

And yet Mr. Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection that we should have given them.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude, in the hope that perhaps someone new who heard this sunset memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,868 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a better way for mothers and their babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered and that all too soon each of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn. May that be the day we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

It is April 16, 2008—12,868 days since Roe v. Wade first stained the foundation of this Nation with the blood of its own children—this, in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

FORMER PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I rise to condemn the fact that former President Jimmy Carter on Friday is going to Damascus to meet with the senior Hamas leader. This is really a disgrace, and, frankly, I think that Jimmy Carter embarrasses himself by doing so.

Hamas is a terrorist organization. It is designated a terrorist organization by both the United States and the European Union. Hamas has been responsible for the murders of 26 Americans, and I would like to read the names and I would like to submit into the RECORD this list of the 26 Americans that have been murdered by Hamas:

Yitzhak Weinstock of California, Nachshon Wachsmann of New York, Sara Duker of New Jersey, Matthew Eisenfeld of Connecticut, Ira Weinstein of New York, David Boim of New York, Yael Botwin of California, Leah Stern

of New Jersey, Malka Roth of New York, Judith Greenbaum of New Jersey, Marla Bennett of California, Benjamin Blutstein of Pennsylvania, Dina Carter of North Carolina, Janice Ruth Coulter of Massachusetts, David Gritz of Massachusetts, Rabbi Eli Horowitz of Illinois, Dina Horowitz of Florida, Alan Beer of Ohio, Tzvi Goldstein of New York, Goldie Taubenfeld of New York, Shmuel Taubenfeld of New York, Tehilla Nathanson of New York, Yitzhak Reinitz of New York, Mordechai Reinitz of New York, David Applebaum of Ohio, and Nava Applebaum of Ohio.

Twenty-six American citizens killed by Hamas, and yet Jimmy Carter would shake the hand of the leading Hamas terrorist with blood on his hands. Shame on Jimmy Carter.

Today Jimmy Carter was in the West Bank and met with another Hamas leader and laid a wreath at the grave of Yasser Arafat. Isn't that really something?

Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist, does not renounce violence and terrorism, and refuses to abide by all previous agreements signed by previous Palestinian Governments. And yet Jimmy Carter would shake the hands of murderers and terrorists with blood dripping from their hands. It's no wonder that the Daily Star in Lebanon has an article today saying "Jimmy Carter, a Fool on a Fool's Errand." It's surely disgraceful. This is a new low.

Jimmy Carter wrote a book, "Palestine: Peace not Apartheid," and fabricated portions in that book. I spoke with the former leader of the Carter Center, who said he was with Jimmy Carter on a number of these meetings and the accounts that Jimmy Carter wrote in his book were absolutely incorrect and falsified because he was in the meetings with Jimmy Carter and took notes.

So I just want to say that I think all freedom-loving people ought to condemn any kind of meetings with terrorists. To meet with terrorists only encourages them to do more terrorism so that they can be players. It's truly a sad day when a former President of the United States will shake hands and greet the leading terrorist, the leader of the leading terrorist organization, Hamas, a man who was responsible for the deaths of 26 Americans, countless more, with blood dripping from his hands. It is truly a shame. I believe that we should all condemn it.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ENGEL. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman for the courage and the leadership that he is providing on the very important issue of standing up for Israel and the right of Israel to survive and how much I have enjoyed working with the gentleman from New York on this issue and for him to come to the floor and make these comments and voice my total agreement with the sentiments that he is stating here tonight.

This is a very, very important issue. Israel is a key ally of the United States in the war on terror. And now is the time for us to stand together with the people of Israel, and I want to commend the gentleman.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank my friend from Florida, and I want to return the compliment. It has been a pleasure working with him in doing everything we can to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship, two democracies with shared values and shared beliefs, and it's been a pleasure working with my friend from Florida.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman 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. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY 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 Idaho (Mr. SALI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SALI 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 Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELLER of Illinois 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 Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

BUDGET SCHOOL: THE RIGHT TO KNOW HOW WASHINGTON SPENDS YOUR MONEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that our majority has set up this Special Order hour and those of us in the minority have the opportunity to come to claim this time and to talk about issues that are of tremendous importance to us.

Over the past few weeks, some of my colleagues and I have come to the floor on a weekly basis, and we have talked about the Federal budget and what you find in the Federal budget. And, Mr. Speaker, we think that this is a very important thing to do because the budget that the majority has brought to us this year is a rather large budget and it contains the single largest tax increase in history.

So we have spent some time talking with our colleagues and with our constituents about what you actually find in this document. Now, we have called this "Budget School: The Right to Know How Washington Spends Your Money." And, of course, as each week we have talked about this, you can go to the whitehouse.gov Web site and go to OMB and pull down a copy of that budget. Then you can get the Republican response from budget.house.gov/republicans and see what we would do, how we would go about reducing the taxes that you pay and making certain that you, the taxpayer, are keeping more money in your budget.

Now, if you want to watch some of the sessions that we have had on Budget School, you can go to house.gov/blackburn, and there are some Budget School resources there. One of the resources that we have used is the Basics of the Budget Process briefing paper. You can go to the Budget Committee Web site, budget.house.gov/republicans, and be able to get a little bit of information about how we actually go through this, how you look at the different functions of the budget, where you find those, looking at the size of the budget, being able to follow it through, looking at the timeline of the budget and how it goes through the process of the President's presenting his budget, then its going to the committee, how the committee works through the process, brings it to the floor, and then this summer as we start through appropriations and through the earmarking process. And we're going to be back to talk about that part of the budget, the earmarks, as we get into the summer.

