

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will consider a Democratic budget that will strengthen our economy and make America safer. After years of devastating cuts by the Bush administration, our budget is fiscally responsible, while also ensuring that we invest in the American people's priorities.

At a time of economic uncertainty, the Democratic budget rejects President Bush's cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, while also adding \$4.9 billion for veterans health care.

Despite the President's repeated vetoes of our legislation to ensure that 10 million children have access to health care, our budget accommodates the \$50 billion that would be needed over the next 5 years to make this goal a reality. We're still hopeful that enough Republicans will join us in overriding the President's ill-advised and non-compassionate veto.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic budget is able to address all of the health care needs while balancing the budget by 2012 without raising taxes.

earmarks

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I am the first House appropriator to swear off earmarks and join 32 of my colleagues, including Senators FEINGOLD and MCCAIN, as well as Chairman WAXMAN and Leader BOEHNER. I'm told that Senators CLINTON and OBAMA are considering supporting this effort.

The Constitution put the spending power in the House, and I used this to support my district. But like other powers, this congressional power could be abused; and, increasingly, we approve low- or no-quality spending to win approval for our own community: you get yours, I get mine, and the kids get the bill.

No more for this appropriator. We should ask: Should the taxpayers pay for a \$320 million bridge to connect a town of 8,000 to an island, population 50? No.

Should the taxpayers spend \$243,000 on Chez Panisse to create a gourmet organic school lunch program featuring "Comte cheese souffle with mache salad" or "Meyer lemon eclairs with huckleberry coulis"? No.

Common sense says we should put an end to such spending. I would urge the House to enact the Wolf-Kingston reforms with a moratorium on earmarks.

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PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE NOT BUYING INTO SCARE TACTICS OF BUSH AND REPUBLICANS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that no one is buying into the scare tactics created by the President and some Republicans regarding the expiration of the President's Protect America Act. Newspapers around the country are rightfully asking Republicans that if this law were so crucial to national security, why did they oppose an extension of it last month?

The Saint Louis Post-Dispatch called this intimidation and "fear mongering at its most craven." The Oregonian wasn't fooled by the President's political actions, writing: "If the Protect America Act is as crucial as he says it is, then he is taking a terrible gamble with the safety of his country's citizens." The Palm Beach Post recognized that "political distraction" is more important to this administration than the law. They wrote, "The law that Mr. Bush and some Republicans say is vital could have been extended for 3 weeks. Instead, they let it die."

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats are serious about passing a strong FISA law that provides our intelligence community with the tools necessary to protect our national security, and we urge congressional Republicans and the White House to join us at the table.

FISA AMENDMENTS ACT

(Mr. KUHL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the FISA Amendments Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978.

It is imperative that we provide our intelligence community with the tools it needs to conduct surveillance on foreign terrorists without getting tied up in the courts, and this bill would do just that. The Senate passed this bipartisan legislation almost a month ago, but the House leadership has irresponsibly refused to bring up this bill, which is critical to our Nation's security.

I have chosen to cosponsor the measure because I believe that in today's world, we cannot shortchange our ability to confront emerging and ongoing threats. Therefore, I urge the majority to bring this crucial legislation to a vote.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION NEEDS TO LISTEN

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, if you ask Mr. and Mrs. America who are in the rural hamlets and the urban cities across America, they will tell you whether there is a recession or not. If you ask the automobile dealers, the home builders, if you ask the individuals who are attempting to

put their children through college or even to make ends meet, they will tell you that bad news is already here; 63,000 jobs were lost last month.

I am glad the Democrats are taking the opportunity to strengthen our economy and create jobs. Democratic leaders last week held a second economic forum. The forum convened national experts and talked about how we can create jobs. The New Direction Congress has already passed a bipartisan economic stimulus of which thousands of Americans will be receiving a payment because of the leadership of our Democratic majority. We are helping to create 500,000 jobs. But it is well to recognize that this administration just last month lost 63,000 jobs.

What we need to do is bring our troops home, lower health care costs, and increase health care quality. We need to vote in the CHIP bill and stop the President's veto. We need to ensure that we lower energy prices through alternative fuels by creating hundreds of thousands of new green jobs. We have got to make college more affordable and K-12 classrooms more successful.

We can empower America with our own initiative and our own genius. But we cannot do it if we have an administration that doesn't listen. Sixty-three thousand jobs lost tells the story, and Mr. and Mrs. America say, "wake up and provide an opportunity for Americans." They want the Democrats to lead and to be able to create the opportunity for the economic engine that will save jobs and create jobs.

NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS WEEK

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, this week, March 10-17, is National Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. The goal of this annual event is to raise awareness of this disease for those individuals and their families who are impacted by it.

Every hour in the United States, someone new is diagnosed with MS. It is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system. Many Americans know a person living with multiple sclerosis, a mother or father, a son or daughter, another family member or friend, or even a colleague.

For me, it was a member of my staff. This brave and strong woman inspired me to get more involved in the battle to live in a world free of multiple sclerosis. As a medical doctor prior to coming to Congress, I'm working here to find sensible solutions for the health care challenges that Americans face. As the cochair of the newly formed Congressional Multiple Sclerosis Caucus, I intend to bring the needs of those individuals into the larger discussion of quality health care.

