

Taliban fighters and Islamic extremists in western Pakistan. However, he has failed to live up to his promise, as reports show that Taliban fighters seem to be flourishing in western Pakistan.

And it appears that Pakistan's agencies, particularly the large and powerful ISI, have been promoting the Islamic insurgency. According to press reports, NATO has captured nearly 200 members of the Taliban, including Pakistanis, who have described in detail the ISI's support of the Taliban.

Last week Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte said that al Qaeda "continues to plot attacks against our homeland from their leaders' secure hideout in Pakistan." President Bush must listen to Negroponte and others who see the realistic side of the war of terror, a war that we are not winning because the President is too focused on the failed war in Iraq.

By sending additional troops to Iraq, in a sense escalating the war, the President will continue to undermine the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. In fact, some reports have stated that a portion of the proposed 22,000 additional troops moving to Iraq will be pulled out of Afghanistan. It is simply unacceptable for the President to continue to risk American lives in Iraq in a war we cannot win while the real terror threat continues to grow in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, if the goal of the war on terror is to prevent future incidents of terrorism in the United States and abroad, President Bush must shift his focus away from Iraq and return it to Afghanistan and Pakistan. He must work with President Musharraf to eliminate extremist training camps in western Pakistan and acknowledge that the real epicenter of the war on terror is Afghanistan and not Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS: AFC CHAMPIONS

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a great day for the State of Indiana and the city of Indianapolis.

For a long, long time, the Indianapolis Colts, our football team, has been trying to make it to the Super Bowl; but they have come just a little bit short the last 3 or 4 years. As a matter of fact, many people were saying that they didn't have what it takes to make it to the Super Bowl.

Yesterday, the Indianapolis Colts were down 21-3 at the half, and many

Hoosiers who were watching the football game and people across the country were so dismayed because they thought once again we weren't going to make it. But Peyton Manning, the quarterback for the Colts; and Joseph Addai; Tony Dungy, the coach of the team; Bill Polian, who put this thing together as president of the club; and the whole team did an outstanding job and came back and made the greatest comeback in the history of championship playoff games to win the game by 4 points right at the end.

I just have to tell you that it was the most exciting game that I have ever seen, and I want to congratulate the Colts on behalf of the Congress and behalf of the people of the State of Indiana for doing such an outstanding job.

One other thing I would like to comment on is the defense of the Colts has been maligned over the past four, five or six games of the season, and yet when it came to the playoffs, they rose to the occasion and did an outstanding job. Defenses don't usually get the accolades they deserve when they perform well, but I want to say to the Colts' defense, you guys did one heck of a job, and you proved your mettle, and I hope in the next 2 weeks you will get yourselves all up for this big game for the championship in Miami. Everybody in Indiana is rooting for you. You did a great job in the playoffs. Peyton, take them to victory in the Super Bowl. We are rooting for you.

□ 2030

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SPACE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY 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 North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS 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 Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE 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 gen-

tleman from California (Mr. 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO 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.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York 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 gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON 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 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.)

BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 44-member fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. Each week we come to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss with you and the people of this Congress, Mr. Speaker, about the need to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our national government.

We speak of the need for accountability. Why? Because today the U.S. national debt is \$8,710,232,192,210; and, we ran out of room on the poster, but if you want to be exact about it, 43 cents. And for every man, woman, and child living in America today, their share of the national debt as of tonight is \$29,061.20. It is what those of us in

the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition refer to as the debt tax, D-E-B-T, which is one tax that will never go away until we get our fiscal house in order.

Mr. Speaker, as you walk the halls of Congress, it is easy to detect when you are walking by an office of a fellow Blue Dog member, because you will see this poster reminding Members of Congress and reminding the American people of the fiscal recklessness that we have witnessed all across this Nation for the past 6 years. The American people have spoken, the American people have given the Democrats an opportunity to lead this Chamber, and we are determined as members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition to getting our Nation's fiscal house in order and restoring fiscal discipline and common sense to our national government.

The Blue Dog Coalition is about accountability. And, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, on Tuesday, many members of the Blue Dog Coalition will be filing a resolution for the 110th Congress, a resolution providing for Operation Iraqi Freedom cost accountability. I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PATRICK MURPHY) for his work on this, a veteran of the Iraqi war who will be joining us later this evening on the floor.

This evening, as members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we plan to talk about providing for Operation Iraqi Freedom cost accountability. You ask people what they think about this postwar Iraq policy, you ask 100 people, you get 100 different ideas about how we ought to do it. One thing is for sure, everybody believes that we need to move in a new direction.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that really makes me proud to be an American is that, unlike Vietnam, and I believe one of the painful lessons to come out of Vietnam is this time, this time at least, we are getting the support for soldier part of this right, because I see us all, not as Democrats and Republicans, but as Americans first. And what I have witnessed this time around has been truly amazing and has made me proud to be an American, and that is that everyone, regardless of how they feel about the war in Iraq, regardless of whether they are a Democrat or a Republican, everyone in America for the most part has stood united in support of our men and women in uniform.

I couldn't help but notice the plane I was on today from Little Rock to Atlanta had about a half dozen soldiers heading to Iraq, and I had the opportunity to shake their hand and thank them for their service to our country. I noticed others doing the same when I was changing planes in Atlanta. There were a lot of soldiers today in Atlanta headed for Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, personally I am opposed to this surge. I think that is not a new direction, I think it is more of the same. But as members of the fiscally

conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, we didn't take a position on that because everyone needs to represent the views of their district, and everyone needs to speak from their heart.

We have approached this, Mr. Speaker, from an accountability standpoint. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read to you this resolution so you will know exactly what is in it, and you will know exactly what the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition stands for and what we are talking about, and then a number of Blue Dog fellow members will be joining me in this Special Order to discuss various aspects of this.

