raise $12 million for parks. Second the administration supports siphoning 20 percent off the top from recreation fees collected for deposit in the Treasury for deficit reduction. The administration proposal is inadequate in scope, and unacceptable in sending user fee revenue to the Treasury.

The administration's recreation fee proposals provides for minor tinkers to existing law, to the benefit of National Park Service visitors only. This is unacceptable to me. We need a complete overhaul of existing law. We need a proposal which addresses the needs of the hundreds of millions of visitors who choose to recreate on other Federal lands not managed by the National Park Service. We need to return all recreation fees to the benefit of visitors. We need to make sure that increases in funding due to recreation fees are not offset through reduced appropriations. Recreation fee legislation reported from the Resources Committee several weeks ago on a bipartisan basis meets all these test. I hope the administration supports my fee legislation, H.R. 2107 when it comes to the floor in the near future. The Interior Inspector General estimated that legislation similar to mine could generate over $200 million per year for parks. This is the type of positive recreation fee legislation we need.

Concession reform: The administration has never submitted a legislative proposal for concession reform. However, the administration has supported legislation which would exclude over 80 percent of existing National Park Service concession contracts from fair and open competition; and which CBO estimates would lose $79 million in existing fees to the Treasury over 5 years. By comparison, H.R. 2028, concession reform legislation which I have introduced, will open not only all 660 National Park Service concession contracts to competition, but over 7,000 other agency concession contracts as well. Further, my legislation would increase deposits to the Treasury by $84 million over 7 years. My bill has already been marked up by the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Lands. Simply put, my legislation raises more funds for our parks and increases competition for these Federal contracts.

National Heritage Area System: The administration has never submitted heritage area legislation to Congress; however, Mr. HEFLEY has introduced this legislation. My subcommittee held a hearing on that bill over a year ago and marked it up last fall. This proposal has been developed in recent years on a bipartisan basis by Congress. Welcome aboard, Mr. President.

Presidio: After a long struggle, the administration is not supporting establishment of the Presidio Trust to manage the developed lands at the Presidio. Last Congress, the administration led the effort to address the issue. Their legislative proposal in the 103d Congress was perpetual management by the National Park Service, which would have cost the taxpayer about $1.2 billion over 15 years. The current proposal, H.R. 1296, developed on a bipartisan basis between myself and Ms. PELOSI, will protect the critical natural lands while saving the taxpayers hundreds of million of dollars. We are glad to have the administration as overdue supporters of this effort.

Sterling forest: This proposal does not even need legislation. The proposal to provide funding for a State park in New York is already authorized under section 6(b) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. If the administration was really serious about this effort, they would have requested the funds for it in their fiscal year 1997 budget request.

Old Faithful Protection Act: Protecting the irreplaceable geothermal resources of this world class park is a high congressional priority. However, according to exhaustive study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey, this legislation is unnecessary. The State of Montana has already passed legislation modifying State water law to protect the park. The States of Wyoming and Idaho remain adamantly opposed to making their State water laws subject to Federal control, as proposed in this bill, just as they have for the last several years.

Minor boundary adjustment: I agree we need flexibility to administratively make minor park boundary adjustments at parks. I introduced legislation to accomplish just that last year. The number of my legislation is H.R. 2067, and I am flattered you are trying to make my legislation part of your plan, Mr. President, but I am ahead of you again and I welcome your signature when the bill gets to your desk.

Management of museum properties: This bipartisan legislative proposal has been kicking around in Congress for over 4 years, carried alternatively by Republican and Democratic chairmen of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Lands. In this Congress, it is my bill, and again I ask the President, Where have you been?

Housing: This is another critical topic which Congress has been working on for several years. In the last two sessions, it has passed the Senate twice and the House once. The involvement of the Clinton administration on this effort is illustrative of how they do business. About 2 years ago, Secretary Babbitt announced a new housing initiative for the National Park Service in the Interior Department. He was going to bring in extensive outside expertise and solve this housing crisis. Press releases were issued and the Secretary showed up for a photo-op at Great Smokey Mountains National Park to help build a house being donated to the park. The sum total of that effort after 2 years has been the donation of three new housing units. Today, no one in the Secretary's office is even assigned to this program. It is dead as far as Secretary Babbitt is concerned.