Tonight as we talk about process and what has actually happened, I want to welcome to the floor and to this session of Budget School the ranking member, and the ranking member of the Budget Committee is our number one Republican on the Budget Committee, and this is the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), who is known for being one of the top fiscal conservatives in the U.S. Congress. And I am delighted that he has joined us for Budget School. He is a leader in the Republican Study Committee and a leader on the Budget Committee.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. And I want to just thank you for all the leadership you've shown not only on this issue but that you've shown throughout your career. You fought the income tax in Tennessee. You're here fighting for lower taxes here in the U.S. Capital, and I want to thank you for all the leadership you have shown. And it's a pleasure for me to join you with this.

I thought, given the comments recently by our majority leader about this year's budget, it would be fitting to go through the budget that we're talking about.

The majority leader just said, in one of the publications printed here, that we don't need a budget conference report. Now, that's happened in the past. Under Republican leadership, when the Republicans ran the majority, there were a few times when the Republicans were unable to pass a budget. And you know what happens? No priorities are set. What happens when a budget is not passed, when a budget is not agreed to between the House and the Senate, is that only spending occurs or tax increases. And so there's no chance of fiscal discipline. There's no chance of putting us on a path to balancing the budget, to making sure we get rid of the deficit and pay down the debt. There's just spending. And 1 year into the majority, 1 year into the majority, they're now showing us that just 1 year in the majority they can't pass a budget.

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They don't have a plan to get us to a balanced budget. They don't have a map for the fiscal future of our country. But they can come to the floor with spending bills. They can come to the floor to spend more money. And in fact, they do have a plan. And this budget is not necessary to raise taxes.

So I would like to talk about exactly what it is that they have been proposing, what it is our partners on the other side of the aisle have proposed. And if you take a look at what they proposed this year, it is the largest tax increase in American history. The biggest tax increase before this was back in 1993. That was a \$241 billion tax increase.

This tax increase that they're proposing now is a \$683 billion tax increase. Now that is a big number. People probably want to know what does that number mean? It sounds big. It is going to do a lot.

Well, here is exactly what they mean when they are talking about a \$683 billion tax increase. They want ordinary income taxes to go up across the board. So for people who got an income tax rate cut, that is every income taxpayer in 2003, they are going to go up across the board. We are now going to make small businesses who file their taxes as ordinary income taxpayers at about a 40 percent tax rate.

What is interesting is the people in the top tax bracket. We hear a lot of

people running for President saying, we want the rich people to pay taxes. Guess what? Seventy-five percent of those who file in the top tax bracket are small businesses. They are not Warren Buffett and Bill Gates. They are small businesses who pay their taxes as individuals because that's the way small business taxation occurs in America.

What's more to the point is the fact that 70 percent of our jobs in America come from small businesses. So they're saying, not only do we propose to raise income taxes across the board for all income taxpayers, also on the engine of economic growth and job creation in America is small businesses. They're also saying, we want to raise taxes on capital gains and dividends. Those are the taxes that affect the value of our 401(k) plans, our IRAs and our pensions.

They also want to bring the death tax back into full force so that you pay taxes not once, not twice, not three times while you are living, but after you die as well. They also want to bring the marriage penalty back. We actually repealed the marriage penalty in 2003. They are proposing that it comes back in so they can spend that money on more government spending programs here in Washington. That hits taxpayers an average of \$1,400 per married couple.

They are also proposing to cut the child tax credit in half from \$1,000 down to \$500. That means a tax increase of \$500 per child. And they are also proposing to get rid of the lower income tax bracket, which is a 10 percent bracket, to a 15 percent bracket.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman would yield, I would like to go back to this poster for just one moment.

So what I am hearing you say is you all worked through this process in Budget Committee. And as the budget document came to you from the President, and then you worked it through committee, this is the resolution that the Democrat-led majority came to in that committee, that they didn't want to have a budget that stressed priorities. They didn't want to have a budget that was going to lessen the burden on the taxpayer. What they wanted to do was have a budget that was just going to keep the focus on spending and taking more out of the taxpayers' pocket.

And in order to get to their number, their desired number, the \$683 billion tax increase that's going to take place over the next 5 years, what they are willing to do is to have those income tax rates go back up, the marginal rates go to 39.6 percent, which will affect so many of our small businesses.

And as you so rightly stated, 70 percent of all the jobs in the country come out of the small business sector. Capital gains, which are very important to our senior citizens, those that are living on retirement income, who have worked hard, who have built a nest egg, who have saved, we are going to

see that go up to 20 percent. The death tax is one of those taxes that I think is so egregious because you acquire something, you pay tax. You earn the income and you pay tax. You make an acquisition and you pay tax. You maintain it and you are paying tax. Then if you have a capital gain, you pay tax. If you put that aside so that you're leaving something for your family, the government reaches in, the IRS reaches in one more time after you're gone and takes it again. And that is going to go to 55 percent.

For staying married, you are going to end up paying \$1,400. You will go from zero back up to \$1,400. Your child tax credit, in the meantime, is going to be cut in half. And then that 10 percent bracket, that lowest bracket for those that are working and need to have a break, the government needs to give them a break, they are going to raise that back up to 15 percent. And that is the resolution that the majority chose to move out of the Budget Committee.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. That's right. And what the majority is basically proposing is they are going to deem this budget resolution. They are going to simply say that this is the resolution that we deem to be the case, and this is how we are going to manage the fiscal affairs of this Congress in this session. So we're planning on a big tax increase, and we're expecting it to happen because this is our plan, and now we're going to start spending the money.

And I want to be fair to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. They did bring a budget to the floor that does balance the budget. It does reach a balanced budget by 2012. The way and the method that it reaches a balanced budget by 2012 is this \$683 billion tax increase. They only increased spending by \$280 billion. But they increased taxes by \$683 billion. So by raising taxes even more than all their spending increases, they are actually hitting a balanced budget.

But take a look at who gets affected by this. I mentioned the actual tax policy that they're proposing with their big tax increase to fund some of their spending increases and to actually hit a balanced budget. But let me just say who is going to actually be affected in America by this. One hundred sixty million taxpayers will see an average increase of more than \$1,800 per year, \$3,000 per taxpayer in Wisconsin, more than 6 million low-income individuals and couples who currently pay no income taxes will no longer be exempt. A family of four earning \$50,000 will see their taxes increase by \$2,100. Approximately 48 million married couples will face this average tax increase of \$3,000 per year. Low-income families with one or two children will no longer be eligible for the refundable tax credit. Roughly 12 million single women with children will see their taxes increase by \$1,100 per year. About 18 million seniors will be subjected to tax increases of more than \$2,100 per year.

And the tax bill for an estimated 27 million small business owners will increase by more than \$4,000 each. These are real people, real Americans, really hardworking people struggling to make ends meet.

And these are real tax increases at a time when people are having a hard time just to make ends meet right now because of all these high prices, you see the price of food going up, groceries, gasoline, health care premiums, across the board.

I just did a telephone townhall meeting the other night. So many constituents said, Congressman, my paycheck is not stretching as far. People's paychecks aren't going as far as they used to go. Inflation is before us. The consumer price index just reached a 4.3 percent increase. And so what we see happening right now is with all these price increases in gas, groceries and health care, people's paychecks are not going as far as they used to go. It is eroding the standard of living of people.

We are possibly going into a recession. And the last thing we ought to be doing right now is raising all these taxes on all these hardworking Americans. We shouldn't be raising taxes on seniors. We shouldn't be raising taxes on people who get married. We shouldn't be raising taxes on parents with children. We shouldn't be raising taxes on small businesses.

What we should be doing in Washington is controlling our spending appetite. And that's the problem. That's the problem with this budget that has passed the House. That's the problem with the budget that the other side of the aisle is planning. They don't want to control spending. They don't want to cut spending or even control it. They want to increase spending.

In order to hit their commitment of a balanced budget, they will increase taxes even more than that. My fear is that this will take this possible recession we are going into and make it even worse, because people are having a hard time making their paychecks stretch as it is today.

Take a look at what Republicans believe and at the budget we passed. This is just a simple graph. The red line is the line of revenues that the Democrats chose to pick on their way to a balanced budget. The green line is the path that we brought with our budget, the Republicans. What does that line do? It says that we are not going to raise taxes. We are not going to raise taxes on income, on families, on people with children, on seniors or on small businesses. And we're going to repeal this alternative minimum tax. And we're going to balance the budget faster and better by cutting and controlling spending. Because if you take a look at the real problem in our fiscal situation, it's really spending that drives our problems.

And if I could just mention this one thing before I yield back to the gentlelady because I think we ought to

have a conversation here, take a look at where we are today. And this chart is fairly confusing, but if you take a look at it, the blue line is the line that we want to be on, which is not raising taxes. The red line is the line that the Democrats are trying to propose, which is all these tax increases, the \$683 billion we just articulated. The green is the future trajectory of spending.

So even if you take all these Democrat tax increases, that will only give you a temporary balanced budget. Because if you don't address spending in Washington, if you don't address our entitlement programs, the spending path that we are on will swamp any level of taxes. We're going to go into permanent deficits and massive debt.

So this notion that we can have a lasting balanced budget by just raising taxes is wrong. This notion that we should just raise taxes and increase spending is dangerous. And the reason that notion is dangerous is because spending is already out of control. And it is on a path that is really dangerous.

If I could just briefly mention this, the budget resolution that the Democrats brought to the floor on just two programs increases the debt by \$14 trillion on just two programs. By saying we are not interested in controlling spending, by saying we are not interested in controlling and reforming government or fixing our entitlement programs, just the debt to Social Security and Medicare goes up by \$14 trillion under the Democrat's budget. That's just two programs.

Every year we don't do anything to fix, save and make solvent Social Security and Medicare, we go another \$2 trillion in debt just in those two programs. Our friends on the other side of the aisle are saying, instead of taking care of this \$39 trillion debt we have with these two programs, we're going to raise it to \$53 trillion. And that's wrong.

We believe that the way to fix our fiscal problems is to let Americans keep more money in their paychecks. It's to protect their paychecks, stop the pork barrel spending, control spending, reform government and reform our entitlement programs. Because we owe it to the next generation to leave them better off than we were left off. That's what my mom and dad told me growing up, that the whole point of America, the legacy of this country, is that you leave the next generation safer and more prosperous with a better chance at a better standard of living.

But for the first time in the history of our country, we have a real serious chance of severing that legacy, of discontinuing that tradition. Because if we give our kids and our grandkids the kind of debt that they are right now slated to get, and if we say for the next 5 years, as our friends on the other side of the aisle are now saying, we're not going to do anything to help that, we're not going to do anything to fix that, we are, in fact, going to add to

the problem. We are going to raise taxes, increase spending and make it even worse for our children and grandchildren. We are going to sever that legacy. And our kids and our grandkids will not have a higher standard of living. They will not have a better government. They will not have more freedom in their lives. And they will not have more money in their paychecks.

And if you want to just bring this point finally home, this is the chart that the General Accountability Office has given us. This shows us that what is unique about our budget and our fiscal history is that for the last 40 years, our government has been remarkably same in size. The Federal Government has had to take 18.3 cents out of every dollar earned in America. That is 18.3 percent of gross domestic product. So 18.3 cents on the dollar earned in America for the last 40 years is what Washington had to tax to pay for the Federal Government, to pay for everything, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, national defense, the Department of Education and the Department of Commerce.