But resolution providing for Operation Iraqi Freedom cost accountability says:

Whereas it has been nearly 4 years since Operation Iraqi Freedom began;

Whereas our military personnel have performed with honor and bravery, and deserve the support of all Americans;

Whereas more than 3,000 American military personnel have been killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and more than 20,000 have been injured;

Whereas the United States has spent nearly \$400 billion in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas the United States has spent tens of billions of dollars paying private contractors for services performed in Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas government investigations and media reports have detailed waste, fraud, and possible war profiteering by some of these contractors;

Whereas American taxpayers deserve a detailed cost accounting for funds spent in Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas instead of the normal budgetary process, the administration has used emergency supplemental appropriation bills to fund Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas the normal appropriations process gives Congress greater oversight concerning both the need for and use of budgeted funds;

Whereas the annual need to budget substantial funding for Operation Iraqi Freedom is not unanticipated within the meaning of section 502 of the fiscal year 2007 budget resolution, and further funding for Operation Iraqi Freedom should be attained through the normal budgeting process;

Whereas since coalition forces removed Saddam Hussein from power, success in Operation Iraqi Freedom has depended upon an active and effective partnership between coalition forces and the Government and people of Iraq, a partnership that provides indispensable leverage to the coalition's financial, military, and political investments;

Whereas Iraqis must assume principal responsibility for internally policing Iraq, failing which past, present, and future coalition investments will not lead to security in Iraq and Iraq will dissolve in chaos.

Let me read that again: Whereas Iraqis must assume principal responsi-

bility for internally policing Iraq, failing which past, present, and future coalition investments will not lead to security in Iraq and Iraq will dissolve in chaos. In other words, we are in this together, and it is time for the Iraqi people to step up to the plate and assume more accountability and responsibility for the internal policing of Iraq.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that; and this is what the Blue Dog Coalition's accountability measure is about: Within 30 days after the adoption of this resolution, and every 90 days thereafter, the Department of Defense Inspector General and the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction shall prepare and transmit to Congress an unclassified report, but with a classified annex if necessary, that would contain:

Number 1. A detailed accounting of how military and reconstruction funds in Iraq have been spent thus far; \$400 billion of tax money from the hard-working people of America has gone to Iraq, and they deserve to know how that money has been spent in support of our men and women in uniform in support of this new Iraqi Government;

Number 2. A detailed accounting of the types and terms of contracts awarded on behalf of the United States, including the methods by which such contracts were awarded and contractors selected;

Our cities and counties all across this Nation are expected to advertise for bids and award bids based on the lowest bid they receive for services rendered for what they are looking for. Our Federal Government should not be any different.

Number 3. A description of the efforts to obtain support and assistance from other countries toward the rehabilitation of Iraq;

And, number 4. An assessment of what additional funding is needed to complete military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq, including a plan for security of Iraq, a detailed plan for how any future funds will be spent, and a statement of how those funds will advance the interests of the United States in Iraq.

That is one point.

The second point:

If either Inspector General fails to submit a quarterly report, the Government Accountability Office shall conduct an audit and report to Congress.

Sanctions shall be imposed against contractors who have engaged in fraud or abuse or war profiteering.

Congress should create a Truman Committee to conduct an ongoing study and investigation of the awarding and carrying out of contracts by the United States to conduct activities with regard to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and make such recommendations to the House as the select committee deems appropriate.

Funding requests for Operation Iraqi Freedom in fiscal year 2008 and beyond must come through the regular appropriations process, and not through so-called emergency supplementals.

No more hiding the cost of the war.

In furtherance of the partnership that is critical to success in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the administration should firmly condition further American financial, military, and political resources upon steady improvement in Iraqi assumption of principal responsibility for internally policing Iraq.

□ 2045

That is the resolution that many members of the Blue Dog Coalition will be filing, a resolution endorsed by the 44-member strong, fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, with the Clerk of the House on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week. I just read it in detail, word by word, so the American people, Mr. Speaker, will know exactly what it is that we are offering up.

It is not complicated. It is not partisan. It is not about whether we should or should not be in Iraq and about whether we should or should not leave tonight or tomorrow, next month or next year. It is about being accountable for the \$400 billion that has already been spent in Iraq, and God knows how much more will be spent in Iraq, and the American people, the hardworking people of this country that get up, go to work, work hard and pay taxes, deserve to know and have a full accounting for how their money is being spent in Iraq.

That is what this resolution is all about. It is what the Blue Dog Coalition is all about. It is about standing for responsibility, transparency and accountability and in getting our Nation's fiscal house in order so we can see this number, Mr. Speaker, the national debt, begin to trend downward, because as long as we are spending a half a billion dollars a day paying interest on the debt we have already got, before we increase it another billion dollars a day, many of America's priorities will continue to go unmet.

We have got to get our fiscal house in order because, you know what, coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world is a whole new generation of veterans. It is our duty in these United States to be there in support of our veterans, to be there in support of our men and women in uniform, regardless of whether they are serving us in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere across the globe.

We can have differences of opinion with the President on Iraq and his Iraq policy, but what makes me proud to be an American is that we are standing together in support of our men and women in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, we have got a number of folks that have joined me this evening to talk about accountability in this Iraq War, and at this time, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROSS very much. It is always a pleasure to be on the floor with you and my other colleagues in the Blue Dog Coalition.

I would like to maybe start just responding to what we are doing so that we can set the stage properly for the American people who are watching to understand why we are doing this and the important confirmation that we have for doing it that is embedded deep in the Constitution of the United States.

