

best for what they consider the peasants in the vast rural areas.

Those elitists grew up in privilege and look down on the rest of the country. The elitists in the imperial kingdom of Washington, DC feel it's their privileged right and obligation to make the peasants happier because those rural Americans don't know how to take care of themselves.

Well, let me tell you the truth about those peasants. These great Americans don't look to Washington or the elites or the monarchy for their happiness. They find their happiness in their individuality. The folks that I represent in southeast Texas are patriotic citizens, many from small-town rural America.

They love their families and are proud of America. They are honest, hard-working independent citizens who, when duty calls, go off to war to defend this Nation. They attend church on Sunday, and if they don't attend, they still feel strongly about their religion.

They believe they have the personal right to bear arms. They are not bitter about life, but they are generally happy. They are not in need of big government coming in in the name of hope and change to control more of their lives.

Those in Washington would do well to remember that the salt of the Earth lives in small-town America. Government should keep out of their way, instead of interfering with their lives, their faith, and their right to bear arms.

And that's just the way it is.

BIG OIL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, JOHN MCCAIN, has a solution to skyrocketing gas prices.

Is he going to take on Big Oil, their price gouging, and their obscene profits? No. Is he going to take on OPEC and their collusion to restrict supply and drive up the price in violation of international trade law? No.

Is he going to take on the hedge fund speculators on Wall Street that are driving up the price unnecessarily 50 cents a gallon so then they can make money? No.

He is going to be the GOP nominee, the Grand Oil Party nominee. He can't take that money. He has a solution. Suspend the Federal gas tax.

In 1993, the Federal gas tax was 18.3 cents and a gallon of gas was a buck. In 2008, a gallon of gas is \$3.50. The Federal gas tax is the same 18.3 cents. It's dropped to 5 percent of the cost.

If we follow his plan, we will cancel hundreds of needed bridge projects and highway projects across the country, throwing construction workers out of jobs, an already hard-hit sector, or maybe he is just going to borrow the money after he cancels the gas tax, be-

cause the only thing going up faster on the Republican administration than the price of gas is the national debt.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

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

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, this week is National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

This Congress should be working to make our cities, our streets, our States, our Nation safer for crime victims instead of talking about things like beaches and protecting union bosses.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children was created 10 years ago, and this is about to expire in a few months.

Let me tell you, having spent 21 years on the bench, I probably tried 250 to 300 aggravated sexual assault cases. One was an adult, the balance were children.

This is epidemic in this country. It's time for this Congress to get on board and work on the Internet Sex Offender Prohibition Act, which would punish people for using the Internet to find victims for their sexual offenses as child predators and would increase and enhance the punishment for those crimes.

This is important work. This is work this Congress needs to do to protect our children and make our streets safe.

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS IS FIGHTING TO MAKE THE TAX CODE FAIR AND PRO-FAMILY

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, as millions of middle-class Americans rush to the post office tonight to drop their tax forms in the mail, this Democratic Congress is fighting to make the Tax Code fair and pro-family.

Already this year we passed a budget that makes middle-class tax relief a priority. Our budget calls for extending middle-income tax cuts, including child tax credit, marriage penalty relief and 10 percent tax bracket.

Rather than supporting our budget, President Bush and congressional Republicans continue to push permanent tax cuts for multimillionaires. For 7 years now, President Bush's tax policy has disproportionately benefited the wealthiest few in our Nation.

Consider that the average millionaire is being given \$120,000 in tax breaks on their 2007 taxes, while middle-income taxpayers are, on average, receiving only about \$740.

As the income gap between the wealthy and the middle class continues to grow, we should prioritize middle-class tax cuts. If Congressional Repub-

licans are serious about providing continued relief to the middle class, they should support our final budget proposal.

□ 1215

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, congressional Democrats are prioritizing tax cuts for the middle class. Our budget made clear that we intend to extend and pay for the Bush tax cuts that directly impact middle class families.

In fact, the Democratic budget identifies the specific tax cuts that we would like to see extended, such as: marriage penalty relief; the 10 percent lower income bracket; the child tax credit; small business expensing; and the R&D tax credit.

But like our fiscally irresponsible colleagues who advocate a continuation of this administration's failed economic policies, the Democratic budget achieves balance in 4 years and ensures that any increased spending or decreased revenue must be offset by comparable budget cuts.

Rather than just charging the cost to the national credit card and increasing our indebtedness to foreign nations like China and Japan, Democrats want to go in a new direction by ensuring that our budgets are balanced and our Tax Code is fair for all Americans.

AMERICANS ASK: WHY IS BUSH SPENDING BILLIONS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, on Tax Day, Americans have a right to ask why the Bush administration continues to spend taxpayer dollars on an Iraq war that has no end in sight and no plans for success.

Today, President Bush will spend more than \$338 million in Iraq. What exactly does that mean for the taxpayer sending in his or her form today? The typical taxpayer covers the cost of the war in Iraq for only one-half a second.

And while we continue to ship billions of dollars to Iraq while our economy is going south and our budget deficit continues to hit record highs every year, the Iraqi government currently has a surplus and is expecting to receive \$40 billion this year in oil revenues. Can someone please make sense of this policy?

Madam Speaker, the American taxpayer has every right to demand more accountability from Washington. Congressional Democrats continue to propose a change in policy, one that shifts more responsibility to the Iraqis themselves. They can certainly afford it. Unfortunately, President Bush and his supporters in Congress ignore the

American people and congressional Democrats who do not want to see taxpayer dollars wasted in Iraq any longer.