So, Mr. President, you have had your press release and photo-op on your plan. Your plan even made it onto the front page of the Washington Post, above the fold. Now that you have accomplished your political goal, why do you not finally sit down and engage yourself in the work of real reform? The protection of our national parks is too important to use as a political ploy and, Mr. President, you have an obligation to start working for our national parks.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE UNITED STATES ROLE IN IRANIAN ARMS TRANSFERS TO CROATIA AND BOSNIA

Ms. GREENE of Utah, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–551) on the resolution (H. Res. 416) establishing a select subcommittee of the Committee on International Relations to investigate the United States role in Iranian arms transfers to Croatia and Bosnia, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2974, CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN AND ELDERLY PERSONS INCREASED PUNISHMENT ACT

Ms. GREENE of Utah, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–552) on the resolution (H. Res. 421) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2974) to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to provide enhanced penalties for crimes against elderly and child victims, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3120, WITH RESPECT TO WITNESS RETALIATION, WITNESS TAMPERING, AND JURY TAMPERING

Ms. GREENE of Utah, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–553) on the resolution (H. Res. 422) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3120) to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to witness retaliation, witness tampering and jury tampering, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1215

ISSUES OF CONCERN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BALLENGER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE]

is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, there are several topics I would like to discuss in this allotted time that I think are important and are on the floor of the House.

First is the gas tax. We have heard a lot about that recently, as consumer prices have skyrocketed, certainly certain things have to be done. I am delighted to see that the President has called for what many of us were urging, which is a complete investigation to see whether there are any antitrust violations, any evidence of collusion. Even if there is not, I think this type of investigation is important. The public needs to know what we have all seen at the tank as we have been filling it up in the last few weeks, about the rapid escalation of gasoline prices.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I paid $1.49 last night for 89 octane for my car, and I know that that is running roughly about what it is across not only West Virginia out much of the country. So as these prices suddenly skyrocket, people justifiably want to know why. Yes, there are possible answers such as failure to negotiate a deal with the Iraqis so that sanctions could be lifted and that their oil could then spill into the market. The failure to be able to turn out enough refined product because of the closure or the lack of refining capability in this country because too much petroleum product was converted to heating oil during the winter, the very cold winter, and thus taking petroleum that otherwise would have been used for refined gasoline off the market, a whole list of things could be the reason. But at the same time it is very important to have an investigation.

By the same token, the President has called for the strategic petroleum reserve to release 12 million barrels. That seems at least in the short term to have had a partial effect, and the futures price of gasoline dropped somewhat over the past couple of days. I question whether 12 million barrels, which is about a half day's supply in this country, whether 12 million barrels will have much of a market impact over a period of time, but we will see.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership and some Democrats are now talking about a rollback of the 4.3 cents a gallon that was passed as part of deficit reduction in 1993. I do not have problems with that rollback. But I do want to make sure that, if it is rolled back, any savings of 4.3 cents does not go into pockets of the oil companies, does not go into the pockets of perhaps foreign producers. I want to make sure it goes into the pockets of consumers.

□ 1230

So how can you guarantee in this legislation that if you roll back the 4.3 cents, that indeed the consumer is getting the benefit of that, not the foreign oil producer and not the oil company? That is going to be a test that I think is very, very important.

I do find it interesting that those now calling for that, and particularly the Presidential candidate for the Republican Party, that those now calling for it previously voted for other gasoline tax increases, as high as a dime total. And so I just say that under the heading of irony.

The other irony, I think, is this. I have also heard the charge from some of my Republican brethren and colleagues, and particularly the Republican nominee for President, that they want to keep referring to this 4.3 cents as President Clinton's gas tax, and they point out proudly that not one Republican voted for this in 1993. And they are correct, not one Republican did vote for that in 1993. But then they do not tell you what else they did not vote for in 1993. They did vote in that same package for the earned-income tax credit, a tax cut that went to every American making less than $26,000 a year, working Americans, not those on public assistance, those who are working, particularly those at minimum wage. When they voted against that deficit reduction package, they voted against a tax cut for 100,000 West Virginians.

So while they were voting to supposedly spare people a 4-cent-a-gallon tax increase, they were voting against a tax cut for 100,000 West Virginians and millions of Americans.

They were also voting against raising income taxes on who? The low-income and middle-income rank-and-file American? No, they voted against raising income taxes on those earning over $180,000 a year as part of that deficit reduction package.

How many people did that affect? Let us take my State, West Virginia. West Virginia had 1,600 people paying increased income taxes; that is 1,600 out of 1.8 million; 1,600 people paid higher income taxes as a result of that deficit reduction package—100,000 West Virginians, those earning under $26,000 a year, received a tax cut. So when they tell you how proudly they voted against the gasoline tax increase, remind them that they also voted against a very significant tax cut.