But what is happening is the baby boom generation is retiring. And the first baby boomer retired just a few months ago. She was a retired school teacher in Maryland who started collecting her Social Security benefits. And behind her are 77 million more retirees. And so the problem for our country is with what we call a pay-as-you-go system, where current workers pay their current taxes to support current beneficiaries, that works out fine if you have an equal number of beneficiaries, retirees and workers. But we are doubling our retirees. We are going from 40 million retirees to actually 78 million retirees. But we are only increasing our workers in this country by 17 percent. So there is about 100 percent increase in the retirees in this country in one generation, but only a 17 percent increase in taxpayers.

So what does that do for our children? Well, I can tell you what it does for my children. My son, Sam, is 3 years old. My son, Charlie is 4. And my daughter, Liza, is 6. And by the time my three kids are exactly my age, exactly my age, they will have to pay 40 cents on the dollar just to keep today's Federal Government going for them at that time.

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That is exactly right. By the year 2040, today's Federal Government, which costs about 20 percent of GDP, 20 cents on the dollar, we are in deficit and raising about 18.8 percent, it is going to cost 40 percent. And that is if we do nothing.

That is what it is all about. If we do nothing and we let government go on as it is, add no new programs, take none away, our government will double in size within one generation. So my children, instead of sending, like we are, about 18.3 cents on the dollar to Washington to pay the bills, will have

to send 40 cents on the dollar to Washington to pay the bills, the bills we are giving them, the debt we are giving them.

That is unsustainable. You can't win globalization. You can't compete with the likes of China and India. We are having a hard time doing that right now. You can't compete with the likes of China and India and Europe and Japan when you are taking 40 cents out of every dollar just for Washington, before you get to local government, State government, gas, groceries, healthcare. This is the future we are consigning our children and grandchildren to. And the budget that is before us today, the budget that the Democrats passed on the floor just this last moment, says, you know what? Here is our answer. Do more spending, more taxes. Make the problem worse. Increase the debt to two programs by just \$14 trillion. It is irresponsible. It is wrong. It is going to sever this legacy to our children and grandchildren.

We need to leave them with a better country, a safer country, a more prosperous country, one where they can compete and thrive and survive. I don't want to just have my children survive globalization. I want America to win globalization, to shape globalization, to make sure that our kids can have careers that they like, that they love, that they enjoy, so they have a higher standard of living.

But in fact that is not what is going to happen if we don't get our fiscal house in order right now. If we sign on to these tax increases and these spending increases, what we will do in the short run is we will make the recession worse. We will take more money out of the paychecks of working Americans at a time when they are having a hard time staying afloat right now. We will put more debt on to the backs of our children by building up all the spending in the baseline around here.

We need to say no to spending sometimes around here. There is one little easy piece of spending that I think we could say no to, and that is earmarks. Earmarks are what we call pork-barrel spending. Our budget, the Republican budget, not only balanced the budget by controlling spending and kept taxes low, but our budget said for one year, let's just have Congress say no earmarks for a year. No more pork for one year. A pork-free diet in Congress for just one year.

Do you know what we can accomplish in our budget by saying no earmarks for one year and keep banking that money, carrying out those savings? We can make the per-child tax credit permanent, make it stay at \$1,000. We can permanently repeal the marriage tax penalty and prevent that \$1,400 average tax increase on married couples from happening, by just saying no pork for one year and saving that money. That is what our budget does.

So the question on just the earmarks is, is it pork for Members of Congress, or is it paychecks for working Ameri-

cans? We chose paychecks. Our friends on the other side of the aisle are choosing pork. That is wrong. So when you take a look at the short run, more pork, less money for people's paychecks. Higher taxes, less economic growth, more job loss, higher taxes on small businesses, on seniors, on families, on married people, on children, on people with children.

What you are seeing is they are going to increase the debt. They are going to increase the already unsustainable path that we are on and this unsustainable debt we have today. This is why we take this seriously. This is why we come to the well of the House to say we need to get our fiscal house in order, and the other side is recklessly spending with abandon.

Now, I want to say this as a Republican: Our party did not do a good job on this either as well in many instances. There are ways in which we should have done better. And that is why it is important for those of us who see what is going wrong to fix it. That is why it is important for us to have proposals to fix these things.

So nobody is perfect in Washington. Republicans did too much spending, but Republicans look like fiscal scrooges compared to the Democrats today. They look like they are the austerity Congress compared to the Democrat Congress today, because the Democrat Congress today is putting no limits on anything. They are saying bring a budget to the floor and just bring up more spending, bring up the taxes, and let's just let our children and grandchildren pay the bill. That is wrong.

So I want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her courageous leadership on this. It is not easy to say no to all of the people that come looking for spending. Most people who come to visit their Congressmen and their Congresswomen say we need more money for this, we need more money for that. Every time you say yes to that, it is more money out of the paychecks of working men and women in America. This Congress chose less money for paychecks, more money for Washington.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for being strong and being a leader on this and for fighting those kinds of instincts, and being a voice in the wilderness for fiscal discipline. I appreciate that.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for his leadership at the Budget Committee and for being there in the fight on this, to make certain that we bring forward these issues, to point out that we are focused not on immediate gratification when it comes to this, not on saying yes to pork-barrel projects. We are focused on the long-term, what is the legacy going to be.

As you pointed out in your charts, by the time we get to 2030, it is going to take every dollar of our existing tax base to cover Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. That is it. I mean, it will just be the entitlements that get covered.

And for our children and grandchildren, if you were to take a dollar and extract 40 cents out of that, and there again, that is just the Federal Government portion, it is not your State, it is not your local communities, it is not your county, it is just the Federal Government. They have that right of first refusal on your paycheck. And now when you earn a dollar, before they give you any of it, then by the time we get to 2040, they are taking 40 cents out of that dollar and then giving you 60 cents for yourself, for your family, for your State, your county and your community.

