flurry of television appearances," a series of changes to his ministries, "but Falwell gave up campaigning for politicians as he did for President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. 'I don't plan ever to get back into the Moral Majority-type work,' he said in a 1998 interview. 'What I did I did because I felt led to do it then, and I'm glad I did it . . . My thing now is a nonpartisan Biblical approach to moral and social issues.'"

Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield to the Republican whip, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT). I am very pleased to have his presence as we commemorate the life of Reverend Jerry Falwell.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I thank the gentleman also for putting this time together today so that we could talk about the incredible, remarkable life of Rev. Jerry Falwell, a man who never apologized for his spiritual beliefs, who never wavered in his commitment to furthering the dialogue of faith and family in America.

Jerry Falwell was a native son of Virginia, the senior pastor of one of its most prominent and well-attended churches, and the founder of a Christian college in Lynchburg that started its enrollment with 154 students in 1971 and today has over 20,000 students.

Along the way, Rev. Falwell honed his leadership skills and pursued his academic study. In Springfield, Missouri, the town I live in now and I am pleased to represent it in Congress, he transferred there as a sophomore to Baptist Bible College. He later graduated from that school in 1956 with a degree in theology.

And the first time I met Rev. Falwell was when he returned to Springfield. I was a county official at the time, and I had begun to watch him on television. And unlike so many other

television pastors, watching Rev. Falwell was like you were right there in the church service because it was a church service. And I remember the growth of the church as you could watch it on that late Sunday night broadcast that I happened to watch on Sunday evening. I remember when they started moving the church, they had a song that was something like "I Want That Mountain," the site on which Rev. Falwell and the church had decided they wanted to grow the church and eventually the school. And watching his incredible faith and what he was doing, his unflagging determination to spread the Gospel, his ability to use the communication tools available to him in ways that others hadn't, but in ways that his growing congregation were totally comfortable with, in ways, in fact, that didn't compete with what he was doing every Sunday morning and every Sunday night at the Thomas Road Baptist Church.

□ 1800

He left Missouri in the mid-1950s with a renewed commitment to the power of ideas, ideas about the importance of spirituality and public life, ideas that promoted the family, ideas about the protection of human life at all stages of development. And for 50 years, for half a century, his mission was a mission of defending those ideas.

It would give rise to a movement of citizen activists in evangelical Christianity that, frankly, for the previous 50 years in many ways had been intentionally removing itself from the civic and political process, with a focus on what was going to happen after we were here, rather than also being focused on the world we live in. He never lost sight of his mission.

He was a man of purpose, not a man of things, it appeared to me. Whenever he applied that purpose to improve the conditions of the world around him, it made a difference. The time and energy he devoted to his once small college, in fact, once just his idea of a college, became one of our larger universities. It's a great example.

The church he started, the Thomas Road Baptist Church, which he started in 1956 in a bottling plant with a congregation of 35 people, now is a church of nearly 25,000 members. But his achievements weren't only building a church and building a school, he was deeply concerned about the moral direction of this country, and worked hard to ensure that people of faith were part of the national dialogue, part of a way of changing who we were for the better.

His lifelong pursuit of truth was not a casual affair nor was his commitment to a way of life and learning that acknowledged the lessons of the past and applied those experiences to building a better future.

Earlier this afternoon, parishioners of the Thomas Road Baptist Church and people from all over the country and all over the world gathered in

Lynchburg to pay a final tribute to their pastor, their friend, a leader that they respected.

Tonight, I would like to join my good friend, Mr. GOODLATTE, and others and use this opportunity to pay my final respects to a person who clearly was a leader. He was a teacher, he was a father and a husband, and above all other things, he was an untiring messenger of the good news and the eternal hope of our Lord.

I want to thank my friend for organizing this time tonight and for giving me the time to join you.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Well, I thank the whip for joining us in this special tribute to Reverend Jerry Falwell.

I must tell you that the mountain you refer to, which is Chandler Mountain in Lynchburg, was acquired by Liberty University. You can see the university growing up the sides of that mountain now. In fact, they now have a big "LU" planted in trees near the top of the mountain.

Jerry Falwell climbed many mountains, and he leaves behind a legacy not only of building an outstanding educational organization and an outstanding church, but more importantly, he leaves behind the people who make that church and that university strong and growing, led by his children, who will carry on his legacy and reach out to many, many more throughout our country and throughout the world.

I close this special order with a moment of silence, acknowledging the life and work of my constituent and my friend, the late Rev. Jerry Falwell.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEMOCRATIC BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COURTNEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. Ross) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening on behalf of the 43 Members that make up the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. We are conservative Democrats, we are commonsense Democrats that want to restore fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Mr. Speaker, as you walk the halls of Congress, as you walk the halls of this Capitol and the Cannon House Office Building and the Longworth House Office Building and the Rayburn House Office Building, it's not difficult to know when you're walking by the door of a fellow Blue Dog member because you will see this poster that reads, "The Blue Dog Coalition". And it will tell you, it serves as a reminder to Members of Congress and to the general public that walk the halls of Congress that today the U.S. national debt is \$8,807,559,710,099. And I ran out of room, but if I had a poster that was just a little bit more wide, Mr. Speaker, I would have added 85 cents.

Your share, every man, woman and child, including the children born today in America, if you take that number, the U.S. national debt, and divide it by the number of people living in America today, our share, everyone's share of the national debt is \$29,174.38. It is what those of us in the Blue Dog Coalition refer to as "the debt tax," d-e-b-t tax, which is one tax that can't go away, that can't be cut until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first bills I filed as a Member of Congress back in 2001 was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund. The Republican leadership at the time refused to give me a hearing or a vote on that bill, and now we know why; because the projected deficit for 2007, based on the budget bill written when the Republicans controlled Congress, they will tell you is only \$172 billion.

Not so. It's \$357 billion. The difference is the money they are borrowing from the Social Security trust fund, with absolutely no provision on how that money will be paid back or when it will be paid back or where it's coming from to pay it back.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I go down to the local bank in Prescott, Arkansas, and sit across from a loan officer and get a loan, they want to know how I am going to pay it back, when I am going to pay it back and where the money is going to come from to pay it back. It is time the politicians in Washington keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund.

The national debt, the total national debt from 1789 to 2000 was \$5.67 trillion. But by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to \$10.88 trillion. That is a doubling of the 211-year debt in just a decade, in just 10 years. Interest payments on the debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget. And the debt tax is one that cannot be repealed.

People ask me, why should I care about the fact that our Nation is in debt? Why should I care that we continue to borrow billions of dollars? After all, it's future generations that are going to be stuck with the bill.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that it should matter for a lot of reasons. But here is a good one right here: interest payments. Our Nation is borrowing about a billion dollars a day. We are spending about a half a billion a day paying interest on a debt we've already got before we borrow another billion dollars today.

I-49 is important to the people in Arkansas in my congressional district. I need nearly \$2 billion to finish I-49, an interstate that was started when I was in kindergarten. That's a lot of money, at least for a country boy from Prescott and Hope, Arkansas. But I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that we will spend more money paying interest on the national debt in the next 4 days than