They also voted against the deficit reduction package, and I think it is important to bring this out as well because when they voted against the deficit reduction package, everyone wants to balance the budget, but when they voted against it they voted against the deficit reduction package that in 3 years has exceeded its goals and has resulted today in less Federal workers actually on the payroll than at any time since John Fitzgerald Kennedy was President. There have been roughly 180,000 to 200,000 Federal, there are less Federal workers today then there were 3 years ago. The goal was 272,000.

So when they voted against that deficit reduction package, they voted against deficit reduction. They proclaimed at the time, and these are the same folks who want to give you their balanced budget version, so I think it is important to look at the projections.

We are talking, Mr. Speaker, about the deficit reduction package of 1993 and the fact that there were dire predictions made by those on the other side about the impact of that. Mr. Speaker, of course what has been the impact has been that the deficit has dropped by one-half or will have dropped over the 5-year period by one-half, but actually today the deficit is about one-half of what it was in 1993.

The deficit has dropped 3 years in a row, the first time that has happened since Harry Truman was President. The deficit has gone from almost $300 billion a year to somewhere around $160 billion a year, and the deficit, most significantly as a percentage of GDP, gross domestic product, which is our economy, that is what everybody puts into the economy: wages and sales and whatever; that the deficit, as a percentage of our economy, had dropped to about one-half of what is was, from roughly 4 to 5 percent of GDP to 2 to 2½ percent, which, I might add, now is one of the lowest rates of any major industrialized nation in the world. The United States for the first time is now being looked upon as a model for deficit reduction by many of our trading partners, including Japan, including Germany, including France and many, many others.

So the folks that were telling us just 3 years about how bad this was going to be, they are now the ones who are putting together their own so-called balanced budget proposal, and meanwhile, or course, trashing the work that has already been done.

So when they tell you that they voted against a gas tax increase, please remind them they voted against significant deficit reduction, they voted against asking those who made over $180,000 a year to pay a little higher, they are now up to 40 percent income tax. That is down from 70 percent in 1980. They voted against a tax cut for working Americans under $26,000 a year, and particularly those at the minimum wage and slightly higher level. That is what they voted against. And they voted against significant deficit reduction.

Just one final note. They often trot out on the floor here a group called the Tax Foundation. I love the Tax Foundation because it was the Tax Foundation that 3 years ago, on the floor, every time a Democratic Member would stand up to speak for the deficit reduction package, somebody would stand up and say, ''Did you know that according to the Tax Foundation you will lose *x* amount of jobs in your district,'' in West Virginia, or in Texas, or California or wherever the Democratic Member was from.

Well, of course, the Tax Foundation got it pretty wrong. The deficit reduction package did not cause the economy to sink. It caused the economy to continue growing. The Tax Foundation got it wrong because what they were calling a job killer turned out to be a job producer, and yet this is the same

Tax Foundation that now gets trotted out on the floor to justify the current-day Republican proposals, including the balanced budget proposal that will be here.

So I just think it is important to put this in a little perspective.

There is another perspective, too, that I hope we could agree on a bipartisan basis needs to be done where, once again, we are facing a rapid run-up of petroleum prices and gasoline prices. $1.45 at the pump is pretty tough, particularly when that is a 20- to 30-cent increase for many consumers in just the last couple of months. That means that that tank which took 13 or 14 dollars to fill now takes over $20 to fill, and if you are driving long distances, as many of us in rural areas do simply to get to work, you begin to feel it very, very quickly. If you are running obviously a small business, transporting goods, you begin to feel it very quickly.

When do we learn collectively as a country, as Republicans, as Democrats, about the need for energy independence? How many times do we have to go through this? I thought that after the Persian Gulf war, when for the very first time Americans sent their sons and daughters to defend the oil lifeline, I thought that that would drive the message home to all of us as policy makers, as a public, all of us, and regrettably we are today more dependent upon foreign-produced oil than at any time in our country's history, including from before the Persian Gulf War.

When do we learn? And when do we start seriously funding and assisting alternate fuel development? Gasoline is a very nice fuel, but I drive a car; in fact, it is parked out in the Capitol parking area now; I drive a car that runs on compressed natural gas. I pay about a dollar a gallon equivalent for that compressed natural gas.

In the State of West Virginia, which has had the private sector willing to make the investment along with the public sector, willing to make some commitments, I can drive almost anywhere in the State on compressed natural gas. It is much cleaner for the environment, it is much cleaner for my engine, it is much better for both the environment and the economy, and the nice thing about natural gas is it is a domestic fuel, it is produced almost exclusively in the United States of America. You are not having to ship it across oceans to get it here. It is cheaper, it is cleaner, and it is, most importantly, domestic.