The question on what role does Congress have in this has been put before pundits and before commentators, news articles once the President made his statement about the surge, and I, too, want to go on record as saying that I oppose this surge, almost exclusively because of the strain that it is placing on our military, which is already overstrained, and taking our young men and women and not only just putting them in harm's way, but placing them in the cross-hairs of a civil war.

But fundamentally, as I mentioned earlier, what this legislation is that we are here to bring some transparency and to bring some understanding of how the taxpayers' money is being spent is embedded, as I said early, deep into the Constitution.

Now, I want everybody to understand that when we put forward this bill, we are not putting it forward based upon what we feel like today. We are putting this forward so that we can be responsive to the job that we were created to do.

In Article I in Section 8 of the Constitution, it states clearly, when that question was put to James Madison and to Alexander Hamilton at the beginning of the formation of the Continental Army, the fight for the freedom of this country at the very beginning, the question was this: Who has the authority to declare war; who has the authority to raise and support our military? Here is what it says in Article I, Section 8, that was written well over 200 years ago.

Article I, Section 8, gives Congress, not the White House, not the executive branch, not the President, it says clearly it gives Congress the power to "raise and support armies." Those words are in there. In other words, it gives Congress the exclusive power to appropriate the funds for war and then to determine the manner in which those funds are handled and used.

That is what undergirds our resolution that we are putting forth as Blue Dogs and as Democrats and as Republicans, because I believe that we will get bipartisan support for standing up and finally allowing this Congress to do what the Founding Fathers put us here to do.

Just for a moment, our war in Iraq has been prosecuted at a tremendous cost to our Nation, a tremendous cost in terms of especially our soldiers' lives, and we cannot thank our soldiers enough for the sacrifice that they have given, but also the strain that it has placed on their families through repeated and increasingly hefty deployments, wear and tear on our equipment and, of course, the taxpayers' money.

That is what the Founding Fathers said when they said raise and support our Army. They just did not say tax the money. It did not say that. It said raise and support, which means put your arms around it and make sure you take care of your Army.

I will tell you, up to this point this Congress has not done so. The strain on our military is extraordinary. Our service members, as we know, are all volunteers. They and their families are more than willing to sacrifice, as they have and as they will continue to do, for the good of our Nation, and the American public at large is also willing to allow its tax dollars to be spent on a worthy cause. However, we in Congress owe it to the whole country to make sure that our service members are not sacrificing needlessly in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that tax money is not being squandered.

The American public and Members of Congress have largely not been aware of exactly where the money is going, where the funding that we are providing has been going, and there is widespread reports of contractor fraud. There is bribery, there is waste, there is theft of reconstruction funds for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the reason it has been is because we have not fulfilled Article I in Section 8 which gives Congress the power to raise and support our armies and determine how this money is being spent, because this Congress, up to now, has rolled over and given this President everything he asked for without asking the questions because they have allowed him to use the emergency supplemental funding process.

For those in America and those on C-SPAN, what that means is that that is a type of funding that prohibits us in Congress from doing exactly what the Founding Fathers said we must do in Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution, and that is to raise and support armies and determine how this money is being spent.

It is because this administration has used the dubious practice of emergency supplementals to fund the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan away from congressional oversight, that is why we have had fraud.

That is why we have had bribery. Emergency supplementals do not go through the normal budgeting and appropriations cycle.

The administration has also not been forthcoming in providing the detail as to what specifically the funds in the supplemental budget request is being used for, and as a result, Members of Congress typically have not had the opportunity to scrutinize the request thoroughly. Supplementals are considered on an expedited basis and basically a sight unseen.

That is why what the Blue Dogs are doing with our resolution is so important. It pulls the covers off and it says let the Congress do the job that the Founding Fathers put us here to do.

One more point I want to make in the Iraq Study Group report that came

out, it recognized this problem, and it mentions briefly the issue of budgeting for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and specifically they recommended that funding be placed back in the regular budget process, away from the supplemental, saying that this should be done to increase transparency and accountability. The Blue Dogs are taking that recommendation and doing with it what was recommended, and for those of you that have that report, you might find that recommendation on page 59 and 60. It is recommendation 72.

So, to correct this problem, we in the Blue Dog Coalition are introducing this bill. As Mr. ROSS said, we will be doing it later this week. This bill will allow the Members of Congress the time and the information required to provide proper oversight of defense spending and contracting, and it will allow us the time to apply the new PAYGO rules recently passed by the House of Representatives, and, most importantly, it will allow the American people, that is what this election was about, it was about this country and this country taking this country back and putting into practice those things that the Founding Fathers gave us to do, and in the process the American people will become more fully educated on the true costs of this war and the sacrifices they are making and make sure that this money goes where it is supposed to go, and will hopefully, prayerfully bring our sons and daughters, our husbands and our wives, our fathers and our mothers back home safe as soon as we possibly can and end this war.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia and would invite him to stay and continue this conversation with me this evening during this Special Order that is being hosted by the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions or concerns for us, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov. Again, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov.

One of the new Members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition comes to us from the State of Pennsylvania, and that is PATRICK MURPHY, a veteran of the Iraq War who was very involved, as I mentioned at the beginning of the discussion this evening, in helping to carefully craft this resolution to demand accountability for how the tax money of the people of America is being spent in Iraq while continuing to remain steadfast in our support of our soldiers.

At this time, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PATRICK MURPHY).

Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for this opportunity and for allowing me to serve on that task force that we formed to present this bill this week, this Oper-

ation Iraqi Freedom cost accountability resolution.

As I was seeking to prepare my remarks, I could not help but think about Mr. SCOTT from the great State of Georgia when he talked about that Constitution. That is the Constitution that every soldier, every airman, every marine takes note to support and defend against all enemies, foreign and domestic. I appreciate that.