That is a frightening, frightening thought for this next generation. That is not the legacy that we want to leave them. We should be about securing the blessings of this great Nation for our children and our grandchildren and future generations. It is truly indeed regrettable and even shameful that the focus would be only on the here and now and not on what is to come for generations to come.

I want to yield now to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), who is a CPA. When we talk about fiscal responsibility, many times this is someone that we turn to and say, tell us what you know and give us your best insights. For that wisdom, I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for yielding me time. I always enjoy hearing the young whippersnapper from Wisconsin, who has been here for a long time, his thoughts, the ranking member of the Budget Committee and also serves on Ways and Means.

A couple of points that I would like to add on or pile on with what my good colleague from Wisconsin talked about. You will hear in these chambers over the next several weeks, months and years that the Democrats do not intend to raise taxes on everybody, as the charts have shown is going to happen if we do nothing. Their intentions are good. They don't intend to raise the lowest tax rate from 10 percent to 15 percent, or a 50 percent increase in tax rates. They don't intend to do that.

But by these budget proposals they brought in in the last 2 years, they commit all of the money that those increased taxes raise. So in order for them to make good on their promise of not raising, as example, the 10 percent rate to 15 percent, they have got to raise taxes somewhere else in the system to make up for those revenues.

So your chart says we have a right to know how Washington spends its money. We also have a right to know how Washington raises its money as well, and that is one of the categories that this one falls into.

I have seven grandkids, about the same age as Paul's young children, and when I look at what we are doing in this Federal Government, I try to translate that into what impact it has on their lives, on their opportunities when they are in our positions.

We have built a world around the concept that let's take care of today's problems with tomorrow or the next day's money. As we look at the problems that face us, and they are daunting, no doubt about it, if they are worthy of being fixed, then they are worthy of taking our money to fix those problems and not taking money away from our kids and our grandchildren to do that fix.

When folks come to Washington from Texas to ask me what can we do, how can we help you do your job better, every single time I go through this speech about \$53 trillion in unfunded promises that we made to each other, a process that we have to begin the renegotiation of those promises, and that they as community leaders have to begin self-assessing whether or not what they are asking Washington to do has a constitutional link to the Federal Government.

In other words, if they want money for a particular project in San Angelo, Texas, or Midland, Texas, is it right to take tax dollars away from somebody in El Paso to pay for that project, or is that a project that ought to be handled by the local folks? Because as Paul said, every time you ask the Federal Government for help in something, that means spending goes up, and we have a very terrible time of saying no.

So if we can get our community leaders, our mayors and county judges and others to do a better job of analyzing what they are asking us for so that it really does have a constitutional Federal nexus to what they are trying to get done, then that is a step in the right direction to make this happen.

I want to talk a little bit about the budget process, because that is really where the spending piece of this wreck occurs. I serve on the Budget Committee with Mr. RYAN, and that top line number is incredibly important, because whatever it is set at, whether it is on a vote between the two Houses or a vote in the House or then some sort of gentleman's agreement with the Senate, that amount of money is going to get spent, come hell or high water.

There is no way to stop it, because as the appropriations bills come to this floor, they have already allocated that top line number among each of the subcommittees. And if we on the floor are able to work to win an amendment to the appropriations bill that strips spending out in some fashion—now, we never win those, but we come down here and try every time—should lightning strike and we actually strip a program out of an appropriations bill, that money does not get saved. That money simply goes back to the committee to spend on something else. Our budgetary processes don't allow us to come down here and effectively drop that top line number.

So I have a bill in the hopper that says if we are successful in reducing the spending in a particular appropriations bill, that that money goes to offset the deficit, or that money does not

get spent, which is how most folks in West Texas thought our system would work up here. If we won a fight on the floor on a vote of more than half the Members that the Appropriations Committee got it wrong and that they sent a priority that that money should not have gotten spent on, that is money we could save in the budget and not get spent. So working to try to correct that is awfully difficult.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman would yield, the bill that he just referenced I think is so important, because what it does is to redirect the funds as the budget works its way through the process. You mentioned the top line number, and that is the number that gets set in the Budget Committee, and then as we move through this process with the appropriations, and we are going to be back on this floor during that season talking about earmarks, but those are hard-fought battles.

But let's say that we eliminate a program and that program saves \$50 million, eliminates \$50 million in spending. Then that money is not used as a savings. It is not realized as a savings for the taxpayer. It goes back to the committee and the committee can choose to spend it another way. And your legislation, and they can go to your website and get more information on that legislation, would require that the Federal Government use that money to lower the deficit.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you. That is exactly right. It is the Savings in Appropriations bill. What it says is the Appropriations Committee, in all of the hard and worthy work they do, they get one bite at the apple of setting priorities. We give them the top line number. They get a bite at it. And if they bring that bite to the floor and more than half of us disagree with what they did, then that money should be saved to the taxpayer, go against the deficit or increase a surplus, should we ever get into it. That is not the way the mechanics of our system work today.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I appreciate that explanation from the gentleman from Texas, and I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin for a comment.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I have explained this to constituents at home in Wisconsin and they are just dumbfounded. They think that if you come to the floor and bring an amendment to eliminate wasteful spending, let's just say we did an amendment to get rid of the \$50 million Rain Forest Museum that is being built in Iowa City, Iowa. You could come to the floor and say, you know what? We probably shouldn't be spending our taxpayer dollars on this \$50 million Rain Forest Museum, this rainforest in a bubble in Iowa. Let's not do that. We could pass that amendment and that \$50 million couldn't go to that Rain Forest Museum. But by the way the rulings of our Congress work today, that \$50 million won't be saved. It will be spent somewhere else in the government.

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Most people think, if you actually go and eliminate wasteful spending, you actually save the money, but that's not the system. It gets spent somewhere else by the rules, somewhere else in the Federal Government.

