

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SMALL
BUSINESS CONSORTIUM OF ALA-
BAMA STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay recognition to the work of the Alabama State University Small Business Consortium on its 29th anniversary.

Since its establishment in 1979, the Small Business Development Consortium has helped support the establishment of small businesses across Alabama. From its humble beginnings, the consortium has expanded to include 11 business development centers in universities across central Alabama, and thanks to the vision of the consortium's founder, Dr. Percy Vaughn, resources for hundreds of fledgling enterprises.

I would like to congratulate the consortium, Alabama State University, and the other member institutions on reaching this important milestone for their organization, and wish them all the best in the future.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over President Bush's handling of the budget and to enter into the RECORD editorials from today's Washington Post, "Budget Mess—President Bush's last spending plan only adds to a disastrous fiscal legacy" and from today's New York Times, "Lame-Duck Budget."

President Bush was given a gift 7 years ago; the gift was a projected surplus of \$5.6 trillion over the next decade. He has been neither appreciative nor responsible with this gift that America entrusted him with to make the lives of all Americans better. Instead his policies have benefited select groups and special interest. Case in point, his tax cutting agenda has greatly improved the lives of households with incomes totaling more than \$450,000 a year. These are some of the wealthiest American households.

The national debt has grown by \$2 trillion and the projected \$725 billion surplus for the upcoming fiscal year (2009) has disappeared and in its place has appeared a \$407 billion deficit. Based on Mr. Bush's recent budget submission, he proposes to pay for additional tax cuts through \$397 billion deficit spending over the next 5 years.

Mr. Bush leaves behind a legacy of failed fiscal policies and priorities. Mr. Bush stated his budget plan would put the country on the road to balancing the budget by 2012. However, he mistakenly forgot to inform the Amer-

ican people that his plan only partially funds the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for 2009, and starting in 2010, he has planned zero spending. This is a disingenuous attempt to make his budget plan seem plausible.

There are no winners with the Bush budget proposal; domestic spending programs will be cut or remain flat. There is no long-term planning for the alternative minimum tax and both Medicare and health care spending will suffer devastating cuts.

Given the uncertain economic future of the country Mr. Bush's budget proposal leaves his successor with a very difficult task ahead. This is especially disheartening since his predecessor left him with a surplus.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 2, 2008]

BUDGET MESS

Seven long years ago, a new president submitted his first budget—an optimistic document now relevant only as a chastening artifact of a bygone era. In that "Blueprint for New Beginnings," George W. Bush grappled with the supposed challenge of dealing with a projected surplus of \$5.6 trillion over the next decade. The president proposed to pay down the debt by \$2 trillion during that time, which, he said, was as much as could be responsibly redeemed. He offered lavish tax cuts. And he vowed to "confront great challenges from which Government has too long flinched," putting Social Security and Medicare on solid financial footing.

The final budget of Mr. Bush's presidency arrived yesterday, and the contrast between then and now could hardly be more sobering. Instead of being paid down, the national debt has grown by \$2 trillion. The \$725 billion surplus once projected for the coming fiscal year (2009) has evaporated. In its place is a \$407 billion deficit—an unrealistically rosy number that omits billions in likely war spending and is artificially reduced by including the \$200 billion Social Security surplus. The explosion in entitlement costs has been left unaddressed and is therefore even more daunting. Indeed, on entitlements, Mr. Bush's legacy will be to have added to the long-term tab with the addition of an expensive Medicare prescription drug benefit.

Some of this transformation, as the administration would be the first to point out, is not Mr. Bush's fault. Even as he submitted that initial budget, the economy was slowing. The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, further rattled the economy and imposed huge unanticipated costs for homeland security and military operations overseas. Mr. Bush tried to launch the necessary debate on Social Security, and, although the president can be faulted for having poisoned the well with a relentlessly partisan legislative strategy, congressional Democrats chose to respond with more partisanship.

But the fact remains that the purported surplus on which Mr. Bush based his tax-cutting agenda was always something of a mirage, and the president has never been willing to adjust his agenda to the grim new fiscal reality. Yesterday's promise of a small surplus by 2012 is once again premised on omitting likely costs (zero is budgeted for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan) and by assuming cuts to domestic spending that are unachievable politically and, in large part, unwise as a matter of policy.