There are other alternate fuels as well. I do not rule and just say there is one. We need to be funding the electricity battery research. That finally is beginning to come on. Whether it is fuel cells, whether it is other forms of alternate fuels, this country needs to set a goal of being energy independent. It does us no good to constantly be caught in the throes of economic and, in some cases perhaps, manipulations which we are very subject to when 50 percent and more of our oil comes from abroad.

So my hope is that is something that the Congress can dedicate itself to. I think it is significant. I was delighted when Speaker GINGRICH appointed a task force on alternate fuels, particularly compressed natural gas. And so my hope is that this Congress is going to be willing not move ahead shortly on some of those areas.

Now let me talk for a minute about the minimum wage, hot-button item, and yet I think rolls into what I was talking about the budget. I think there is going to be a vote on the minimum wage. I believe that an almost solid bloc of the entire Democratic Party and a significant number of Republicans are going to push for that, and indeed the minimum wage, which has not been raised legislatively since 1989; the last actual increase to $4.25 an hour was in 1991. The minimum wage is now at an all-time buying low in 40 years. I think it is interesting to note that the minimum wage in the 1950's and 1960's was designed to be roughly one-half of the average nonagricultural wage, roughly a manufacturing wage, one-half. Today it is barely a third of that. It has sunk consistently in buying power and in relation to other wages.

We talk about welfare reform. As President Ronald Reagan said, the best welfare reform is a job. It is pretty hard to ask people to go out and get a job if their income steadily sinks.

Henry Ford had it right. He said, ''If I expect people to buy my product, I have got to pay them what it takes to buy it.'' Well, I am not saying that minimum wage will buy the kind of vehicles that are necessary, but minimum wage is necessary in order to get people up to a respectable level so that they can do the things that are so necessary for their family.

I find it interesting that there are a couple of attacks now on the minimum wage. One attack has been, ''Well, listen, a minimum wage worker is eligible to receive aid to family with dependent children, eligible in some cases to receive food stamps, eligible in some cases even to receive a Medicaid card, health care for the low income. So therefore the minimum wage does not need to be raised because they are already getting these other benefits.''

When was it that the taxpayer was supposed to subsidize work? I thought the goal was to make people independent of the Government, not to make workers more dependent, and so what we have is the taxpayer being asked to subsidize the minimum wage worker.

I also find it interesting because these standards vary State to State, and so what may be a threshold level in one State is not necessarily the threshold level for AFDC benefits and others in another State.

I think it is also interesting to note that the argument, and I do want to take this argument on: I have heard the argument repeatedly in the last couple of days about, well, why is it that President Clinton and the Democrats who had control of this House for 2 years prior to the present session of Congress, when they had the chance to do something about the minimum wage, they did not do it. They did not bring a minimum wage bill to the floor. And, yes, that is correct. Democrats and President Clinton did not bring a minimum wage bill to the floor.

Now, why was that? Let us look at history. 1993, President Clinton and the Democrats passed, and, the Republican leadership proudly boasts, with not one Republican vote, that President Clinton and the Democrats passed the Earned Income Tax Credit increase. What that meant was that low-income working people, those making less than $26,000 a year, got to keep more money, and if they made below a certain level, they actually got money back from the Federal Government, a tax credit. We passed that, Democrats passed that, without any help from this side.

So that was the minimum wage increase because what that did, in effect, was to bring minimum wage workers up through the tax today.

Incidentally, President Reagan—Ronald Reagan, not exactly a wild-eyed liberal by anybody's estimation—President Reagan once called the earned-income tax credit the real way to boost wages.

□ 1245

So we worked with what had been a bipartisan approach, the earned income tax credit, giving lower-income working people a larger tax credit, money back, in effect, to boost the minimum wage worker. That was in 1993. In 1994 came the health care debate. If Members remember, there was a proposal, the President's proposal, which would have asked all employees, I believe, to pay something like 4 percent of payroll to assist in providing health care.

The thought was then if you could get health care to low-income workers, that was far better than giving them a quarter or a 50 cents or 75 cents an hour increase; that health care was the major need.

Of course, we pushed ahead with that. Health care did not make it. It was defeated. But I find it interesting to note that those who helped defeat health care reform are now trumpeting, ''How come there was not a minimum wage increase?'' The answer was because that was to be, in effect, the minimum wage increase.

Once they killed health care reform, now they want to kill a minimum wage increase, and incidentally, they are also filing proposals in the budget to roll back part of the earned income tax credit. So now we have it coming all ways: They are against minimum wage, they are against health care reform, particularly that which will help low-income workers, and they are for rolling back the earned income tax credit. It is pretty tough, apparently, to be a low-income worker.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that I support the minimum wage increase. I

have consistently supported it. I have supported it since I was 18 years old, or actually, let me correct the record, I believe 20 years old, and I was working my way through Duke University in Durham, NC, at $1.25 an hour in the hospital.