Mr. Speaker, we must work together to improve access to quality health

services, to break down barriers, and to make MS therapies more affordable. I ask other Members of the House to join me in this noble cause. We must always remember that behind every statistic is the face of a family member or friend. We have a shared responsibility to offer help and hope. There is no better time than now to begin offering it.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET IS INADEQUATE

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, during the first 6 years of the Bush administration, the President and congressional Republicans squandered away large budget surpluses that were left to them by the Clinton administration; yet they failed to properly fund key national priorities. Again this year, the Bush administration proposed a budget that ignores the real needs of American people, particularly at a time of such economic uncertainty.

This week, congressional Democrats will bring a budget to the House floor that fully funds Medicare and Medicaid, the health care programs for the Nation's most vulnerable people, including our children and our seniors. Unlike the President's budget, our budget fully invests in environmental protection and low-income heating programs such as LIHEAP so that low-income families, including those in my district in New Jersey who are facing skyrocketing home heating bills this winter, will receive some much-needed assistance. We also fully invest in the COPS program so that we can better protect our streets against crime.

Mr. Speaker, we do all of this without raising taxes by one single penny. This is a well-crafted budget, and it deserves strong bipartisan support.

SUPPORT THE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. With gas prices soaring to all-time high records, families in east Tennessee and all across America are struggling to make their ends meet. The Democratic budget resolution fails to meet the test of fiscal responsibility miserably. Instead of exercising fiscal restraint and lowering taxes, the Democrat budget raises taxes by over \$683 billion over the course of 5 years. You heard me correctly, \$683 billion over the next 5 years. This is the largest tax increase in American history, and it blows away the previous tax increase record in 1993 by \$443 billion. Families in east Tennessee will be forced to pay over \$2,611 in new taxes because of the Democrat budget.

I am supporting the Republican budget which addresses the bloated govern-

ment in Washington, lowers taxes on struggling citizens and families, addresses the unfunded liabilities of Social Security and Medicare, and reins in the out-of-control spending here in Washington.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the fiscally responsible Republican budget.

PRESIDENT VETOES INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION BILL

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a word about the President's veto of the congressional ban on torture. By vetoing this measure, he is essentially instructing America's torturers to act in a way that is illegal according to international law, to act in a way that is wholly inconsistent with the military's code of conduct who are required to abide by the Army Field Manual, to act in a way that does not consistently provide reliable information because people being tortured tell their torturer what they know they want to hear so as to stop the torture. They know it is not the most effective means of acquiring information.

He also must know that this puts our own soldiers and civilians in much greater jeopardy because our enemy will consider it license to do at least as much as we do to them. But, most importantly, it undermines our moral authority. How far we have strayed from the vision of our Founding Fathers that this Nation would serve as a moral guidepost to the rest of the world. We should override this misguided Presidential veto because it is both illegal and, most importantly, it is immoral and un-American.

TIME FOR HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY TO JOIN TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Village Health Partners of Plano, Texas, for receiving the 2007 Davies Award of Excellence by the Health Care Information and Management System Society. Since 1994, the Davies Award has nationally recognized excellence in the use of health information technology. Dr. Christopher Crow and his partners decided to use technology to revolutionize how they practiced medicine. It took their office 3 short months to go from paper charts to completely paper-free. Using this technology has given these doctors the tools to track the quality of care they provide their patients. In just 1 year these physicians have seen the dramatic impact this technology has had on the lives of their patients.

As all of my colleagues know, our health care system is in need of some serious reform, and I believe that bringing every doctor's office, hospital, and medical record into the 21st century is a great start. Just look at the success that we have had in Plano.

As Congress continues to debate health care reform, I look forward to working with my colleagues on proposals that will encourage more of the health care industry to join the technology revolution. The time is now.

THE BUDGET

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, we're hearing the howls from the Republican side. Their fat-cat supporters might be forced to pay a fair share of taxes in the future, millionaires and billionaires who today are paying taxes at a rate less than that of your average schoolteacher or an Army captain. They say that that's the secret for a strong economy. Those hedge fund managers on Wall Street are doing such a great job, the people who brought us the financial meltdown for the United States of America that's hurting average people while these people are still cruising in their yachts and building their seventh and eighth homes in exotic places around the world. They need those tax cuts. That's the nostrum for a failing economy: tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts for rich people.

No, how about tax fairness and how about dealing with a sea of red ink in this country. You can't do it without asking the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share. And restoring some programs that are important to the middle class. Yeah, that's right. The rich people don't need roads that are up to standard because they're in the back seat of a chauffeur-driven limousine. They don't care if they sit in traffic for a long time. They're in their private jet. They're in their walled community. What do they need for public safety? Their kids go to private schools. What do they care about public education? And, hey, they don't have to worry about the cost of health care. That's the Republican world. We're going to change that with this Democratic budget.

FISA

(Mr. MCCAUL of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, nearly 4 weeks have passed since the Protect America Act expired, and for 4 weeks our intelligence community has gone dark around the world. For 4 weeks, we are missing critical intelligence from foreign terrorists to better protect this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this is a dereliction of duty. The most solemn obligation we have in the House is to protect the