As always, Mr. Bush pledges to press ahead with his tax-cutting agenda: another \$2.4 trillion over the next decade, \$3.7 trillion if relief from the alternative minimum tax is included. The President argues that failing to extend his previous tax cuts would result in an average tax increase of \$1,800. But Mr. Bush neglects to point out that the overwhelming share of the tax cuts go to the wealthiest Americans. The top 1 percent of households—those with incomes of more than \$450,000—would get 31 percent of the benefits, with tax cuts averaging \$67,000 by 2012. And Mr. Bush does not even propose fully paying for these cuts: The budget he submitted yesterday envisions another \$397 billion in deficit spending over the next five years because it would devote more money to tax cuts than it would cut in spending.

Mr. Bush inherited a potential windfall—and squandered it. The next president will inherit his mess.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 5, 2008]

LAME-DUCK BUDGET

President Bush's 2009 budget is a grim guided tour through his misplaced priorities, failed fiscal policies and the disastrous legacy that he will leave for the next president. And even that requires you to accept the White House's optimistic accounting, which seven years of experience tells us would be foolish in the extreme.

With Mr. Bush on his way out the door and the Democrats in charge of Congress, it is not clear how many of the president's priorities, unveiled on Monday, will survive. Among its many wrong-headed ideas, the budget includes some \$2 billion to ratchet up enforcement-heavy immigration policies and billions more for a defense against ballistic missiles that show no signs of working.

What will definitely outlast Mr. Bush for years to come are big deficits, a military so battered by the Iraq war that it will take hundreds of billions of dollars to repair it and stunted social programs that have been squeezed to pay for Mr. Bush's misguided military adventure and his misguided tax cuts for the wealthy.

The president claimed on Monday that his plan would put the country on the path to balancing the budget by 2012. That is nonsense. His own proposal projects a \$410 billion deficit for 2008 and a \$407 billion deficit next year. Even more disingenuous, Mr. Bush's projection for a balanced budget in 2012 assumes only partial funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for 2009, and no such spending—zero—starting in 2010.

It also assumes that there will be no long-running relief from the alternative minimum tax—which would be ruinous for the middle class—and that there will be deep cuts in Medicare and other health care spending that have proved to be politically impossible to enact.

Mr. Bush, of course, inherited a surplus from the Clinton administration, which he quickly used up on his tax cuts. He then continued cutting taxes after the surpluses were gone and even after launching the war in Iraq—\$600 billion and counting. Mr. Bush remains unrepentant. Even now, with the economy—and revenues—slowing, he is pushing to make those tax cuts permanent. That would be fiscally catastrophic.

The big winner, predictably, is the Pentagon. After adjusting for inflation, the proposed defense budget of \$515.4 billion—which

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

does not include either war spending or the cost of nuclear weapons—would be up by more than 30 percent since Mr. Bush took office and would be the highest level of military spending since World War II.

Mr. Bush's war of choice in Iraq, on top of the war of necessity in Afghanistan, has seriously strained the American military—its people and its equipment. Even a new president committed to a swift withdrawal of American troops from Iraq will have to keep asking for large Pentagon budgets, both to repair that damage and to prepare the country to face what will continue to be a very dangerous world.

What is so infuriating about this budget is there is not even a hint of the need for real trade-offs. As far as anyone can tell, not a single weapons system would be canceled. That means it will be up to Congress—also far too captive to military-industry lobbyists—to start scaling back or canceling expensive programs that don't meet today's threats, or tomorrow's.

There is one place we're delighted to see Mr. Bush invest more money: a proposal to hire 1,100 new diplomats. The next president will need all of the diplomatic help he or she can get to contain the many international disasters Mr. Bush will leave behind.

Predictably, the big losers in Mr. Bush's budget are domestic-spending programs—including medical research, environmental protection and education—which will either be held flat or cut.

Even more predictably, most of Mr. Bush's touted savings would come from programs intended to protect the country's most vulnerable citizens: the elderly, the poor and the disabled. The budget would sharply restrain the growth of spending on the huge Medicare health insurance program, in an effort to save some \$178 billion over the next five years. The administration would achieve that primarily by cutting the annual increases in payments to hospitals, nursing homes and other health care providers that are designed to keep up with the rising costs of caring for Medicare beneficiaries.

