

FAIR TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 3 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, you've heard it a lot of different ways this morning. Our challenge is not that we tax too little. Our challenge is that we spend too much, and we're taking steps to make that happen. But we do tax incorrectly. We do tax in a way that challenges the patience, the tolerance and the intellect of millions of Americans every year. We're coming up on that.

One week from today is Tax Day, April 15, that day that folks dread year after year after year after year. One of the things that makes Tax Day so complicated is the exceptions, the exemptions, the loopholes and those special favors that get written into the Code year after year after year after year.

I want to associate myself with the comments from the previous speaker, the gentleman from California. And we've talked about the very serious—the very serious—discussion of the budget that's been going on in the Budget Committee. I'm pleased to be a member of the Budget Committee.

Bloomberg came out with a report this morning, \$2.9 trillion in special tax breaks, loopholes and exemptions erased in that budget. Not that taxes go up for Americans, but that taxes get simpler for Americans and fairer for Americans by taking away \$2.9 trillion in special favors and special exemptions.

There's a proposal that goes even further, and I want to mention it now a week out from Tax Day, and that's H.R. 25, the Fair Tax. It's a bill that started with only two cosponsors, one Democrat and one Republican. It grew to two Democrats and two Republicans, and then it grew to four Democrats and four Republicans. Now there are 60 cosponsors in the House, five in the United States Senate, the most widely cosponsored fundamental tax reform bill in this Congress.

And it does this: It abolishes income taxes and replaces them with consumption taxes, because the power to tax is the power to destroy. And what we destroy in this country is productivity. We're the only OECD country on the planet that doesn't have a consumption tax, the only one that punishes our producers instead of taxing our consumers. And it eliminates not \$2.9 trillion in loopholes as the budget does, but 100 percent of every corporate loophole.

We've heard it on this floor again and again: Loopholes for oil companies, loopholes for this company. It eliminates every single corporate tax break in existence today. And it eliminates them for individuals as well in favor of a simple, low-rate personal consumption tax.

On Tax Day, we talk about the income tax. The largest tax 80 percent of American families pay is the payroll tax. Everybody in here who's got a job

has seen that FICA line. You may not add it up, but it is the largest tax that 80 percent of Americans pay. And there is not a single bill on this floor that deals with that except the Fair Tax, which abolishes that tax so you get to keep what you earn so that nobody touches your paycheck before you do.

As you finalize your tax forms over the next 7 days on your way to April 15, I want you to think about what could be different. I want you to think about how, with the passage of H.R. 25, April 15 could just be another spring day.

CUT SPENDING AND GROW THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) for 3 minutes.

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, I have said, like most in this Chamber, that I oppose a government shutdown. Last November, Nevadans spoke. The American people spoke. They said cut the spending so the economy can grow.

My primary goal is not a government shutdown. It is to do the job that the people elected me to do: cut the spending and grow the economy.

Quite simply, our country is broke, all because there are checks in the checkbook doesn't mean there's money in the checking account. And we're paying the overdraft fees with money that we're borrowing from China.

Some people ask: What's the difference between a billion here and a billion there? Well, that's just \$1 billion that we don't have. There is an old saying: Take care of your pennies, and your dollars will take care of themselves. For those who question the importance of a billion dollars, I would say, take care of your billions, and your trillions will take care of themselves.

DEMOCRATS FAILED TO PASS A BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY) for 3 minutes.

Mr. DUFFY. First of all, I think many of us here in this House want to see the government to continue to be funded. But let's review what has happened here.

Last year, the Democrats failed to pass a budget. They failed to propose a budget. So this Congress, we're here doing the work of last year's House and Senate.

We proposed a bill to fund the government, and in that bill, we cut \$61 billion. That is under the backstop of the fact that we're going to borrow \$1.6 trillion this year alone. Our national debt is \$14 trillion. The Democrats in the Senate say they don't like our proposal.

That's okay. If you don't like it, pass your own proposal. Give us a counterproposal, and we will consider it. But the bottom line is the Senate has failed to act. They haven't sent us a counterproposal.

So what we've done is we've passed two extensions to fund the government, and again yesterday we passed a third. The Senate isn't going to take it up.

Again, if you don't like our proposal, give us your own. We can't negotiate with ourselves. We're willing to sit down and talk, but we can't continue to put out our proposals and our ideas and have you fail to give us a response.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Your Word, Lord God, calls us to reform and spiritual renewal. "Where your heart is, there is your treasure." The transformation You ask of us is not a change only of our manners or way of doing things. It is not a call for a change of language, the bottom line or even our thinking.