Mr. CONAWAY. If the gentleman would yield.

If they think that more than half of us vote to say that's a bad priority set, I mean, that's just a bad piece of deal, that the majority would win in that circumstance. But under our rules, and they have been in place for a long, long time, it goes back to the Appropriations Committee. They get a second bite at the apple in setting priorities, it's just not the way most folks run their project.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. If the gentleman would yield, because we can pass amendments eliminating programs or cutting back wasteful spending. By the practice and the rules of this Congress, that money just gets spent somewhere else.

I simply want to applaud the gentleman, I want to applaud him for coming up with a creative, innovative, idea to get these rules back to the world of common sense. Then we could actually go after wasteful spending, we actually save the money, and give it back to the taxpayer by lowering our deficit, than just finding other places to spend it, which is what happens today. I just want to thank him for taking on this very important fight.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the gentleman. I want to make one more point, and I will yield back and visit with the gentlelady from Tennessee, and that a third of the budget that we work on every year is annual discretionary spending. In other words, it's money that we should be deciding, can we afford this this year or can't we, a legitimate setting of priorities.

The other two-thirds of the \$3.1 trillion that we spend is going to happen on autopilot. It will happen whether we do anything or not. We have to act aggressively and make hard decisions to go after that two-thirds.

This year's budget proposal took a pass on the hard work of addressing the two-thirds of the budget that we referred to as entitlements or mandatory spending or automatic spending—I won't offend some of my colleagues by using the word "entitlement"—but it takes courage in this body to go after those spending programs.

They are the ones that are on the charts, are driving us to bankruptcy under our current system of government if we don't have courage to begin to say we have to renegotiate those promises. We have made promises that we just can't pay for.

But a third of the budget that we can do something about, we ought to have rules on this floor that allow the majority's will to be reflected in whether that money gets spent. I yield back.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman.

I want to welcome another member of the Budget Committee to our discussion this evening. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) was a freshman with me in 2002, and we all worked together starting the Washington Waste Watchers. Waste, fraud and abuse, fighting waste, fraud, and abuse was our freshman class project.

We certainly have stayed at the forefront. The gentleman from Florida has stayed at the forefront of fighting wasteful spending and then seeking ways to reduce that, seeking ways to approach the budget process, changes, and also looking for ways to reduce the burden of taxation.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for your steadfast leadership on this issue, your leadership is really common sense to a system, a city that is, frankly, broken. Washington is broken.

You know, there are so many, many examples that we can show that Washington is, frankly, broken. It's stuck in this sort of like a perverse dance, frankly, of taking one step forward to help the taxpayer and 3 or 4 steps backwards in hurting the taxpayer.

I would like to give you an example, just one of those examples that when the American people see what is going on here, of course, they say Washington is broken. Of course, they say that there is no common sense in Washington.

Look, what are the good moments? One of the fine moments is when the economy starts slowing down, this Congress, on a bipartisan level, got together, and in a bipartisan level made the determination that the way to get the economy moving again was how, was how? It was to lower taxes.

That debate took place, and it was very clear, on a bipartisan level, Congress decided, House and the other party, the other body, both parties to lower taxes in order to incentivize the economy. It was actually a good moment for this Congress.

But then what happened just days after that? Just days after this Congress lowers taxes on the American people by \$107 billion, because we understand that lowering taxes helps the economy, helps the American people, small businesses and families. Just days after that, the majority party comes to this floor with a budget that raises taxes, increases taxes by \$683 billion over 5 years.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist or a mathematician to understand if everybody agrees, both parties, that lowering taxes by \$103 billion is something that would help the economy, and that's what we did, doesn't it seem logical that days later coming back and passing a budget that in-

creases taxes, not to the level of that, making up for that \$103 billion, no, no, increases it by \$683 billion over 5 years.

Of course people look at Washington and say what are you guys thinking? Don't tell me that you are helping the economy by lowering taxes by \$100 billion and then, days later, think that we are going to be surprised, we are not going to understand that you then propose raising almost \$700 billion on the same taxpayer, that you are lowering taxes because it helps the economy.

If there is an agreement, a bipartisan agreement, that lowering taxes by \$100 billion helps the economy, which there is, is it that hard to understand that the flip side of that is that if you raise taxes by \$700 billion it hurts the economy? Yet that's what this Congress did over the objections of those of us that are speaking here, and many others, but that's what the majority party did.

So, again, why is it that Congress has the lowest number, frankly, approval rating since probably these things have been counted? Because they must think we are nuts, because they must think we are totally, absolutely, insane and crazy and have absolutely no idea what we are doing.

Again, I may not be the smartest guy in the whole world, but it doesn't take the smartest guy in the whole world, as you know, to understand that if there is a bipartisan consensus that lowering taxes in a year, \$100 billion helps the economy. There should be a consensus that raising taxes by \$700 billion for 5 years would do just the opposite. Oh, no, because our desire, the majority's desire to just tax and spend and tax and spend, just, frankly, goes above and beyond any common sense, any logic, any sense of reality.

I just want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for your leadership, because you have not stopped fighting for the taxpayer, for the small family, for families, for small businesses, for farmers, for the people, real life, not D.C. D.C. is broken. Again, thank you for your common sense. Thank you for your fight for the taxpayer.

I also need to add to that. One of the people that I frankly most admire in this process is Congressman RYAN of Wisconsin, who is the ranking member of the Budget Committee, who understands the budget better than, frankly, anybody else, and who has taught me so, so much. Mr. CONAWAY brings to this process something that is so greatly needed, which is common sense.