That is the Constitution I had the great opportunity to talk about and teach about every single day at the United States Military Academy at West Point, and talking about those first three articles of our Constitution that lays out the framework, that separation of powers that we talk about. There is a reason why Article I was the Congress and Article II was the President and Article III was the judiciary.

Those two main goals of the U.S. Congress is to, one, declare war; but two is the purse strings, that budget that you talked so eloquently about. So I appreciate you bringing that up, and I hope we can make this happen this week. I do believe that we will get many of our colleagues, not just on our side of the aisle, but also on the other side of the Chamber as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the war in Iraq, and I want to talk today because the Blue Dogs, the Blue Dog Democrats, the fiscally conservative Democrats, stay focused on two things: one, fiscal responsibility; and, two, a strong national defense. The legislation that we are discussing this week, which I will have the opportunity to introduce, tackles both of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent over \$360 billion in Iraq over the course of the last 4 years.

□ 2100

Along with the casualty reports and the terrible news on the ground, we are getting reports about money lost and weapons missing.

Last week, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, we heard from Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraqi reconstruction. He told those of us at the hearing that as much as 15 percent of the billions of dollars that we were spending in Iraq has vanished, and as many as 14,000 weapons sent to the Iraqis have gone missing because of mismanagement and fraud. That is enough weaponry to arm an entire division of the al Sadr militia. This isn't just about money; it is about the safety of our troops as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is long past time that we kept track of the money and the weapons that we are giving to the Iraqis and to replace the fraud, waste and abuse with proper oversight, responsibility and accountability.

The legislation that the Blue Dogs are introducing this week addresses the glaring lack of oversight and accountability in Iraq and addresses how our taxpayer dollars are spent on the war.

It puts forward commonsense proposals that ensure fewer resources are wasted and more resources get to the troops in the field.

This bill contains measures everyone can agree on, regardless of their political party. American families are frustrated with the war in Iraq, and this legislation will go a long way toward providing some meaningful solutions.

Another thing that this legislation does is urge the establishment of a Truman Committee-type commission to track and curb the waste, fraud and abuse in Iraq. In the 1940s, then-Senator Harry Truman established a committee that wasn't very popular at the time. Senator Truman's work reportedly saved \$11 billion, and eventually landed him on the cover of Time magazine.

Now, Mr. Speaker, none of us here, none of us Blue Dogs here, are looking to be on the front of a magazine cover; but we are looking for an end to the mismanagement in Iraq and in the war.

As you know, this issue hits very close to home for me. I served in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2003 to 2004 as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, Second Brigade Combat Team. On our team, we lost 19 men, men that made the ultimate sacrifice. Part of what we did in Iraq was to train the Iraqi National Defense Corps.

At the time that we were training them back in that summer of 2003, they didn't have uniforms, so we took the initiative to give them hats, Chicago White Sox hats, so that we could identify them as a unit. They didn't have uniforms. There was no oversight. There was no thought process. But our soldiers on the ground took the initiative to at least give them something that would distinguish them.

At our hearing, Special Inspector Bowen revealed one example of \$75 million so grossly mismanaged by the Iraqi Police Academy that it had to be knocked down before it was even put to use. That is \$75 million in American taxpayer money that is just thrown to the wayside.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for answers, and it is time for accountability.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, a veteran of the Iraq war, a new member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, for not only joining us for this Special Order this evening on demanding accountability of the American people's tax money and how it is being spent in Iraq, but also playing a very important role in helping draft, carefully craft and write this resolution that the Blue Dog Coalition has endorsed and will be filed as a House resolution on the floor of this House this week. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania again for his work on that and for his service to our country.

At this time I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois, Ms. BEAN, another very active member of the Blue Dog Coalition, someone who comes to

this town and demands fiscal accountability and responsibility like we are doing here on the floor of the House this evening.

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. It is always a pleasure to join my Blue Dog colleagues on the House floor.

The Blue Dogs were formed with the intention of always demanding accountability and oversight, particularly relative to our national budget. We are out here pretty regularly talking about the \$8 trillion national debt. You have the number right next to you, Mr. ROSS. That has really ballooned out of control.

We talk about PAYGO budget rules, which we were glad to lead our caucus into passing through the House so we can start to bring some fiscal sense back to this Congress in the same way that our taxpayers and constituents have to bring to their home budgets and their business budgets. They deserve the same level of accountability with their tax dollars and the way we spend them here.

That applies to the entire budget. There is no more important priority than ensuring the safety of our troops and our Nation. So it is almost incomprehensible that billions of dollars of the roughly \$400 billion that has been spent on the war in Iraq goes unaccounted for.

Congressman MURPHY just spoke to that. He talked about it is not just dollars unaccounted for, but weapons as well. So there is a serious safety issue for our troops. Therefore, I was proud to join my Blue Dog colleagues as a cosponsor of this Iraq war cost accountability resolution that I believe we are introducing on the floor tomorrow.

Before I talk about the resolution itself, I just wanted to mention another one of our colleagues who is not with us today, Congresswoman JANE HARMAN, who recently had an op-ed piece that she entitled "Stop Conducting the War Off the Books." She talked about how the emergency supplemental that the President has said he will be bringing to this Congress will be the sixth emergency supplemental for this war. She also talks about how our own last year's budget resolution defined "emergency" as only spending that is "sudden, unforeseen or temporary." While certainly supporting our troops is urgent and important, it is not sudden, when we are almost 4 years and \$400 billion into this war.