Rather, You Lord, who are hidden from our sight, know the hidden secrets of the heart. So You continually seek conversion of heart until, at last, our hearts rest only in You.

In such a changing world, unless we are willing to change our deepest desires according to Your Spirit of life and love, we will instead be changed by forces around us. Send forth Your powerful Spirit that You may have Your way with us both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOUTHERLAND) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches from each side.

PROTECT OUR POSTERITY

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

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand today the Constitution of the United States. It begins by saying: "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

I have a very, very short time here today, but I will say that irresponsible spending of the Federal Government does not form a more perfect Union. As a matter of fact, it forms a more imperfect Union. It establishes injustice. It ensures domestic chaos. It provides for the uncommon defense. It destroys the general welfare, and it endangers the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Based on this very Constitution that I hold in my hand, the direction that we are heading violates the will of the people. It is time for us to stop arguing and get on with the work of the people and protect our posterity for generations to come.

FUNDING CUTS THREATEN HEAD START

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my Republican colleagues: Which child pictured here would you deny an early education? Why would I ask that question? I'll tell you why. As it stands now, the Republican budget proposal would kick 218,000 children out of Head Start and prevent them from receiving an edu-

cation, some of these children right here on this poster.

It will close 16,000 Head Start classrooms, classrooms in which these children learn. It will fire 55,000 Head Start teachers, teachers who teach these kids here.

A budget document, my friends, is not just about dollars and cents. It reflects our priorities as a Nation. Our children are our future and must be our top priority. Head Start is a key investment in improving their educational outcomes.

But if the Republican majority has their way, Head Start programs in my home State of Rhode Island will have to cut three kids from each classroom right now.

So I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Which of these children would you deny an early education to?

ILLEGALS SHOULD NOT RECEIVE WELFARE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, according to a Center of Immigration Studies report cited in the Houston Chronicle, 70 percent of Texas' illegal immigrant families with at least one anchor baby collect welfare from Uncle Sam. People illegally in the United States should not receive welfare. American citizens shouldn't pay for the welfare of people who violate the law to enter this country.

Illegals are also draining our health care system. Sixty percent of the births over the last 4 years at a public hospital in Houston, Texas, were by women living here illegally.

I was recently in Cochise County, Arizona, where they have been forced to shut down almost all of their maternity wards because they can't financially support all of the illegals coming into the country.

Mr. Speaker, illegal immigration is breaking the bank. Let's take care of our citizens and legal immigrants first. Are you in, Mr. President?

And that's just the way it is.

DON'T DISMANTLE MEDICARE

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, today the Republicans want to shut down government. Tomorrow they want to dismantle Medicare. If the shutdown weren't enough, the Republican Party just released next year's road-to-ruin budget. And, unbelievably, the people they have chosen to target are America's seniors.

This budget ends the Medicare guarantee as we know it. It turns Medicare into a voucher system where you would have to put your fate back into the hands of private insurance companies. It results in seniors paying more for

Medicare. This plan shifts costs onto seniors and cuts Medicare at a time when seniors need health care the most.

We must take the target off the backs of our seniors and off of Medicare, a guarantee that seniors have earned through a lifetime of hard work.

ARMED FORCES FUNDING

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, every day courageous young men and women from all over America volunteer to serve our country in the military. They prove themselves as leaders and role models. But what is the response they receive from congressional liberals and even their Commander in Chief? A callous disregard. To further their own political aims, some of our colleagues would deny them their pay if there is a shutdown of the government this weekend. This is outrageous.

Our troops, especially those in combat zones, already have plenty to worry about without Democratic intransigence adding personal debt to those worries.

In February, Republicans offered H.R. 1 and yesterday H.R. 1363, which would ensure that every member of the Armed Forces would receive his or her full salary for the rest of the year. Republicans support the troops and want them to succeed in their mission. It appears that most of the Democrats in Congress feel differently.

Our troops are sacrificing to keep us free and are exhibiting leadership. Democrats should follow their example and honor our commitments to the men and women of the military and their families.

□ 1210

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN: EFFECT AND CAUSE

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of quotes on this floor, so this one goes out to our young people and our seniors and our service-members and Federal workers who stand to be affected by a government shutdown. It's a lesson for my Republican colleagues courtesy of the White Stripes, a little "Effect and Cause":

"I guess you have to have a problem
If you want to invent a contraption
First you cause a train wreck
Then you put me in traction.
Well, first came an action
And then a reaction
But you can't switch around
For your own satisfaction.
You burnt my house down, then got mad

At my reaction?
It's that you just can't take the effect