I thank the three of you. Look again, yes, frankly the American people have reason to be skeptical, when they see that we lower taxes on one side because we say it's in a healthy economy, and then, days later, the majority raises

taxes way above that and pretends that it's not going to have an effect, hoping that people will not learn the truth. But the problem is that that truth is out there, and people's pocketbooks are going to be hit really, really hard.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Yes, absolutely.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Does the gentleman remember when we had a markup where the budget was written in the Budget Committee, and we had 36 amendments? Remember the different kinds of amendments we had, and the votes, we had votes on whether or not it's right to cut the child tax credit in half, whether it's right to bring back the marriage penalty, whether we should or should not raise income tax rates across the board for all income taxpayers. Vote after vote after vote, on all these taxes, and our friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats voted time over again to raise those taxes on individual tax rates.

They voted specifically to cut the child tax credit in half. They voted specifically to bring back the marriage tax penalty. They voted specifically to raise income tax rates across the board, to bring back death taxes, to raise capital gains and dividends taxes. They did this so they could pass a budget that increased spending.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida, who has the most passion and who so well articulates the problems we have in America today. I want to thank you for your knowledge, your passion, and your understanding. I also want to just ask you if you recall all those votes and all those differences that we have seen here in just this Congress in this last short year.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I thank the gentleman. If I may?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Frankly, that was one of the saddest days that I have experienced in this process, because, you know, there is so much rhetoric that's thrown around here. We hear the rhetoric, that, oh, no, these are tax cuts on the wealthy.

Then you and others came up with a specific amendment to say, no, no, let's just talk about the issue. Let's take rhetoric off the table for a second. Let's not be partisan. Let's just look at the issue. Let's see if there is something that we can agree on.

Those amendments were brought to the committee. Those amendments were, as you just mentioned, the per child tax credit, and then we kept hearing, but those are tax cuts on the wealthy. I remember the argument and the discussion, again, not only the wealthy get married.

Tax cuts, remember the 10 percent bracket.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Yes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Individuals that are the working

poor that now earn so little that they don't pay Federal income tax, and they should not, are now going to be required to start paying Federal income taxes. But they say those are tax cuts on the wealthy.

It's not the wealthy. When you cut to the chase, you get the most smoke and mirrors, and we were able to bring these individual amendments to the committee. The sad part, the reason I say that was really sad, is because those amendments are defeated on a partisan vote, on a partisan vote, amendments to keep the taxes low.

If you have children, amendments to make sure that people who are working poor, that have a hard time paying for gasoline and paying for groceries and don't pay Federal income tax, because they are so poor right now, still don't have to pay them. They voted against those amendments.

There is a reason why people are skeptical and people don't believe what comes out of Washington. Frankly, they have a very good reason to have that attitude.

Mr. CONAWAY. Will the gentleman yield?

Some of those amendments were co-sponsored in regular legislation by Democrats. Yet when it came to the Budget Committee they voted against them. In their own bills on the floor over here, they voted against them, just partisan, partisan politics. It helped to add to that cynical attitude that you are referring to.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I agree, and I will conclude.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield, I think that there was also an amendment presented that day in those 36 amendments that would have allowed your State of Florida and your State of Texas and my State of Tennessee to continue to deduct the sales tax deductibility that some of us worked very hard in 2003 to have that deduction restored for our States, where we did not have a State income tax. We have a sales tax. That is an issue of tax fairness, and it was a party-line vote to take that deduction away.

In my State of Tennessee, that is about a \$1,600 deduction per family. That ends up being real money in the pockets of our families. This new \$683 billion tax increase that the majority has brought forward and laid on the table here in this House and said we are for it, that is what they want, that is what they think should be the priority. That bill, their budget, will take another \$2,668 per tax filer out of the pockets of my constituents and send it here.

I yield back to the gentleman from Florida.

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Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. This is just not that complicated. The question is: Is government here to help serve the people? Or are the people here on this planet and in this country

to help fund government exclusively? And that is the battle. We hear that time and time again when we try to reduce taxes on working people, working families, they say you are going to hurt government if you don't allow us to increase taxes. Hurt government? Excuse me, since when is the role of the government just to milk people as much as it possibly can.

Again, there is a reason why the rankings of this Congress are the lowest they have ever been. I guess some think nobody is watching; and, therefore, we can say we support tax cuts and even sometimes file legislation, and then vote against amendments on the budget to lower taxes, the per child tax credit, the death penalty and the marriage penalty so you don't have to pay more just because you are married. Even the death tax.

Quoting the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY), as partisan as this process is, can we not at least agree that there should be no taxation without respiration? No, not in this process. In this process with the people in control now, they are going to milk the taxpayer and spend every penny, and when that is spent, they are going to look in the cushions of people's homes to see if there are loose quarters and take those as well because government knows best because there is no money we can't spend. And, frankly, the American people know better. They are wise.

I thank all of you, particularly the gentlewoman from Tennessee for your leadership and bringing commonsense to this process.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I hope the people of Tennessee realize a big reason they don't have an income tax imposed upon them is because of MARSHA BLACKBURN. You led that antitax fight in Tennessee to prevent a new income tax from being imposed on the people of Tennessee. And now in Congress you have led the fight up here to see that they can have the same kind of deductibility of their sales taxes as those of us who come from States that have income taxes have that deductibility.

So I want to thank the gentlelady from Tennessee for being a champion of the Tennessee taxpayer. I am a Badger. I am a Wisconsin fan. I am a Packer fan. I am not a big Titan fan or a Volunteer fan, but I am a MARSHA BLACKBURN fan because you fight for taxpayers. We need more people in Congress fighting for taxpayers, just like we have champions like the gentleman from Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Mr. CONAWAY from Texas. Texas has a lot of people who fight high taxes, but MIKE CONAWAY is one of the guys leading here.

I am glad we got together to set the record straight on the budget and on the fiscal path that we are on in this country, and set the record straight for what future lies before our children and grandchildren if we don't take our responsibilities here seriously and change our course.