The only collective bargaining agent I had, and a whole bunch of other young people and, incidentally, parents as well, because it was a mixture of students and adults working in the hospitals wards, the only collective bargaining agent we had was the U.S. Congress. When the Congress raised the minimum wage from $1.25 to $1.50, we all got a pay increase. That happened about once every 3 or 4 years.

So yes, I am for the minimum wage. To the argument that, well, the minimum wage, I believe two-thirds of it goes to people under 30 years old, half of it goes to folks under 25; come again? You mean we are supposed to be discouraging our young people from going to work, as I did and millions of other Americans have done? How is it we are supposed to get through college? How is it we are supposed to begin making ourselves independent? How is it that those young people are to get ahead?

I think they are entitled to an adequate minimum wage, and yet, indeed, an increasing number actually are now not just the student, the teenager, but an increasing number are people trying to raise a family, the sole support of their family, single parents, or those working another job.

The minimum wage I think is welfare reform. Once again the ideal is, in every piece of welfare legislation, the Republican proposal and the Democratic proposals all have a significant work component in it; you will be required to work, as it should be. But if you are not going to pay an adequate minimum wage, what is the message that you are sending out? The message is, we are not serious about work.

The other thing is, if you are not willing to pay an adequate minimum wage or if you are going to ask the Federal Government, the taxpayer, to subsidize that minimum wage worker through the welfare program, what is the message you are sending out as well? The taxpayer is supposed to subsidize the requirement that we all have.

Minimum wage I think is significant, Mr. Speaker. My hope is that finally, after 5 years, we will be able to see a significant minimum wage piece of legislation get to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, while we are talking about minimum wage, that leads into growth. Here I may be able to strike a more bipartisan chord that I have been so far, because there is a problem that both the Republican budget proposal has and the Democrat budget proposals have, whether it is the President's proposal or others. That is that there is not enough growth.

Both proposals say that if you take these steps, very tough steps to balance the budget in a 6- or 7-year period, that what you will finish up with, and really what I guess the goal is at the end of the period, is 2.3 percent growth on the average for the 7-year period. So both sides say that the best they see is 2.3 percent growth after you have gone through all these steps.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to think that that is a prescription for economic disaster, that if we are going to settle for a 2.3 percent growth, you might as well close the tent, fold the tents up right now, because that is not a growth economy. That is an stagnant economy. That is an economy that what we are going to be doing is fighting about whether or not to raise the minimum wage for the increasing number of lower-wage workers that are coming into the marketplace; because this is not the kind of economy, 2.3 percent growth will not boost productivity, will not boost investment, and is going to set the stage for an increasing severity of problems later on, particularly in Social Security, in Medicare, and in pensions.

Why do I make that statement? I believe firmly that Social Security, much of Social Security's future depends upon what the rate of growth is now. I hear some who want to predict gloom and doom for Social Security: It will not be there when those baby boomers retire, starting in 2013 or whatever, is the dire prediction.

Let us take a brief look at the history of Social Security. The fact is that Social Security, when it was created in the mid 1930's, the same kind of predictions were often made, incidentally, about it not being able to sustain itself, but the fact is that no one can predict 40 or 50 years out what the economy is going to be.

Is there anybody here, Mr. Speaker, able to predict what the economy is going to be and what the inflation is going to be in 6 months or a year? I do not think so. If so, you people are in the wrong place, because a lot of investment houses could use that expertise.

The reality is that you cannot predict. What you need to do is to constantly be monitoring a program just as, starting in the 1930's, Congress had to constantly monitor Social Security. Who could have predicted two world wars, seven recessions, and an equal number of growth spurts, all of which have led us to today?

By the same token, when Medicare was created in 1965, who could predict the rapid run-up in medical costs; the fact that the elderly began living much longer, thanks to Medicare? All of which goes to say that you need to be constantly monitoring Social Security, but that you can make Social Security's demise a self-fulfilling prophecy if you do not have adequate growth built into your economic plans and your forecasts.

That is my concern, is that Social Security does run into problems if you settle on 2.3 percent growth, which I might add is roughly two-thirds to one-half that which was the rate of growth in this country during the 1950's and 1960's, and even into the early 1970's. I am not talking about growth through inflation, I am talking about real economic growth.

So I would say to Democrats, as I say to Republicans, if you are going to struggle, if you are going to do this balanced budget approach and you are going to struggle for 7 years and make these sacrifices and then the best you can do is to promise me a no-growth economy, that is not good enough.