I think she makes a good case that we all support, who are on this resolution, getting these requests into the budget, and that one of the reasons they have been called emergencies when they haven't been unforeseen or sudden is that doing so exempts the President from spending caps and from counting the hundreds of billions of dollars that have been spent on the war in Iraq in our deficit.

What that really is, it is dishonest accounting. We are not asking all

Americans to join Congress in making the hard decisions about what the cost of this war should mean relative to a shared sacrifice. So by doing it off the books, we are not engaging in the dialogue we really should be having.

This resolution that we are introducing tomorrow will require four things: first, accountability and oversight, not only for our own spending, but also what we are doing to urge other countries and allies to participate and what their spending would be. It will talk about dollars already spent and how they have been spent and whether we have accomplished what we set out to do. Also important is it will include sanctions for contractors that have engaged in fraud, abuse or war profiteering.

The second thing it will do, as Congressman MURPHY alluded to, is create committees akin to the Truman Committee that will, again, look at all contracts awarded and also the method of how those contracts are awarded to ensure we are getting the best return on our tax dollars.

Third, it will require, as I just alluded to, the on-budget accounting of the war. No more emergency supplementals. But it will require that the war in Iraq, starting in fiscal 2008 and beyond, any requests for funding must come through the regular appropriations process, with the oversight and accountability that goes along with that.

The fourth thing that this resolution does is it states how important it is for Iraq to be moving forward in assuming the principal responsibility for their own internal security. It will require that the administration should condition further American financial or military support upon steady improvement in Iraqi progress toward that end.

I am very proud to join my colleagues on this resolution. I think the American public should expect no less from this Congress. I am hopeful that we are going to have bipartisan support on this resolution, as we have on some of the things we have been introducing in the first 100 hours in our new majority.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for letting me join him.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank an active member of the fiscally responsible Blue Dog Democrat Coalition, the gentlewoman from Illinois, MELISSA BEAN, for being a part of this discussion this evening to talk about the Blue Dog Coalition's resolution to demand accountability for how tax money is being spent in Iraq, just as we do here at home through our Blue Dog 12-point plan for budget reform.

This resolution will be filed on the floor of this House this week as the Blue Dog Coalition demands this administration to be accountable for how your tax money, Mr. Speaker, is being spent in Iraq.

At this time I yield to the gentleman from New York, a new member of the Blue Dog Coalition, someone who has

come here and been a very active member of our coalition and has been doing a lot to help us with this resolution, and that is the gentleman from New York, MIKE ARCURI.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong opposition to this administration's call for 21,000 new troops in the surge in Iraq. As one of three New Yorkers in the Blue Dog Coalition, I am very proud of the position that the Blue Dog Coalition takes with respect to identifying issues of fiscal responsibility. They have done that very thing with the war.

There are many, many reasons why we shouldn't be involved in the war in Iraq, and the Blue Dogs have pointed out one additional reason for that in terms of the cost that this war has and the way it has burdened our country.

When I talk to people in my district, they always ask me, why are we spending so much money on the war, when we have such great needs for education or for health care or for housing? Those are all issues that people are very concerned about; yet we continue to spend billions and billions of dollars on a very unpopular war.

My other concern with respect to this war and this operation in Iraq is the fact that our Army is an army that is a volunteer army, which means that in order for us to continue to defend our country and to get the numbers that we need in the Armed Forces, we need to have high numbers of volunteers. Yet with this protracted engagement that we are involved in now in Iraq, it continues to lower morale and makes it more and more difficult to attract troops and to attract recruits to our military.

I am very humbled when I hear my colleague PATRICK MURPHY, a real patriot, a veteran of Iraq, get up here and speak and talk from his heart about the things that he experienced while he was in Iraq. It concerns me, because I believe that this war and this engagement in Iraq is doing more to hurt the morale of our military than any other operation that we have seen in recent history. It concerns me because I hear different anecdotal stories from people in my district. There is one I would like to share with you.

Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine who was a very patriotic young man enlisted in the armed services and actually did three tours of duty. He did one in Afghanistan and two in Iraq. He was wounded and received the Purple Heart and received a Bronze Star.

After his last tour in Iraq, he was ready to leave the military. He talked to his people in his outfit, and they asked him if he would stay and help to train troops in a non-deployment type of position stateside. Being the patriotic person that he is, he agreed to do that.

The problem for him was that because of the buildup and because of the steps that are being taken now, he was

told that he would no longer be able to continue in a nondeployment type of position, but would rather have to go into a third tour of duty in Iraq. It put a huge strain on him. It put a huge strain on his family.

These are the kinds of concerns that we have when it comes to the morale and when it comes to the future of our military.

□ 2115

And speaking from myself, I would just like to say that I believe that this type of action and this type of activity puts a huge strain on our military.

I strongly support the efforts of the Blue Dog Coalition because I believe that they point out the things that we need to do as a country. We are talking about a resolution that will create a Truman type of committee that will help to oversee efforts and oversee different actions which are taking place by different contractors in Iraq. So I am very pleased to be here today to talk on behalf of the Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ARCURI), a new Member of this Congress, a new member of the Blue Dog Coalition, for coming and visiting with us this evening about the need for accountability and responsibility in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Blue Dog Coalition is about fiscal responsibility. It is about restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government, not only here at home, but also in Iraq. And that is why this week the Blue Dog Coalition will file a resolution that its coalition, the Blue Dog members, have endorsed to demand accountability in Iraq.