I want to thank the gentlelady for hosting this hour.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. On policies we debate in this Chamber, we always have choices. And it seems as though recently with respect to spending, the choice is to spend more. With respect to taxes, the choice is to tax more. With energy, the choice is to raise energy costs. All of those things are not good for the American taxpayer. All of those things are not good for the health of this country. And in particular, the seven grandkids that I love the most, it is clearly not good for their financial health or well-being, and we clearly need to do something about it.

I thank the gentlelady for letting me participate tonight.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The gentleman from Texas talks about his seven grandchildren and the gentleman from Wisconsin talks about his three children. I have two adult children, and I am going to have a grandbaby in just a few days, and it is so disappointing when you see what that child is going to be responsible for when they come on the face of this Earth.

This year alone, Washington is going to spend over \$25,000 per household and that is going to be a heavy burden for every man, woman and child to bear.

Just as a reminder, our budget school, the right to know how you spend your money, if you want to see how the Republicans would have approached this budget this year and not raised taxes, how the Republicans fought a \$683 billion tax increase, \$683 billion, this is where you go: Budget.house.gov/Republicans, and you can pull that response down. To get more information on our Republican Study Committee, budget and school resources, go to House.gov/Blackburn. That is a great way to figure out how we think is the best way to approach fiscal responsibility, how to be a good steward, a wise steward of the taxpayer dollar.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for having yielded the time tonight.

IRAQ AND THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, good evening. It is a pleasure to be here tonight on behalf of the freshman class. It certainly has been an honor to serve here this last year, and to be joined by Mr. HALL of New York, and a number of other Members who are going to join us tonight.

What we are going to talk about tonight is something that I think is weighing very heavily on the minds of Americans right now, and that is the

economy. We understand because the United States is the most resilient, optimistic, innovative country in the world, that we will persevere and we will work out the issues that have caused some of the problems in our economy right now.

But that being said, as we speak today, there are people all over the United States who are hurting. They are hurting because their jobs may be threatened or they have lost their jobs or lost confidence that their job may be here in the next weeks and months. They are hurting because their home may be threatened from foreclosure or difficult terms. They may be hurting because gas prices have shot up. If we think about what the cost of oil was not that long ago, literally back in 2002, it was \$28 per barrel. And we know as of today, it hit \$114 per barrel. Shame on all of us for allowing that to be the case today and for having this dependence on oil. We have leadership in this House that is working on that.

Americans may be hurting because their health care is a threat, pre-existing conditions, things that are not covered by their policies, and the cost of insurance is just beyond their means.

There are a lot of things that people are thinking about that are weighing them down. At the same time, we have a war in Iraq and in Afghanistan. And a fight that we, as Americans, obviously understand that when America is challenged, we will fight back. But I think there is also a broad recognition that the war we are in, at least in Iraq right now, we may have gotten into for some of the wrong reasons, and without justification.

With that being said, I want to thank the men and women who serve this country and put their lives on the line every single day in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world. And their families that are back home, persevering and doing the necessary things to carry on while their loved ones are gone. I know this Congress has taken upon itself to be certain and put all of the dollars on the table that have been promised in the past but not delivered, to make sure that every man and woman when they come home from service in the armed services, that they are given all the medical services, mental health services, physical health services, and a lifetime of care if necessary. We are committed to doing that as Congress.

But the question today is what should we be doing about Iraq, and how does this interplay with the economy. That is the subject of what we are going to talk about tonight. Are there things that we should be doing to help us as Americans, help us in our daily lives in the United States, help us make sure that we have the future, a better future, as our parents wished for us, that my children who are in college right now, that they will have a better opportunity than I did. That is something that is the American dream, and

it has been around for generations. And yet people today are questioning if that is where we are going.

We have to say what do we have to do to make sure that Americans come first and also protect our national security and evaluate this foreign policy, this fight in Iraq and other places, yes, is it in fact making us safer at home and on our streets. Or is it a disastrous situation that has cost us \$600 billion up to this point, over 4,000 lives of our brave men and women, and 30,000 to 40,000 brave men and women who have come back with severe injuries and will require lifetime care.

We are going to talk about those issues, engage each other on the floor, and we are going to continue to invite the American people to work with us and come up with some good solutions.

I am joined by the gentleman from New York (Mr. HALL) who has been a strong leader and very focused on the fact that our security is important, but our economy is equally important, and I turn the floor over to Mr. HALL.

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, it is good to be here with Mr. KLEIN and Congressman BRALEY.

Before I talk about Iraq, I have to respond to a couple of things that were said a few minutes ago by our friends from the other side of the aisle who used the word "truth" frequently and talked about their children and grandchildren. And I am sure they are sincere, but to those of you Americans out there listening, I am sure you can remember that when President Bush took over with Republicans controlling both Houses of Congress in the year 2001, he had a surplus delivered to him by the Clinton administration.

In the years since then, these folks you just heard talking, who profess to know what is best for our economy, have delivered to the United States, from a surplus when we were paying down the national debt, now the biggest deficit in the history of our country, the biggest balance of trade deficit, the biggest individual debt by Americans that is held, whether it is credit card debt or home second mortgage debt, and now we have the housing crisis, the subprime crisis, and various big box stores I was reading today are getting ready to file for or have already filed for bankruptcy, including some that we have seen proliferating around the country and have assumed that they were on solid ground.

So I would take all the proclamations you just heard and the fancy charts that you just saw from the Republican hour before us with a grain of salt.

The tax increase that they claim we are voting for is actually something that they, when they installed their tax cuts early in the Bush years, they installed it by putting in a sunset provision that is their creation, not ours. So I stand here and say that we have not in fact voted for anything like this biggest tax increase in history. It is a theatrical and dramatic presentation,