SUPPORT TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE AND SIMPLIFICATION ACT

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

Mr. McNERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today on Tax Day 2008 in strong support of H.R. 5719, the Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification Act. I commend Chairman RANGEL and Ranking Member MCCREY for bringing this bill to the floor and working hard to simplify our tax policies.

Today's Tax Code has become so complex that it takes more than 25 hours to complete an itemized tax return. That is an hour longer than 2003, and 10 hours longer other than 1989.

Families will benefit significantly from this legislation which strengthens identity theft and tax fraud protections, stops taxpayer harassment by ending the private collection of Federal taxes, and expands tax refund assistance for low-income Americans.

I am also pleased that the provisions in the Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification Act increase online fraud security and allows individuals to have better recourse in the event of a crime.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5719.

AMERICANS ASK: WHY IS BUSH SPENDING BILLIONS IN IRAQ

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

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, today, Tax Day, millions of Americans know that their tax dollars will support rebuilding Iraq instead of rebuilding America. Americans have already spent \$44 billion in rebuilding Iraq at a time when the Iraqis have a huge oil revenue reserve.

Today, taxpayers may be wondering how this money could be spent in Iraq, our money, instead of rebuilding the U.S.A. With the \$339 million that we are spending daily in Iraq, we could instead provide an additional 18,000 American students with Pell Grants so they can attend college. We could also hire and keep 4,400 "COPS on the beat." Our moneys could be used, if we spent them here, to have 2,000 more border guard agents to protect our borders.

Madam Speaker, as Americans pay their taxes today, they have a right to know why billions are being spent each month in Iraq instead of here in the U.S.A.

DEMOCRATS' FISCALLY IRRESPONSIBLE BUDGET

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

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, House Democrats' fiscally irresponsible budget will impose on American workers and businesses a \$683 billion tax hike, the largest in U.S. history.

With our economy slowing and many families losing their homes, the last thing Congress needs to do is to take more money from these hardworking Americans. Tax relief, not a tax increase, is the best stimulant to our economy. Socking 116 million Americans with an average tax hike of over \$1,800 is an irresponsible fiscal strategy.

Working families would be hit especially hard by the Democrats' irresponsibility. A family of four with two children that currently earns \$50,000 annually would have to pay an additional \$2,155 in taxes under the Democrats' plan. That would amount to a 191 percent increase in their tax bill.

The last thing our economy needs right now is the largest tax increase in history. House Republicans are dedicated to protecting working families, investors, and small businesses from the irresponsible tax hike that is being foisted upon us.

TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE AND SIMPLIFICATION ACT

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, my friend, the colleague who spoke just before me, was mentioning a fictitious tax increase. I want people to know that such a thing does not in fact exist, and I would be curious to see which law it is.

In the meanwhile, there is no better day than today, April 15, to talk about the commitment this Congress has made to the American people to ensure that the Tax Code becomes fairer and simpler for middle class families.

We must be consistent and make the Tax Code more helpful to families by prioritizing middle class tax relief, including the child tax credit, relief from the marriage penalty, and preserving our lowest tax brackets.

We must also commit to making sure our tax dollars are spent wisely. The average family pays over \$13,000 in Federal taxes; they deserve to get their money's worth.

For that to happen, we must preserve fiscal discipline, as this Congress has done by reinstating the pay-as-you-go rules, PAYGO, meaning we only spend as much money as we have and we do not increase the deficit for our children and grandchildren. And we must prioritize important spending such as health care, education, and our national infrastructure.

WHY IS BUSH SPENDING BILLIONS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, as our constituents put the finishing touches on their tax returns, many of them are probably wondering just how much we will be sending to Iraq.

Taxpayers are rightfully outraged, as are many Members of this body, by the massive levels of waste, fraud and corruption documented in large government contracts to well-connected firms. Under the Bush administration, the use of no-bid contracts has doubled and the Defense Contract Audit Agency believes that \$10 billion of the taxpayers' money has been spent on questionable or unsupported costs in Iraq contracts.

Madam Speaker, House Democrats are bringing much-needed accountability to the government contracting business by cracking down on no-bid contracts, protecting Federal whistleblowers, and withholding Federal contracts from tax-delinquent companies.

While Democrats would like to see a change of policy in Iraq, we, like the average taxpayer, want to prevent our money from being wasted. We are taking the steps necessary to ensure that no longer happens.

ON TAX DAY, WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

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

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, today is Tax Day and everyone in America is asking the question: Whose side are you on?

Well, I am on the side of Wisconsin taxpayers, and my record proves it. I have kept my word.

In September of 2006, I stated we should do two things: First, balance our Federal budget here in Washington like people do back home; and, second, to reduce taxes for middle class families.

We have kept our word. And like other Democrats, I voted to cut taxes and balance our Federal budget. We saved 62,000 households in the Eighth District of Wisconsin from paying the AMT tax; for tax deductions for health care expenses and property taxes; we voted to cut taxes for small businesses and S corporations; and we are trying to make mortgage payments deductible for everyone, whether you itemize or do not.

We also voted to close tax loopholes that encourage our jobs to be shipped overseas. We are on the side of the taxpayers. My record proves it. Today is Tax Day. Whose side is your representative on?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas