

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

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

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

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

(Ms. LEE 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 Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. YARMUTH 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 Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE 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.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker and Members, colleagues, I am pleased to open this hour for the 30-Something Working Group, look forward to my fellow colleagues joining me as we progress through the hour.

We come to the floor tonight to talk about a variety of important issues. We are proud and pleased that we sent an economic stimulus package that was developed in a bipartisan fashion, in a bipartisan spirit, this evening to the President of the United States. It was

a process that was long negotiated and hard fought, but we were able to make sure that we focused on the priorities of the American people during a difficult time economically.

The focus of this economic stimulus package was threefold, and they all begin with "t." First, an economic stimulus package that we passed had to be "temporary." We have to make sure that we can get a temporary infusion of cash into the hands of the middle class and people who will spend that money, and make sure that we can stimulate the economy.

It has to be "targeted." It has to make sure that we were getting it into the hands of people who were actually going to spend that money, not people that were going to invest it, not people that necessarily were going to just pay off bills or sit on the money, but people who were going to use it to spend on items that they needed and get that infusion of cash into the economy so that we can have a short-term stimulus.

And, finally, the third "t" in the three-legged stool is that it had to be "timely." We had to do it soon and quickly because in order to either stave off a recession, or address the one that we're in, depending on which side of the debate you're on, on whether we're in a recession or headed towards one, we needed to make sure that we did this in a timely fashion and made sure that we can get that cash into people's hands over the next couple of months. And now we look forward to that happening.

Let me walk Members and others through the process that we went through. This was truly a bipartisan effort. It continued the bipartisan spirit that Speaker PELOSI and our majority leadership have been making an effort at extending our hand across the aisle since taking over the majority a little over 1 year ago.

In December of last year, the House, under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI, held a House Democratic Economic Forum to talk about the dire straits that the economy was facing to really hear about what issues Americans were struggling with and to begin to figure out what we could do on a short-term as well as a long-term basis.

□ 2030

After the beginning of December, we had ongoing discussions between the House leaders and the administration through Treasury Secretary Paulson. There were intense and heavy discussions because everyone knew that something needed to be done. The devil is always obviously in the details.

But we came together, the administration as well as the Republican and Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives, we came together and came up with a bipartisan solution.

There was a Democratic leadership letter to President Bush that was sent on January 11 urging the President to work with us and make sure that we could pass an economic stimulus pack-

age that was timely and targeted and that we made sure that it got money into the hands of people who would spend it.

We saw that PELOSI had a meeting with the Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, and he testified in the House of Representatives on January 14 and thereafter, and the message that he sent was that an economic stimulus package was essential and would be helpful in order to deal with the issues that the economy is struggling with.

After that, we had a meeting between Speaker PELOSI and Leader BOEHNER, and they were able to reach an agreement and move in the direction until we finally reached today where we are able to pass the economic stimulus package, send it to the President, and over the next couple of months, I believe the timing is around May of this year, we will see that those funds get into the hands of people who need it the most.

One of the most exciting things about this package is that it is not going to go to the wealthiest few. It is not going to go to people who are just going to put it into the stock market or sit on it or just pay off bills or use it to pad fat bank accounts. We were able to successfully negotiate that the people who received this economic stimulus, these economic stimulus funds, we were able to stretch it all the way down to people who earn only \$3,000. I mean, that is a category of person who truly fits the definition of needing the economic assistance. People who will be able to use those funds to make sure that they can address their everyday needs and spend those dollars so that we can put it an injection of cash into the economy and begin to revitalize it.

We made sure that we also provided some assistance for people who are struggling with housing issues and with mortgage issues by making sure that the FHA has a wider ceiling of mortgages in which they can provide loans to people. We have raised the cap to up over \$700,000, recognizing that the range of the cost of housing is wide across the country.

It's good to see Mr. ALTMIRE, and I'm glad you have joined us tonight. I know that the average price of a house in my district, in my community right now is over \$300,000, which, obviously, without an economic stimulus package raising that cap would make it difficult for someone to qualify under the FHA's criteria. But we were able to make sure that we raised that cap for 1 year so that we could address in a short-term way the third T, which was "temporary," in a short-term way address the economic problems that people are struggling with right now.

And we have continued the bipartisan tradition through the economic stimulus package because last year, when we began and took over the majority, we adopted the 6 in '06 agenda.

In the first 100 hours of our taking over the majority of the House of Representatives, the Democratic Congress

acted on issues important to Americans, and the Republicans on the other side of the aisle joined with us in a bipartisan fashion.

Mr. MURPHY has joined us as well.

Let's walk through some of the bipartisan cooperation that we've had over the last years because there is a lot of words thrown around about how this is an institution that is being run by Democrats and that there is not bipartisan cooperation. Let us just show where the proof is in the pudding here.

We implemented the 9/11 Commission's recommendations which, in previous years, this was a report that was sitting on the shelf gathering dust with the Republicans refusing to put that on the floor and adopt up that legislation. We put it on the floor. It passed 299-128 with 68 Republican votes.

We had an average of over 60 votes for every one of these bills. Raising the minimum wage, H.R. 2. It passed 315-116 with 82 Republican votes.

The funding for enhanced stem cell research, which unfortunately President Bush saw fit to veto. That was H.R. 3. It passed 253-174 with 37 Republican votes.

We passed legislation to make prescription drugs more affordable, so that we could allow the Federal Government to negotiate for lower drug prices with the pharmaceutical industry which, by the way, is currently prohibited in Federal law. We passed that legislation with 255-170 with 24 Republican votes. And the list goes on.

Cutting student loans in half. That was H.R. 5. Passed 356-71 with 124 Republican votes.

And, lastly, we passed the energy package, which was the effort that we are making to recognize that global warming, yes, global warming, truly is a problem and we are committed to ending our addiction to foreign oil. Adopted the CAFE standards, the first time that we adopted some improved CAFE standard in 30 years.

H.R. 6 passed 264-163 with 36 Republican votes. In that legislation, the CAFE standards was legislation that was passed a few months later. And in this bill we said that we were not going to allow \$14 billion in subsidies to be returned to the oil industry so we could make sure that we start to address the high cost of fuel.

So we are very proud of our record, our bipartisan spirit of cooperation, which culminated this evening and will continue, we hope, through the rest of this election year by passing that economic stimulus package.

I'm happy to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida, and I'm glad the chart is up today and our colleagues are able to look at that.

Those are the six items that we identified as our top six legislative priorities for the 110th session of Congress and starting with the very first day, January 4, 2007. So, going back more than a year, we began work on these

projects. And as the gentlewoman pointed out, four of the six have become law. They've been signed into law by President Bush. All four of them passed with strong bipartisan support. The other two that did not become law, both passed the House. In the case of stem cell research, it passed the House twice and it passed the Senate twice and was vetoed by the President twice. Unfortunately, we were unable to override the veto. The Medicare prescription drugs, that failed in the Senate. But all six of these passed the House with strong bipartisan support. Four of them have been enacted into law.

I'm glad to hear about the stimulus package, too. That was the vote that we cast today. And I'm very excited with the quick response that this House and the Senate gave to the American people. We worked together in a bipartisan way to address the problems with the economy. Just about any economist that you talk to, bipartisan, across the spectrum, will say that we are in great danger of slipping into a recession if we are not already in a recession.

So coming back at the very beginning of the year, working together, the first week back, we put together the stimulus package. We passed it out of the House. We sent it to the Senate. They took a little bit longer, but they got their work done, and I congratulate them for that. They passed it today, sent it over to us. We immediately passed it out of the House, and now we are going to send it on to the President.

And this is a stimulus package that is directly going to impact people's lives. This is a tax rebate that is going to put money in the hands of consumers who are going to spend it. And I know we are going to talk in some more detail about that. I will leave that discussion for after Mr. MURPHY speaks.

But I did want to point out the issue that we are talking about is bipartisan. We came back from the holidays, saw the need, heard from the economists, and immediately sprung into action, put together a package in a bipartisan way. Got it done. Both sides of this Capitol. Now we are sending it to the President.

The reason this is so important is because of some of the issues that Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was talking about. The subprime mortgage issue that we all have heard so much about. One of the issues that people need to think about among our colleagues is that when you think about mortgages that are unable to be paid and foreclosures taking place with the subprime mortgages, in many cases this is not a case of somebody buying too much house, buying a house they can't afford, being unable to pay their mortgage. Certainly that does happen.

The bulk of these mortgages that go bad in the foreclosures that take place are second mortgages. There are people who are unable to pay their bills be-

cause of rising gas prices, because of rising health care prices, because of higher education costs. They're simply unable to make ends meet. They take out a second mortgage to pay their daily expenses and unfortunately get in over their heads and lose their homes as a result.

So this stimulus package, by putting money into the hands of people who are going to be able to use it to pay bills and stimulate the economy and buy merchandise and hopefully get the economy kick-started again and prevent a recession, or at least lessen the impact of a recession if we are already in one, this is a very important piece of legislation that both the House and the Senate passed today.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I want to underscore how important it is that you have seen a remarkable degree of coordination and bipartisan cooperation in the House on the second stimulus package. Because you and I both know as acutely as anybody in this Chamber, because we were out there campaigning for change here in Washington, that folks were sort of sick and tired of everything being a fight here, everything being lined up as Republicans against Democrats, conservatives against liberals, X against Y, A against B. That was kind of the order of the day here during the last 12 years before the election of 2006. Everything was going to be a partisan fight, and there really wasn't going to be any real effort to reach across the aisle. That's changed. You and I weren't here, but we know what the perception was from the outside. And the perception, and I think Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ will testify, that was backed up by reality.

Now, cooperation that you see on the economic stimulus package doesn't mean that you still don't fight for what you believe in when you have an honest-to-goodness disagreement, and we are going to talk a little bit tonight about some fights that are about to come, some lines in the sand that we, as Democrats, are prepared to draw with the President and his Republican followers here in the House. But there are so many other things that you don't need to fight about, there is honest-to-goodness agreement on, whether it be jump-starting this economy with an economic stimulus package, whether it be passing reasonable restraints on the mortgage market, opening up access to liquidity for people who want to refinance their homes, have a means to do it but can't find anybody to give them the money and the access to capital. Those are issues that don't have right and left divides. The economic downturn doesn't discriminate against you whether you're a Republican or a Democrat.

So we are passing bills here to deal with this economic slowdown with Republicans and Democrats behind it, and that's what people want us to do.

Now, that doesn't mean they want this Chamber to be Kumbaya on every

single issue. They sent us here to fight for what we believe and what the American people believe in. But you don't have to default to one position all the time or the other position all the time. You don't have to be cooperating on everything or fighting on everything. You can pick and choose. That's what a parent does every day. I mean, you choose the battles that you are going to fight with your kids. As a kid, you choose the battles you are going to fight with your parents. There are things that you get along with them on and things you disagree on.

This place, for a very long time, resorted to the fault of fight about everything, never bother to reaching across the aisle, never try to pass a package with the Republicans and Democrats. I mean, why would you have to? If you have a majority of Republicans here, you can just pass it with Republicans. So why reach out to Democrats? The majority rules in the House.

That's not what the American people want. They want to see that bipartisan partnership. They want to see bills not passing 51 percent to 49 percent. They want to see some bills passing by a real majority. That's what you saw with the 100 hours agenda, and that's what Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ pointed out. That's what you saw with the economic stimulus. You might not see it every time, but you are going to see it a lot more times in this Congress.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And that's the direction we are going to continue to go in, because that line in the sand that you referred to, we have got to draw one. And the place that we draw it is a real commitment to making sure that we move back into a surplus situation like we were in before this administration took us to hell in a handbasket. I mean, let's take a look at the deterioration that our budget has gone through over the last number of years.

We had a situation where the budget has deteriorated by \$8.8 trillion under Republican policies. In the 2001 fiscal year, we had a \$5.6 trillion surplus. Literally leading into President Bush taking office, we were in a \$5.6 trillion surplus.

Now, over the time of this administration, which is approaching 7½, almost 8 years, we have gone from a \$5.6 trillion surplus to a \$3.2 trillion deficit.

□ 2045

Now, if there is anyplace that I think that this Democratic majority will draw a line in the sand, it's here, so that we can make sure we take our established policies and adopt a budget and a plan and a blueprint to get us back to a surplus situation.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I think it serves us to point out that this believes conventional wisdom that Democrats are the ones to draw the line in

the sand when it comes to fiscal responsibility. I mean, the image out there, for whatever reason, for a long time was that if you cared about deficit reduction, if you cared about drawing the line on spending, you might vote Republican. Well, that hasn't been backed up by facts for 12 years now. It was the Clinton administration that had record surpluses. It was a Republican President and a Republican Congress that racked up those enormous deficits. So now, we, as Democrats, are the ones coming down here and saying, listen, if you care about fiscal responsibility, this is the party that you want in charge of your Congress. This is the line that we're going to draw in the sand.

And it bears pointing out the sort of strange irony of that because for a long time the conventional wisdom was the opposite. But the facts back up the reality, which is that if you care about spending, it's the Democrats that are going to offer to draw that line in the sand.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Exactly. And let's detail some of those facts, because the mythology that you just laid out, which is that it's Republicans that are fiscally responsible and that it's Democrats that cause debt, let's take the reality of the Bush administration's responsibility and stewardship of our fiscal house over the last several years.

This administration, under President Bush's leadership, is responsible for the five biggest deficits in American history. Now, there was a whole lot of talk, Mr. ALTMIRE, as you recall over the last year or so, from this administration about how they were going to get us out of debt over the next 4 or 5 years. Right? Well, the third highest deficit that exists is proposed in the budget document that President Bush submitted to the Congress on Monday at \$407 billion. The only two higher deficits that were projected were last fiscal year and in fiscal year 2004, when it was \$413 billion. We're going in the wrong direction.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I would say, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, not to interrupt, but the President did tell us last year that he was going to reduce the deficit, and I see here that last year we had a \$410 billion deficit. And he did, in fact, reduce it. Let's give credit where credit is due. The deficit this year is only going to be \$407 billion.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. That is backing up words with actions, Mr. ALTMIRE.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. ALTMIRE, will you yield?

Mr. ALTMIRE. I certainly will.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. Because we backed out \$3 billion in deficit in a \$3 trillion budget. The budget this year that he proposed was over \$3 trillion.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I'm being facetious, obviously. A \$407 billion deficit for 1 year is a very significant deficit, third highest ever submitted behind only the

budget he submitted last year and the budget from 2004.

But I really appreciate the gentlewoman giving us a little walk down memory lane because we're in a Presidential election year this year, so people are thinking about Presidential politics. And I like to remind my colleagues to think back to the 2000 Presidential election, and let's remember what the discussion was at that time. The Clinton administration was wrapping up. We're in our fourth consecutive year of budget surplus at that time. And as the gentlewoman pointed out with the previous chart, those surpluses were forecast as far as the eye could see, \$5.6 trillion forecasted deficit over 10 years. So the discussion during the Presidential election in the year 2000 between Vice President Gore and then-Governor Bush was, what are we going to do with all this money? This is an incredible surplus. We're awash in money. Are we going to shore up the Social Security trust fund? Are we going to pay down the debt? What are we going to do with this money?

Well, now it's 8 years later, and unfortunately we are not having that discussion anymore, because instead of having had a \$5.6 trillion surplus, as the gentlewoman pointed out, we have had a \$3.5 trillion deficit over just the past 7 years. So that \$5.5 trillion surplus was a 10-year projection, \$3.5 trillion over 7 years. And as the gentlewoman points out, that's almost a \$9 trillion swing.

And I often ask, when we discuss the budget, if you had said to an economist or any group of economists after the new administration took over and they were facing this \$5.5 trillion surplus, if you had said, well, what would it take to have a \$9 trillion swing to the negative in the surplus to a deficit, just about any economist you talk to would have said, well, that's impossible. You can't possibly mismanage the economy to such an extent that you would have a \$9 trillion swing over just 7 years. Well, unfortunately, this current administration has done the impossible; they have added \$3.5 trillion to the national debt, which now stands at \$9.2 trillion.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. ALTMIRE, we're talking about giant numbers here, but let me give you another point of comparison. I mean, there are so many different ways to make this point to the American people that we have allowed spending in this budget to spiral out of control under Republican leadership and to hammer home the point that the problem that the Democratic majority has inherited is one that is going to take a long time to fix, but it is only going to be fixed by having a truly fiscally responsible leadership here in the House in charge.

Here is another way of putting it. I mean, this is remarkable, Mr. ALTMIRE. And this is a chart that Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. MEEK and Mr. RYAN have shared several times,

but it bears putting out here one more time. Forty-two Presidents took 224 years to rack up about \$1 trillion in foreign-owned debt, debt owned by China, European countries, OPEC nations. 42 Presidents, 224 years, over two centuries they took to get \$1 trillion in debt held by foreign countries. This President, one President, has now, this number isn't even accurate anymore, has now racked up \$1.33 trillion in foreign-held debt. One President in about 7 years has racked up more debt than 42 Presidents in 224 years.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman yield for a second?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Absolutely.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Put the chart back up because I think it's important to note that when we began using this chart, it was actually at \$1.03 trillion and the bar was a little bit lower. Now, here on this chart it's 1.19, and it's really \$1.33 trillion in foreign debt. The bar is up to the President's chin. It's actually, the 1.33 I think is up to his lips. He's about to drown in the debt right here on this chart. So we really need to make sure, I mean, there are deficits and there is debt, both are significant, both are important, and both really hamper our long-term security.

When we talk about the need for homeland security, economic security for Americans is equally as important. If we can't rely on our government and our leadership in the government to make sure that we make responsible fiscal decisions like we did when we re-instituted the PAYGO rules, when we made sure that the bills that we pass here are paid for and that we, going forward, aren't going to cause more debt and more deficits and saddle that burden of debt on future generations, that's what fiscal responsibility is all about; that's what financial security is about.

Every single day Americans have to make sure that they don't spend more money than they take in, and we have families across the country who make sacrifices in order to be able to do that. They know they're in trouble if they go in the opposite direction. This administration has spent like drunken sailors and really, to be honest with you, treated the resources that we have like it's Monopoly money, like it's not real, like it grows on trees. I mean, I guess once you get into the trillions, Mr. MURPHY, that's a hard concept to grasp, \$3 trillion.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Well, it's not that hard, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, maybe to grasp over 224 years, but it's hard to grasp how you do \$1.3 trillion in foreign borrowing in just 6 years. And I'll be honest, I can't name every guy here, but I bet you there are some pretty wild spenders in that group, and I bet you there were some real deficit lovers somewhere buried in that group of Presidents. And still, all of them together, \$1.01 trillion, this one President.

Remember, a President alone can't do this, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ; you have to have a Congress that's willing to back you up on this kind of deficit spending. And he had it, but he only had it for 6 of his 8 years. I mean, that's the difference. He had a Congress that's willing to spend that kind of money, that's willing to rack up those kinds of deficits for 6 of his 8 years. For the last two, he doesn't get that deal. For the last 2 years of his Presidency, he gets a fiscally responsible Democratic Congress that for the first time in 8 years is going to push back. It might not be successful every time, but we're going to push back for the first time in a long time.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. MURPHY, I would like to direct a question to our colleague from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ). She has been here for two terms now, we've been here for one, so I'm going to ask her a question. Maybe she can enlighten us and anyone else that may be listening.

What are the nations that we're talking about here when we're talking about foreign-held debt? What are some of the countries that we are lending this money to?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I'm glad you asked that question, Mr. ALTMIRE, because some of these concepts are hard to grasp. I know they're hard for me to get my mind around sometimes. Like I said, \$3 trillion, which is the budget that this President proposed this year, and \$407 billion in deficit. On top of that, a \$1.33 billion foreign debt; that is money that we owe to foreign governments.

Let's look at just who it is that we owe this money to: \$644.3 billion of that is owed to Japan. China, almost \$250 billion, China, through 11/05. And then China now, \$350 billion. Great Britain and the U.K., \$240 billion. The Caribbean, right nearby, our neighbors very close by, we owe \$68 billion to them; \$63 billion to Taiwan. The OPEC nations, where we're trying to move in the direction of weaning ourselves off our dependence on foreign oil, the nice words that the President put in his State of the Union a couple of years ago that we all heard, well, \$100 billion of our debt is owed to the OPEC nations. \$70 billion to Korea, \$53.9 billion to Hong Kong, and \$52.5 billion to Germany.

So we have a lot of our debt spread all over the world. And we're supposed to be the strongest and most vibrant Nation in the entire world, and we have a lot of hands all over us world-wide. And it is not a good situation to be in. It's a tenuous situation to be in, and it's fiscally irresponsible. And we've got to make sure, and we're committed as Democrats under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI, to move us in the right direction and get us out of that debt.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. And Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, we're also committed as 30-somethings. I mean, the reason why this group for 3 years, and before that, before you were here,

when Mr. MEEK and Mr. RYAN were down here, talk about this debt that we owe to foreign countries, talk about the deficit night after night, I mean, people may wonder, why are these guys and why is Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ down here talking night after night about the debt? Well, we're the 30-something Working Group. We're here, in part, to represent the concerns of some of the younger voters in this country. And we need people to understand, we need our 30-something brethren and our 20-something brethren and even kids in high school to understand—

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And sisterhood.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. That's right, that this is going to be their problem, that these loans that we've taken out from China and from the Caribbean and from OPEC nations, they're going to want that money back. And they're going to want that money back 10 years from now, 20 years from now when folks who are now in their teens and their 20s and 30s are in their prime earning years. Just when they need to be mustering the money to send their kids to college, they are going to be paying exorbitant taxes to the Federal Government because we're going to have to start paying back that debt.

So this is an issue that the 30-something Working Group talks about a lot because the problem is today, but even more gravely, the problem is in 20 or 30 years. And it's our obligation to be making policy not just for next week, but for the next decade.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And I know that the gentlewoman is going to talk about this next issue, and Mr. MURPHY and I talked last night at great length about the fact that the second largest line item on the budget that the President submitted to us on Monday, the second largest line item in a \$3.1 trillion budget that is literally a foot thick page by page is interest on the national debt. The Pentagon budget is first, and interest on the debt is second. I believe the gentlewoman has a chart showing it's approximately \$240 billion, just interest, on the national debt.

So when you think about that \$407 billion deficit for 1 year that the President submitted to us, more than half of that is due solely to interest on the debt that he has accumulated over the last 7 years.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That's exactly right. And it's important to show this debt and the impact of it in different ways because different people think and look at things through a different prism.

So the second highest line item in the budget that he submitted was the interest on the debt. And as you can see, like Mr. ALTMIRE pointed out, we're at about \$240 billion, which is the net interest that we're paying on that debt.

□ 2100

Now, expressed comparatively to the other things that we believe are incredibly important in terms of improving the quality of life of people in America and moving this country in a new direction, which is what we were committed to doing when we took over the majority and that we promised the American people that we would do, so we are at \$240 billion in net interest on the debt. That is as compared to what we spend on education, what the President proposes to spend on education, which is at about, let's say, a little less than \$50 billion, a little bit less than that for spending on veterans health care, and then a little bit less than that on homeland security.

Now, what's mind-boggling is, if you listen to this administration and to this President and to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you would think that the most important thing on the planet to them is homeland security and making sure that we provide adequate funding for homeland security. Well, if you take education, veterans health care, and homeland security combined, combined those items don't equal the payment of interest on the national debt.

I mean who is for homeland security and who just talks? I mean you have to back up words with action. We do all this right out in the open. People can see where the priorities are because, as the Speaker always talks about, Mr. MURPHY and Mr. ALTMIRE, the Speaker always talks about how the budget is an expression of our values. And we are going to show the American people the difference in our values as Democratic Members of Congress, who are the leaders of this coequal branch of government, versus the expression of values that President Bush put forward on Monday, which clearly are dramatically different than the priorities of the American people.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I know we want to talk about that budget and how clear, once again, the President has made it, that his priority is going to be to turn the Federal Government's back on regular working folks out there who need a little bit of help getting their parents into a nursing home, who need a little bit of help getting quality education for their kid, who want to make sure their streets are safe. We're going to talk about that.

But I think it's worth noting that we've gone through one budget cycle already here with Democrats in charge of the House, and we have shown this place, Washington, D.C., that we have shown everybody out there in America that you can have a responsible budget that sets you on a path towards balancing that budget within 5 years, and you can do it in a way that is still compassionate about the people out there who need a little bit of help from their government. You can do both.

Mr. ALTMIRE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and I all come from pretty

fiscally conservative districts. We have people who want to see the Federal Government spending their money right. But we also come from districts full of people who do want to help their neighbors, who do want to reach out and give a helping hand when it's needed and when it can be done on a reasonable and efficient basis. And the budget we passed last year, it has a very modest growth in spending, but it invests in the right programs. It gives increases to programs like health care, research. It gives investments in community policing. It gives increases for elementary education. And it does it all while setting a course to balance the budget in 5 years.

So you can do both. You can get fiscal responsibility, and you can make sure that you're covering your bases in the programs that help regular, average Americans. And we did it as a Congress. The President, once again, has submitted a budget to us that isn't going to do that.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a little bit about the chart that Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was referencing and still has up. It shows the interest on the national debt and how that account dwarfs spending on education, veterans, and homeland security. But the truly sad part of that chart is that the red bar that shows net interest on the national debt is growing exponentially while the President, in the budget he submitted to us, slashes funding for education, for veterans, and for homeland security. And Mr. MURPHY and I went over this a little bit last night in our talk on that 30-Something Group. But I just wanted to talk about those three accounts, education, veterans, and homeland security, and talk about what the President has decided to do.

Instead of investing in innovation in the classroom, his budget eliminates the \$260 million program providing grants to States for classroom technology and freezes the \$179 million mathematics and science partnerships. Now, that's a program that's targeted at improving achievement in math and science. And instead of making college more affordable, something that this House took a giant step towards doing just today, the President's budget inexplicably eliminates supplemental education opportunity grants. And the Perkins loan program, one of the staples of higher education assistance in this country, the President eliminates it in his budget. He also eliminates the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership program, the LEAP program that we know about. And they all provide necessary funding for needy students. His budget also eliminates funding for vocational education. This is completely unjustified.

We talked about homeland security, something that's very important to every Member of this House. Well, the President's budget slashes funding for State Homeland Security Grant Programs. And I would repeat that. I'm

speaking correctly. It slashes funding for State Homeland Security Grant Programs at a time when we're at war.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If I could just reclaim my time for one second because different people would have different definitions of "slash." So since we know actually by what percentage he slashed it, let's underscore. The Department of Homeland Security State responder grants that he slashed, he slashed by 78 percent. So we're not talking about just a little nick here. We're talking about cutting the legs out from under a program that provides assistance for homeland security efforts locally, not just for New York and Los Angeles and the places with big tall buildings, but places all over this country which have vulnerable sites that any wise, smart-minded terrorist would love to catch a community sleeping that doesn't have a coordinated effort and a plan to make sure that they can take care of their community and ward off a potential terrorist attack, which could happen anywhere.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, let me just get this right. So we have spent billions upon billions of dollars, another 170 this year, on the war in Iraq, which is feeding the international terrorist movement, and this isn't our saying it, that's the 22 most important national intelligence organizations through the National Intelligence Estimate, that is feeding the frenzy of international terrorism and is growing the ranks of the people who want to do harm to us. So we're spending money in Iraq to increase the ranks of people who might do harm to us, and then we are cutting the money here at home that would make sure that none of them lands on our soil and does harm to us. That is a very odd thing for the President or the Republicans or anyone who supports that policy to have to explain to somebody.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. All the while with the President's continuing to insist that we make the tax cuts permanent, that we extend permanent tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, to cut more of our ability to make sure that we can fund first responder grants for communities across this country, and all the while having a \$407 billion deficit and a \$1.33 trillion debt. I don't know. In my dictionary, fiscal responsibility, that doesn't meet any of the definitions in the dictionary that I use. Maybe the dictionary in bizarro world. Maybe there's some opposite universe. I remember when I watched Star Trek, there was a bizarro world, opposite universe episode, and everything that was one way in one universe was the opposite way in the opposite universe. Maybe that's what it is. Maybe that aisle right there, maybe that side of the Chamber is actually a parallel universe, and so everything we believe is the opposite on that side. That's what it is. I figured it out.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. If the gentlewoman would yield, it's a wonderful world to live in, though, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I mean this world in which you can spend money on all of these things that you want to spend money on, that you can have no one pay for it, that you can kind of convince yourself that all of the people that are lending you the money aren't going to really ever ask for it back, that you can additionally convince yourself that the fact that you owe money to all of your enemies isn't going to have any consequences when you want to fight them or negotiate with them. I mean, that's a great place to live in. A world full of no consequences. A world full of postponing all bad things until a moment in which no one is here to answer for them anymore. It's a wonderful place to live.

But I've got to believe that that's why Mr. ALTMIRE and I got sent here as part of the new class last November, that the American people kind of figured out that it was a myth. I mean, they figured out that it was an alternative universe. Now, they might not be as big a science fiction fan as you are, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, but they figured out that something was up. I mean, I come from a district that was Republican for 24 years that has these Rockefeller Republicans that are sort of socially moderate but fiscally conservative, and they came out and voted for Democrats in droves this year because they figured out what you knew all along, that this was just a made-up world here where you could just spend wildly on a war in Iraq, that you could borrow in order to pay for it, that you could rip the guts out of social services, and everything would be all right. So the American people, I think, have figured it out and they sent us here to fix it.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And, Mr. MURPHY, you're leaving out one of the key facts, that they live in a world where you can charge everything to the national credit card. Everything that you do, every expense of the Federal Government, just charge it to the credit card, and that bill is never going to come due.

Well, guess what? That bill has come due. And the reason we're facing a recession right now is because we have been living through that fiscally irresponsible time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. ALTMIRE, can I ask you a question? Because you were going through the details of the cuts that the President has proposed in his budget that he submitted for fiscal year 2009 on Monday.

There was a program that was first implemented and proposed and funded by Congress but proposed by President Clinton called the COPS program, which put 100,000 police officers on the street and made sure that we had first responders, police officers, on the streets, patrolling our communities, making sure that the streets of America were safe. And how much did President Bush propose for the COPS program in his fiscal year 2009 budget?

Mr. ALTMIRE. The gentlewoman may have a different chart than I have.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I have zero, because the number that I have is that he cut the entire program, 100 percent cut to the COPS program, zeros it out, so that there would be no COPS program, no funding to put police officers on the streets in our local communities.

It's just unbelievable. We continue to hear the rhetoric come from this administration. I mean, it's nice, happy talk. It's nice, happy talk that you can stand behind the podium and say whatever you want and live in bizarro world across the other side of the aisle and just ignore reality and squeeze your eyes shut and hope that people don't notice that what you're saying is not true.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And it's particularly frustrating to Mr. MURPHY and I, who are in our first term and we had our second State of the Union address just last week, a week ago, and the President of the United States stood right behind where I am standing right now and said to the Congress you need to be more fiscally responsible. And he lectured us on how he perceived this Congress to have been fiscally irresponsible. And literally a week later, 1 week later to the day, he drops on all of our desks a budget that is out of balance by \$407 billion. So when you talk about living in a world where you can say one thing and do another, I would suggest you look no further than that budget that was submitted to us.

And the gentlewoman asked about the COPS program, and I appreciate her bringing that to our attention. I had in front of me funding for something that's near and dear to my heart, and that's for veterans, which was the third category on the chart that she showed several minutes ago when we talked about education funding and other accounts that pale in comparison to interest on the national debt. I just wanted to talk about what the President's budget does for veterans. It cuts health care for veterans by \$20 billion over 5 years and cuts funds for constructing, renovating, and rehabilitating medical care facilities in the year 2009.

And I would remind everybody what happened at Walter Reed, which is a defense health care facility, last year, at about this time last year, when we heard reports of substandard living conditions and paint peeling and rodents. And we are then going to look at the VA, according to the President's budget, and actually cut funds for constructing, renovating, and rehabilitating medical care facilities at a time when we've had a national scandal at one of those facilities? I think that's disgraceful.

And for the 6th year in a row, the President's budget raises health care costs on 1½ million veterans by imposing \$5.2 billion in increased co-payments on prescription drugs and new enrollment fees for veterans.

□ 2115

Mr. ALTMIRE. I can't think of a group that we should be helping more than our Nation's veterans. And to have a budget submitted to us at a time when all of us can agree that there is nothing more important than taking care of the people who are putting their lives on the line for us, wearing the uniform of the United States every single day, making every possible sacrifice, and to have a budget submitted to us that slashes funding for veterans programs is an offense. It literally is an offense.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. ALTMIRE, I have to compliment you because the people of western Pennsylvania, when they made a decision to elect you, sent a champion for our Nation's veterans to this institution. Since day one, I don't remember a day that has gone by that I have not heard you talk about the plight of our veterans and the importance of not forgetting them, and making sure that we are going to appropriately fund and adequately fund their health care needs, provide for their needs when they come back from their service to our country and continue to take care of them in the variety of ways that we should instead of forgetting them like so much dirty laundry and make sure that they don't get left behind. It is another example of the new direction that the people of America wanted. And when they elected you, that is exactly what you have delivered to them. And I know your constituents really appreciate it.

You mentioned the lecture, which is a good description for what the State of the Union was last week that we got from President Bush, and Mr. MURPHY, I would like to say our caucus chairman, RAHM EMANUEL, did a good comparison, or timeline, of where we were at the start of the administration almost 8 years ago and where we are now. He did a press conference and talked about, gave a speech, a really good speech on the floor and just showed where we were at the start and where we are now.

So, Mr. MURPHY, I know you have some of the information in front of you, as well, just to walk people through where we were then, at the beginning of this administration. At the beginning of this administration, we started with a record \$5.6 trillion surplus when President Clinton left office. And President Bush will be leaving behind, Mr. MURPHY?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Annualized \$400 billion operating deficits, the three largest operating deficits in the history of the Republic under the Bush administration, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. And at the beginning of the Bush administration, Mr. ALTMIRE, we were on track to pay down all of our publicly held debt. All of it. I am not sure if you have the chart in front of you right there; but, Mr. MURPHY, we were

on track to pay down all of our publicly held debt. And what is the Bush administration leaving behind?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Curiously, as we talked about here, a \$9 trillion debt owed mostly to foreign nations, a President that has racked up more publicly held foreign debt and privately held foreign debt than any other Presidents combined in the history of the Republic.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is really astonishing, the dramatic difference and the swings we have gone through in the last 8 years. Who would have thought that we could go through that type of rapid deterioration?

How about the economy? We are certainly not facing a strong economy right now. At the beginning of this administration, as President Clinton was leaving office, Mr. MURPHY, we had the strongest economy in three decades. We had 22 million jobs that had been created. We had a record surplus. We had a thriving economy by any definition. And now that we are wrapping up the Bush administration, what is this President leaving behind?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Well, we know he is leaving behind one of the weakest and one of the most fragile economies that we have seen in a very long time. Today we get reports from the Nation's largest retailers telling us that they still have not unburied themselves from the holiday malaise. We had a report recently from the service sector showing the service economy starting to bottom out. We have news yesterday from the Labor Department telling us that worker productivity continues to slow. We have an economy after 6, 7 years of the Bush administration's policy left over from 12 years of neglect by the Republican majority that is as weak as it has been in a very long time.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I want to talk about a few things that the President is leaving behind as he leaves office going into next year, and we look forward to working with him certainly throughout this year, \$400 billion in annual deficits, deficits as far as the eye can see, as Mr. MURPHY talked about, an exploding debt burden, a slowing economy; and this is something that I think really needs to be talked about because we had in January a net loss of 17,000 lost jobs. And there was a lot of talk in the administration about how, well, this was the first loss in 4 years in job growth in a month, which is true.

Now, any economist will tell you, anyone who studies these issues will tell you that because of the population growth in the country that works, we are experiencing in any given month, it takes between 100 and 150,000 new jobs being created just to keep pace with the increase in population growth in the country. So just to maintain, you have to have at minimum 100,000 new jobs. Well, many of the months that we are talking about going back 4 years, we have had much fewer jobs created per month than 100,000. And in fact,

this administration, if you look at the job growth that has taken place over the 7-plus years of this administration and pro rate it, this is the weakest record of job growth in any administration since the Hoover administration.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Did they have good job growth in the Hoover administration?

Mr. ALTMIRE. Right. And Mr. MURPHY held up his chart with all the Presidents on it and talked about big spenders and fiscally irresponsible people, and I think Mr. Hoover may not be remembered in those categories, but he is certainly not going to be remembered as a job creator, let's put it that way. So for this administration to have the worst record of job creation since the Hoover administration, I think really spells out the failure of these economic policies.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely. And as we begin to wrap up, getting back to the lecture that you referred to earlier, Mr. ALTMIRE, that we received from President Bush last week, the matter of transparency is incredibly important. This is a President who talked about how we need to make sure that we disclose earmarks, which we took the lead on when we became the majority and made sure that we put our names next to the earmarks that we get in the appropriations act, and we are the ones that made sure that there was full disclosure and adopted the ethics package that was the most comprehensive in American history.

And with this President's proposed budget this week, let's outline, and we are going to have some of these charts next week that are blown up so that people watching can see, but let's talk about what was left out of the budget, because he talked very nicely about transparency, and make sure that people really understand clearly what we are doing here. He left out of his budget any war costs, any costs for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan beyond the first half of this year. He also left out AMT reform beyond 2008. So all of the millions and millions of taxpayers that we helped avoid be subject to that AMT tax when we passed that legislation at the end of last year, there is no fix for them. And President Bush doesn't even count them as that going forward, which we know we are obviously going to have to do.

It is fake. It is just, again, bizarre world. We can just make stuff up in the budget and hope that people believe that it is true. This was a fairy tale document that he gave us on Monday. The good news is that the Congress actually writes the budget when push comes to shove.

Then in terms of any spending policy details beyond fiscal year 2009, there was nothing detailed in this President's budget. Let's just give you, as I wrap up and then turn it over to the two of you to bring us home, let's just go through last year. In fiscal year 2008, President Bush requested \$193 bil-

lion, Mr. MURPHY, for the war in Iraq. And in the fiscal year 2009 budget he just proposed to us on Monday, he asked for \$70 billion. Good news. We are only going to spend \$70 billion on the war in Iraq and Afghanistan this year.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. We get some discounts this year.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Wow, that is so exciting. Again, we have to make sure that we are honest, transparent, and forthcoming with the American people. We can't fake it. We can't gloss it over. We have to make sure that we give them the straightforward facts and be honest with them in the budget document and in everything that we do.

Mr. MURPHY, why don't you bring us home. It is a privilege to be here again with you and Mr. ALTMIRE, and we miss our colleagues, Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK, tonight; but the 30-Something Working Group is always here to talk about the issues that are important to the American people, but particularly to our generation of Americans who are going to inherit the results of the decisions that we make here.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, just to leave on some good news, I think the passage with the Republican and Democratic votes of the economic stimulus package shows that this Democratic Congress has the potential to reach across the aisle and push back on a lot of these policies that we have been talking about today. This is bad news, the President's budget he submitted to us. It is not a good budget for people, for families, or for fiscal discipline.

But the good news is that we have shown a record here of being able to work together, Republicans and Democrats, to be able to push back.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, if you want to get in touch with us, you can e-mail us at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov or go to www.speaker.gov to visit our Web site.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. MURPHY.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the opportunity that has been given to us by the Speaker.

PEAK OIL

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

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, our government has paid for four studies looking at the world energy situation, particularly at oil. Two of those studies were reported in 2005, and two of them were reported in 2007. The two in 2005 were the SAIC report known as the "Hirsch Report," and then later in the year there was a report by the Army Corps of Engineers,