What is it that we ought to be focusing on? We ought to be focusing on, yes, balancing the budget, and yes, continued deficit reduction, because carrying a high level of debt is not good for anybody. But at the same time, let us not lose sight of the real goal. The real goal is a full growth economy. You reach that only by increasing productivity. You reach that only by increasing productivity. You reach that only by setting the conditions such that real wages do increase, not decline, as they have for 60 percent of the American working families in this country today; that people begin to move ahead, that people are able to buy the products.

I kind of worry as I see wages begin to shrink, real wages; I get to worry. Well, yes, it is good business sense, I guess, for this corporation to reduce wages so that you go now from $12 to $11 an hour, and then somebody else lays a group of people off, and now we are paying less over there than we were before, and it is downsizing, it is getting mean and lean. Yes, there is a need for some of that.

But by the same token, at the end of the day, or actually the end of, say, a 5-year period, where are we nationally? If people are no longer able to afford to buy the homes, the cars, the refrigerators, the high ticket items, where are we as an economy? It is possible to get us all working for $7 an hour, but when we do, I am not sure who it is that is going to be buying what it is we are producing.

The United States is still the largest single market in the world, and yet who is it that is going to be buying the more expensive items, the up ticket items that are produced? So that is why you need an approach that boosts productivity, boosts wages.

Let me just outline a couple of items that I would include in this: First of all, an increase in the minimum wage, not because it is going to produce the kind of growth that I am talking about, but because it gets people up to a slightly more equitable level, boosts their buying power slightly, makes them a little less wards or dependents of the state, and it is also just the proper thing to do, and hopefully, in some measure, welfare reform.

Second, and here I think we can get bipartisan agreement, education and training: Consolidating job training

programs and funding them adequately; consolidating job training programs, making it easier for that worker who faces downsizing or who wants to increase his or her skill level to get that training that is necessary. That is in business's interest, that is in the individual's interest, that is in the Government's interest. That I think is important.

Here it has not been smooth sailing on a bipartisan basis, and that is student loans. We ought to have as a goal in this country that every qualified, emphasize and underline qualified, every qualified student will have the ability to go to college; that they will certainly have to work for it, that they will have to pay for it, so to pay back a loan for it. But the answer is not to cut student loans, as was initially proposed in this body many months ago, to cut student loans such that the average person was paying $3,000 to $4,000 more for an undergraduate loan. I know what that would have done to 35,000 students on the Stafford loan program in West Virginia.

Student loans, or the ability to go to college and to receive a higher education, ought to be enhanced, and not reduced. Also, I think it is important to recognize the victories that were fought here on this House floor and finally won, on keeping the funding at the adequate level or semiadequate level for the title I program. That is what provides remedial math and reading instruction for many of our students across the country. In West Virginia, the cutbacks alone would have meant the layoff of 225 specialized title I teachers, 90 aides, and roughly 6,500 title I students, elementary school students not getting the instructional training they needed.

Happily, after the House did pass the cuts, they were removed in the conference agreement, and the good news is that title I will continue at last year's level, meaning that you will not see those kinds of cutbacks take place. But we ought to vow that we are not going to have that fight again in the upcoming years, that title I's position is recognized.

A minimum wage increase, improvement of education and training. Third is infrastructure development. Mr. Speaker, I think it is just crucial that we recognize that we are not producing our infrastructure, our roads, bridges, our water systems, our sewer systems, our airports our telecommunications structures, in some ways, we are not either maintaining or building what we need to be a true 21st century economic power.

Indeed, if we look we will find, for instance, that as I recall, almost 50 percent of our roads and bridges are somehow deficient, that our infrastructure is way behind projected needs. We are spending far less percentage today, roughly half for infrastructure, of what we were spending just 20 years ago.

We wonder why, during the 1980's, Japan and other nations moved ahead in terms of economic growth. The answer is they put their money into infrastructure. Japan, with half the population and half the economy, actually spent more in real dollars on infrastructure development than did the United States. Then we wonder why our productivity and growth was slower during that period of time.

There are for the first time some interesting studies that show a direct correlation between amount invested in infrastructure and productivity increase. The reality is that increasing productivity and growth is our ticket out of the economic stagnation that we are presently in.

We have to be willing to look at some innovative infrastructure approaches. This House voted to take the highway trust fund off-budget, for instance, not to make it part of the regular budget process, because in the regular budget process you need to be looking at how much you are spending on day-to-day expenses: Your salary, gasoline for the Federal vehicle, pencils for the courthouse, whatever it is to run government on a daily basis.

☐ 1300

That is the operation and maintenance of government. We have got to balance that.

But every family knows that they borrow money for a house, Mr. Speaker. I do not know too many people that pay for their house in the first year. I know that our mortgage certainly runs 20 years and we just refinanced, so I think we are on the hook for a little longer.

That means, Mr. Speaker, that every family borrows for its house, borrows to buy its cars, borrows, most families, for their children's education, their college education. So those items that we recognize having greater return over a period of time than what we put into it, that are investments, those, Mr. Speaker, are capital investments.

So whether we take the trust funds off budget, or whether we do as I have suggested and others on a bipartisan basis have suggested, that we devise a capital budget, that we show on one side of the ledger our investment and we account for those on a different basis than we account for our daily operating expenses, whatever it is, Mr. Speaker, this Federal Government needs to move toward it.

I make an interesting observation. I have spent some time studying capital budgeting, one of the more boring subjects, Mr. Speaker, but ironically probably one of the most exciting in terms of what could be done for growth in this economy, and also to get the Federal budget on a sound system.

I note that every family, every business, every county government, every city government and every State has some form of a capital budget. There is only one major entity that has no capital budget, the Federal Government of the United States of America. It seems to me it is time to move in that direction.

The Federal Reserve, Mr. Speaker, the Congress does not have much control over that. The reality is that the continued policy of the Federal Reserve, to always be looking over its shoulder at inflation while not looking ahead toward boosting growth beyond 2.3 percent, I think is a stalemate position that only leads to stagnation. The irony to this is that the Congress, even if the Congress could agree on a higher growth rate and policies to implement that, if the Federal Reserve is still clamping down, then what we have is a governmental stalemate.

The fact is that inflation, which is something that was deeply impeded in each of us, the fear of inflation, in the late 1970's, early 1980's, that that was last year's war. We do not make light of it, we do not ignore it. But, by the same token, the international economy has changed so significantly, Mr. Speaker, that the competition that is abroad is a natural check on rising prices and rising wages in the United States.

So we ought not to always be fighting tomorrow's economic battles with the last war's tactics, and so the Federal Reserve is another element. At this point I will leave it to jawboning the Federal Reserve, but at some point Congress may need to look at what can be done to influence.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about growth once again. I agree that if we could, that 2.3 percent is not the ticket that we want, is not the goal; that any budget proposal has to be looking toward boosting that significantly; that the way we get there is, through equity, basically is first a minimum wage increase, second is education and training initiatives, both in job training, recognizing that the average adult is going to have to be retrained 7 to 8 times during our working lives, by adequately funding the student loan program, by making sure that the special education programs funded by the Federal Government are at an adequate level, such as the title I program; that this country embark upon an infrastructure maintenance and development effort similar to what President Eisenhower initiated with the interstate highway system back in the 1950's; that this Nation recognize that growth is a desirable component of any budget policy, and that this Government put its books on the same basis that every other entity in this country, whether private or public, has with some sort of capital budgeting approach.

All of these are very, very crucial.

Another pitch for education, Mr. Speaker, is that I look at history, recent history, since World War II, and I see the single greatest economic accelerator in our country was the GI bill. It was when millions of veterans came home from World War II and they did not know what kind of job market they were getting into. As they returned, the Congress on a bipartisan basis enacted the GI bill which said, ''We're

going to assist you to get the education you need to boost your skills and your opportunities.''

What the Congress expended in increased educational opportunities was repaid to the Federal Government within 10 to 12 years. But the economic accelerator of that has gone on for decades as we have seen those men and women who got the chance to upgrade their skills, to improve themselves, go on to much higher income levels, to being able to produce much more for our economy and themselves.

So just as the GI bill produced that kind of economic growth that was so important following World War II, so it is that we need to take that lesson from history and vow to do the same for our present day workers and young people.

I want to speak for a second, Mr. Speaker, on the health care legislation that is emerging. The House and the Senate have both passed reform measures. They are incremental. They deal with limited areas. The reality is that that is the best we are going to get this year and probably to the next few years is incremental, and that is fine. We will move on that basis, addressing particular needs and in so doing trying to cover more and more.

The basic premise of this legislation is that it would make it much more difficult, indeed, to ban denying somebody health insurance because of a preexisting condition that they might have. That is very important. The second is that it would make it much easier for an individual who leaves one workplace where they are covered by health insurance to carry that health insurance to another workplace.

Certainly many of us have become aware of job lock, where a family is afraid to leave a job they have even if they could boost their wages, boost their opportunities, because in so doing they may endanger the health insurance which covers their children. So the House and the Senate have passed legislation. They are now trying to work out the differences.