There is clearly room to restrain the rate of growth in some of these payments. But the size and duration of the cuts are irresponsible. Meanwhile, Mr. Bush—who insists that every answer to the country's health care woes can be found in the private sector—has left largely untouched the big subsidies that prop up the private Medicare Advantage insurance plans. Eliminating these unjustified subsidies could save Medicare more than \$50 billion over five years and \$150 billion over 10 years.

Just as the nation seems on the edge of a recession, the budget would also shave federal contributions to state Medicaid programs by some \$17 billion over five years. That is exactly the wrong direction to go in tough economic times, when low-income workers who lose their jobs need Medicaid coverage and states have fewer funds to supply it.

All of this means that Mr. Bush will leave his successor a daunting list of problems: the ever-rising cost of health care, the tens of millions of uninsured, a military that is desperately in need of rebuilding. Thanks to Mr. Bush's profligate ways, it also means that the next president will have even less money for solving them.

HONORING GENERAL
MONTGOMERY C. MEIGS, USA

HON. JOE SESTAK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to thank and congratulate General Montgomery C. Meigs, USA, for his dedicated service to the armed forces of the United States of America.

General Meigs is receiving the General Alexander M. Haig, Jr. "Guardian of Liberty" award from the West Point Society of Philadelphia. This is awarded to individuals who exemplify the Motto of "Duty, Honor, Country" while contributing to and guarding the freedom which we all enjoy. Past recipients have been General Haig, General Jowlan, Secretary of the Army Tom White, General Clark, General Shinseki, General Reimer, and General Downing.

General Meigs' academic credentials are remarkable. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and he graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a Master's Degree and a Doctorate in History. He also is a graduate of the Armor Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, United States Army Command and General Staff College, and National War College.

General Meigs has had a variety of key leadership and management positions throughout his career including: Squadron Maintenance Officer, Vietnam; Chief, Strategic Application Branch, Office of the Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, J-5, The Joint Staff Washington, DC; Commander, 2d Brigade, 1st Armored Division, United States Army Europe and Seventh Army, Germany and Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia; Commanding General, United States Army Europe and Seventh Army, Germany and Commander, Stabilization Force, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

His awards speak to an extraordinarily successful career and include: Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with "V" device, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medals, Army Commendation Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Ranger Tab, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge.

General Meigs' family, friends, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and our entire nation extend their gratitude to him for a career of selfless dedication to our safety and security.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably absent yesterday afternoon, February 25, on very urgent business. Had I been present for the three votes which occurred yesterday, I would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 978, rollcall vote No. 69; I

would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 930, rollcall vote No. 70; and I would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 944, rollcall vote No. 71.

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS AND
FORT LEAVENWORTH PILOT
PARTNERSHIP FOR WOUNDED
WARRIORS

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, earlier this month, the University of Kansas and Fort Leavenworth agreed to conduct a pilot program that would allow Wounded Warriors, both active duty and retired, the opportunity to complete a graduate degree program and then return to the Army to work in assignments at Fort Leavenworth related to their recently earned degrees. In a ceremony at the Lewis and Clark Center at Fort Leavenworth on February 6, 2008, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren and University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway welcomed eight Army Wounded Warriors into the pilot program.

The concept for the program was developed in September 2007 and presented to the Secretary of Defense, who encouraged the Army to proceed. Soldiers accepted for the program will be assigned to the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth with duty at the University of Kansas. There they will work to complete master degree programs in areas that can support programs or academia at the Combined Arms Center. The cost of the degree awarding program will be covered by the Army. The University of Kansas was asked to be the partner in this program due to its strong relationship with the Combined Arms Center and its superior academic reputation and accessibility for disabled students.

I am so pleased that these two great institutions have come together to provide a way for wounded Soldiers who may not be able to return to battle the ability to continue to serve their country. I congratulate both the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth for their initiative and I invite my colleagues to do the same.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE
DESIGNATION OF APRIL 2008 AS
PUBLIC RADIO RECOGNITION
MONTH

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to introduce a resolution expressing support for the designation of April 2008 as "Public Radio Recognition Month." This legislation celebrates the contributions of public radio to America's communities and enduring civic spirit.

Today, more than 33 million Americans listen to and appreciate public radio through more than 800 locally controlled stations, spanning every State and congressional district. Public radio is committed to community-