We read the resolution in its entirety at the beginning of this Special Order. Basically, we want a detailed accounting of how military and reconstruction funds in Iraq have been spent thus far, a detailed accounting of the types and terms of contracts awarded on behalf of the United States, including the methods by which such contracts were awarded and contractors selected; a description of efforts to obtain support and assistance from other countries toward the rehabilitation of Iraq. The U.S. should not be going this alone; an assessment of what additional funding is needed to complete military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq, including a plan for security in Iraq; a detailed plan for how any future funds will be spent; and a statement of how those funds will advance the interests of the United States in Iraq. Sanctions shall be imposed against contractors who have engaged in fraud or abuse or, yes, war profiteering.

We are calling for the creation of a Truman-like committee commissioned to conduct an ongoing study and investigation of the awarding and carrying out of contracts by the United States to conduct activities with regard to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and make such recommendations to the House as

the select committee deems appropriate.

Funding requests for Operation Iraqi Freedom in fiscal year 2008 and beyond must come through the regular appropriation process, not through the so-called emergency supplementals; no more of not being accountable; no more hiding the true cost of the war.

And finally, the administration should firmly condition further American financial, military and political resources upon steady improvement in Iraqi assumption of principal responsibility for internally policing Iraq.

Now, why are we filing this resolution? Because our Nation has now spent over \$400 billion, nearly a half a trillion, in Iraq. Total for 2006, \$100.4 billion; for the month, \$8.44 billion; the cost per day, \$275 million. And, Mr. Speaker, yes, each hour we are sending \$11,458,333 of your tax money to Iraq. And we believe it is time for this Congress to fulfill its constitutional duty to provide oversight on how this money is being spent.

I yield to my fellow Blue Dog member from California Mr. COSTA.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, the gentleman from Arkansas. I appreciate having an opportunity to share with my fellow Blue Dog colleagues this evening the challenges that our country is facing as we wage this war on terrorism, and try to bring together some level of stability in Iraq.

The War Funding Accountability Act that the Blue Dog Coalition is sponsoring, that we present to you this evening, is an attempt to bring accountability that has sorely been missing almost 4 years now after we have been engaged in this effort. And we, as Americans, are all engaged in this effort.

This War Accountability Act, if it successfully passes Congress, would require the Department of Defense Inspector General, as well as the Special Inspector General for Iraq on Reconstruction, to report to the Congress every 30 days after any supplemental bill passes, and quarterly thereafter. These reports, unfortunately, have been lacking over the last 4 years.

Now, as we look back, there has been a lot of water that has passed under this bridge, at tremendous costs, beginning first with over 3,000 American lives, men and women that have been lost, and over 20,000 Americans who have suffered injuries as a result of this engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We are talking about the fiscal costs here this evening. But there is no way that we can put a cost or a value on the American lives that have been lost in this effort to try to bring stability and continue to protect Americans on this war on terrorism.

What has been lacking is accountability. The Blue Dogs feel strongly that accountability not only in the fiscal sense, but accountability in how we have engaged in this war effort needs to be seriously focused on. And that is why I am supporting this resolution.

A couple of weeks ago I met with the President, as he solicited our ideas about how we should go forth. I said, "Mr. President, I was in Iraq last year, among the first delegation to meet with Prime Minister Maliki, and I asked Prime Minister Maliki what his goals were. He said they were disband the militias, reduce violence, get reconstruction going and move the economy." It all makes a lot of sense. Eight months later, going on to 9 months, unfortunately, the Prime Minister's actions have been far deficient of his words. And so today we are focusing on this War Funding Accountability Act.

But I said, "Mr. President, militarily we cannot be successful in this effort alone. There needs to be a political agreement in which the major sectarian factions in this sectarian civil war are willing to agree upon how to share the political power in Iraq and the oil revenues." Let's make no mistake about it. That is what we are fighting in today.

Unfortunately, that is the sectarian civil war that we have gotten ourselves into, and without a political solution, we will not be successful in Iraq.

I have been there. I looked into the eyes of the American men and women in uniform who are fighting valiantly on our behalf, and we need to put the same support for them as we try to put for you. So as we demand accountability on single-source bidding, on sole-source contracting for the efforts in Iraq, let's also hold the Iraqi Government to the same time lines and the same sort of accountability that we should be holding our own government for. And for these reasons, I support the Blue Dog Coalition on the War Funding Accountability Act.

And as I told the President, "Put me in the doubtful column as it relates to the surge unless we have a political agreement among the Shiites, the Kurds and the Sunnis on how they are going to share power forthwith and how they are going to share the oil revenues, because otherwise, in my opinion, we are kidding ourselves, and, more importantly, we are misleading the American public. And sadly, what is at stake are the lives of American men and women in uniform who are in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA). And in the 8 minutes or so we have remaining, I have got three other members of the Blue Dog Coalition that have joined us, and we are very pleased that they have. At this time I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA).

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker and Mr. ROSS, tomorrow night, when the President of the United States delivers his State of the Union Address, the Nation will listen carefully as he lays out his agenda for the final 2 years of office. And there is no question our Nation faces many great challenges. The one issue, however, that weighs most heavily on the minds of the American people is, of course, the war in Iraq. The

President is now moving forward with a plan to escalate the war, despite bipartisan opposition. I have grave doubts about the wisdom of this action, as do most of my colleagues.

Regardless of one's views on the right way to move forward in Iraq, we should be able to agree on one thing: Fraud and abuse and flagrant waste of taxpayer dollars that we have seen throughout this war have got to stop. It is bleeding our Treasury dry, and it is further undermining our security in Iraq.

Some estimates suggest the war in Iraq will cost the American people \$2 trillion when all is said and done, and that is truly a staggering figure. That is why the Blue Dogs are putting forward this resolution asking for accountability. We can't afford another \$2 trillion in debt piled on to what Mr. ROSS has already said, \$8.710 and change trillion.

So Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take up a lot of time. We have two distinguished colleagues that have waited here to speak to you tonight. But I will say that I applaud the Blue Dogs, and I am proud of being a member of the Blue Dogs. I am proud to be here with you again, Mr. ROSS, and I just believe it is high time that the American people have a full accounting of what this war is costing, and how the contractors have misspent American Treasury in the process.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California for demanding accountability of how your tax money, Mr. Speaker, is being spent, the tax money of hardworking Americans is being spent, not only here at home, but also abroad in places like Iraq.

I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee, my fellow Blue Dog member, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS.

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. Congressman ROSS, thanks very much. I will be very brief.

During the campaign in November, October and September, obviously leading up to the November 7 election, I heard a great deal from those who would be talking about, do you favor cut and run or stay the course?

I submit to you that neither of those are good alternatives. And the sad thing is that the American public has been told that mission has been accomplished after landing on the battleship. And then shortly after that, the Iraqi insurgents were told, just bring it on. I think it is time that we bring on a little bit of accountability. And this accountability and the resolution that the Blue Dog Democrats have introduced doesn't deal with whether or not we stay, how long we stay. It just talks about the stay that we have already been there, account for it. Account for the almost \$400 billion that has been spent of taxpayer dollars that could be used, quite frankly, maybe to have won the war in a better way, to have brought about a safe Iraq that is not there today.

And my real concern, as I go back and study the Tet Offensive, it is my

concern that, as we send these 20-some thousand extra troops into Iraq, and as we start talking on the Shiia militias, that we may see the results of another Tet Offensive that we saw in 1968 in Vietnam.

I just hope that our President, that the Defense Department and those who are advocating additional troops not only will be accountable for what we have already done there, but at least present to us a better plan than what we have had presented to us in the past.

Stay the course, mission accomplished and bring it on just ain't got it done, and it is time that we look at what is going on in this country. When you look at Iraq and Iran, and you realize that when you hear that there are a billion folks of the faith of Islam, most of those are either in Asia, Central Asia and in Africa, not in the Middle East. Virtually all in the Middle East perhaps are the Islam faith except, obviously, for the nation of Israel. But when you look where most of the Shiias are, only 10 percent of the faith of Islam are Shiias. The other are Sunnis. And when you look at where the bulk of the Shiia population is, it is in Iraq and in Iran.

It is my fear that stay the course, bring it on and mission accomplished has only brought to us two nations in the Middle East, Iraq and Iran, with probably close to 7 percent of the Shiias that will be in control of two nations in the Middle East that will have under their soils around 50 percent of the oil in the Middle East. It is time, Mr. Speaker, that we take a serious look and do what the old crossing at the railroad used to say: Stop, look and listen to what we are doing.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his assessment in support of this Blue Dog resolution to demand accountability in Iraq. And with the remaining 3 or 4 minutes left in this Special Order, Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as the gentleman from Florida, a new member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a new Member of this Congress, Mr. MAHONEY, may so desire.

□ 2130

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Arkansas for yielding to me tonight. I stand here today representing the great State of Florida's 16th Congressional District, a district that spans from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico and represents the hopes and aspirations of all Floridians.

I stand here as a freshman member of the Blue Dog Coalition supporting our resolution demanding that the administration account for the Iraq war in a manner that lets this Nation see the true costs of the undertaking, and ensuring that our brave men and women who are fighting for our freedom are not being robbed by profiteers and inefficient government bureaucracy.

What got me was that not only was the deficit a tax on my daughter, Bai-

ley's, future, but this administration was not leveling with the American people. This administration was not telling the people the true cost of their programs, telling us that these tax breaks for the wealthiest were driving us to the poor house, cutting revenues when increasing government by over 30 percent.

Now, do not get me wrong. I believe in smaller, more efficient government. I do not believe we need to raise taxes. However, as a businessman, I believe in living within one's means, having to make tough choices so that we can determine what is important, determining what our national priorities are and making those hard choices.

The fact that this administration has calculatingly funded this war with emergency supplemental appropriations so that the American people would not see the true cost is wrong. This Congress and the American people have the right to determine for themselves if the results justify the expenses. Looking at the budget cuts our children had to endure when he cut Head Start, when he unfunded No Child Left Behind, cutting the budget for health services for our veterans, cutting funding for law enforcement programs while violent crime is on the rise, making a decision to leave our ports unsecured by not inspecting the hundreds of thousands of containers that enter this country every year.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve to have all of the facts so that they can make their own decision. This resolution calls on the President to budget for the Iraq war like he budgets for everything else. No longer can this country afford the President standing in front of the American people and declaring fiscal victory when he loses less of our money than he projected, declaring victory when we are running record deficits and not adding the cost of the Iraq war.

These are real losses, these are real debts, debts to be repaid with our tax dollars. Further, this resolution calls for the President to be a good steward of our money by asking for accountability in how our hard-earned money is spent. Our resolution specifically calls on Congress to perform this congressional responsibility to provide oversight and make sure that our brave men and women fighting for our liberty get everything they need to come home and make those who would steal from them pay the price.

This is not a new idea. President Truman, as a U.S. Senator, did exactly that during World War II, a Democrat in Congress providing oversight to a Democratic administration. Imagine that. What a novel idea.

Tonight I call upon the American people to let the President know that regardless of whether you support the war in Iraq or not, you expect him to level with the American people.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear the Blue Dog Coalition stands for fiscal responsibility and accountability

here at home and in Iraq, and we stand in support of our men and women in uniform, and we demand accountability for them to ensure that these resources are going to them to support them, to keep them safe, and to return them home to their families. May God bless our troops and their families.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SPACE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, postponed votes on motions to suspend the rules with respect to House Resolution 51, House Resolution 57, and H.R. 476 will be taken tomorrow.