The Senate has a piece, they did add an amendment that I consider very important. I am proud to have joined on a bipartisan basis with other Members to support parity for mental health benefits. The fact is that 30 million Americans at any time may be having trouble, may be suffering some sort of mental concerns, mental problems, emotional distress and only 20 percent of those will be seeking help. The fact is that most insurance does not encourage us to be seeking assistance for any kind of emotional distress, emotional disturbance, or mental illness.

Every study has documented that the amount of time lost in productivity to this economy because of mental health problems is way into the hundreds of billions of dollars. At some point one out of five Americans is going to have a problem with mental health, and so it becomes important that we recognize this.

I have heard all the arguments about how, well, mental health is different than physical health, and we can identify a physical illness and we know how many treatments to give it, but mental health, how do we put some kind of handle on that? How do we identify how many treatments are necessary to deal with a psychiatric problem or an emotional problem?

I guess I look at it this way. How do we identify how many treatments are necessary for chronic back pain? How do we identify what it is going to take for many of the types of pains or migraine headaches or other problems that people are afflicted with?

The fact is that physical science is not a complete science, yet and what we are learning is that mental health is indeed much more of a science than what was conceived of just 20 years ago. When I was working in that hospital at minimum wage, I was working in a psychiatric facility, and I am still struck by the incredible changes that have taken place in mental health during that period of time.

Thirty years ago, not quite 30 actually but, say, 25 years ago when I might have been up and down the hall all night with a young person afflicted with a schizophrenic process, because outside of Thorazine we did not really know what to do except sedate them, today the National Institute of Mental Health, the research that former Congressman Sil Conte was so responsible for getting started and funded, and creating the decade of the brain and the amazing research that has been done with BET technology, with MRI's, all of that, has made great breakthroughs in the treatment of mental illnesses. So that today you would not be having to walk the floors all day and all night with that affected individual. You would be administering some basic medications, you would be taking certain steps that were unknown just a few short years ago.

So that is the importance of moving ahead in research, of moving ahead in treatment techniques, and also moving ahead in recognizing the parity of mental health with physical health and, indeed, recognizing there is a holistic approach that needs to be taken here. Mental health and physical health are really one in many ways. We have not thought about it that way in the past. That is why this legislation that is in the Senate that would, in addition to safeguarding a person's right to gain insurance and not be denied because of preexisting conditions, the legislation that would protect the individual's ability to carry their insurance from one job to another, that is why that amendment is so important, and I hope the House conference will adopt it, that would say that mental health is to be considered the same in insurance as physical health and that there should be parity between the two. That is the humane approach. It is also the scientific approach and the proper one.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I join with many other Members, Republican and Democrat, on both sides of the aisle and in both Chambers, the House and the Senate, in urging that that step be taken.

Mr. Speaker, I might also say that health care can be part of that growth package I was talking about because one of the areas that so affects people, so makes them back up and say, ''Well, maybe I won't take that chance and become a small business person, maybe I won't take chance and become an entrepreneur, because if I leave my regular job, I leave my insurance and I don't want to leave my children naked without it,'' maybe to that welfare recipient who says, ''If I go and take this job, I lose my Medicaid card, which I'm prepared to give up for myself but I'm not prepared to sacrifice for my children,'' maybe by providing adequate health care and access to health care, then that too becomes a component of that growth package. So we add health care now to minimum wage increase, to education, and training, to infrastructure development, to capital budgeting and building a growth component into our Federal budget, and also now we add health care to make it a total package.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to be talking a lot more about growth. My hope is that Members on both sides of the aisle will join in this discussion and recognize something that actually, I think, began to develop in the Republican primaries. While I have to be honest, they did not invite me to participate as much as they might have in that process, I do think that the useful debate was started by Steve Forbes and by some of the others about the role of growth in this whole budget process.

Everybody agrees on the need for a balanced budget, but on the way to balancing the budget, if we run the economy into the ground, what have we accomplished? What we have accomplished is at the end of 7 years, we may have a balanced budget—I do not think so—we may have a balanced budget, but we will have an economy that is incapable of generating the jobs and opportunity that we want, and in so doing will be generating future and greater deficits.

That is not a situation any of us want. We do not want to be generating future problems for Social Security and Medicare and many of these other programs. So we ought to be able to rally and come together around the growth initiative and say to both Republicans and Democrats alike, 2.3 percent growth just does not get it and we need to be focusing on something much more attainable, much more achievable, and something that truly reflects where it is we want the American economy to be.

□ 1315

THE EFFECT OF RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE ON UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May