DEMOCRATS MUST ACT TO AVOID TAX INCREASES

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight, as I have for the past couple of weeks, to remind the American people that if this Congress does not act over the next 2, over the next 4 years, in just 1,440 days there will be a tax increase in this country. It is going to happen as I said over the next 4 years if the Democrats do not extend the tax cuts that the Republicans have put in place over the last several years.

It is going to amount to about \$200 billion that the American people will pay more in taxes. And I appreciate my colleagues from the Blue Dog Democrat Coalition coming down to the House floor and talking about fiscal responsibility. They talk about the budget. But I hear very little about taxes and keeping taxes low on the American people.

And one of the Blue Dogs mentioned in his remarks that he believes in smaller and efficient government and that we have to make tough choices. And that is true. We have to make very tough choices. But it is not our money.

We need to make sure that one of the decisions is to not raise the taxes on the American people, because when we were here in the final hours of the Democrats' 100 hours, on that Friday morning, right after they finished the 100 hours, we were in session for all of about 45 minutes, from 10 to 11 a.m. and most Americans did not see that 45 minutes.

So that is why I think it is important that I come to the floor and remind the American people what this Congress is doing and what we have done in the last couple of weeks or the 100 hours that the Democrats ran their six bills. And I have a number, 1,440. That is again January 1, 2011, when our taxes will finally get up to that \$200 billion tax increase if we do not act. All the Democrats have to do is run the clock

out, they do not have to pass legislation, and those tax cuts that we put in place that have benefited this economy so greatly will expire.

There is another number that you can put up, and that is how many days since the Democrats' last tax increase. And it has been just 4 days. Now, little did I know and little did I think that it would take only 14 days of the Democrats being in the majority party in Congress, they worked for 13 years to win back the majority, and in 14 days the first tax increase passed this House and is going to move on to the Senate. I hope the Senate does not pass it.

Because that is a tax increase on the American people. Now, the Democrats say that it is the oil company, the big oil companies that are going to receive this increase in taxes. And that is true. The big oil companies will pay about \$6.5 billion of taxes over the next several years. But the reality is, corporations and businesses do not pay taxes in this country; consumers pay it. The tax increase will be passed along. And it will be passed along in the form of higher energy costs.

We will pay more at the pump when we go to fill our cars up. Oil companies, they will have a competitive disadvantage. They will have to pay more when they go out to explore for oil. It will be the Venezuelan oil company, Citgo, or it will be the Iranian or some other foreign oil company that is going to be in a better position to be able to spend money to find oil, to sell it to the American economy, sell it to America, less expensive than our own domestic energy producers.

Ladies and gentlemen, I just think if you are watching tonight that is not the right thing to do, especially in this time of high energy costs. We have got to make it more cost efficient, give our companies a better footing to compete, not only in energy but in manufacturing. And raising taxes on business is the wrong thing to do.

And as I said, it has only taken the Democrats 14 days until this first tax increase has come down the road and has passed this House of Representatives. And that should not surprise anybody in America, because during the campaign, the new chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the Representative from New York, he told the Bloomberg News that he cannot think of one tax cut passed under President Bush that merits renewal.

There is no question about it, he said, everything has to be on the table. And what we have seen already is a tax increase just 4 days ago. And as I said, I believe that is going to trickle down into the American public, and they will be paying that through higher energy costs, higher fuel costs.

As I said, it is important that I think the American people, if you are watching this evening, are reminded that you are getting exactly what the Democrats said during the election. They said that they would raise your taxes. Once again, I hear the Blue Dogs come

down here night after night talking about fiscal responsibility. I do not hear them, though, talking about taxes, making sure they keep the taxes low on the American people.

I do not hear them talking about the biggest spending programs that our government has, and that is Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. How are we going to improve and strengthen, reform those important programs important to the American citizens, important to our seniors in this country?

So those are things that I do not hear them talking about. I am very interested to see what the Blue Dog Democrats will propose when it comes to the budget. We will come into budget season here I believe in March. And I know that when the Republicans were in the majority, the Blue Dogs offered a budget every time. There was a Democrat budget, there was a Blue Dog budget, and there was the Republican budget. So I am very, very interested in seeing what the Blue Dogs propose if in fact they are even allowed to propose a budget, because I think it will be different than their elected leadership will put on this floor.

But back to the tax cuts and what it means to the American people. Over the last 4 years we have seen 7.2 million jobs created in this country from those tax cuts. Our economy is creating jobs month after month. Just in December 167,000 jobs were created in this country. The unemployment rate is down to 4.5 percent. It is the lowest average it has been in four decades. That is directly attributable to the tax cuts we have put in place over the last several years.

Now, if we do not extend them, if we do not do the responsible thing, the American taxpayers are going to be penalized for their hard work by us taking money out of their pockets. When you look at a family of four that earns over \$40,000, if we allow the child tax credit and the marriage penalty to expire, they will pay about \$2,000 more that will come out of their pockets.

That is money that they could use to save for college, to pay for health care insurance, to buy a new washer and dryer, or put a down payment on a new car. That is their money. They should be able to spend that money as they see fit. And the way to do that is to keep the tax rates low so that they can continue to determine how to use that money best.

Small business owners, same situation. If we allow some of these tax cuts to increase, our small businesses in this country will be hurt. And I hope the Democrats take a lesson from history. President Kennedy, back in 1960, did just that. He cut taxes. And when he cut taxes, revenues to the Federal Treasury rose as they have today.

Ronald Reagan did it in 1980. He had to fight a Democratic majority, but finally was able to cut taxes. And what happened was the economy grew, one of the greatest expansions of our economy in history, and revenues to the Federal