that has been fallen other multicultural, multi-ethnic nations. If we have averted their fate so far, it is no small thanks to our common language, our common glue, our commonality, the English language.

As Winston Churchill said, the common language is a nation's most priceless inheritance, and when we pass on, this Nation, our traditions and our values, on to those people who are following us, passing on a common language is our Nation's most priceless inheritance that we can pass on. At the dawn of the 21st century, Churchill's observation, as usual, could not be more true. A common language is now more important than perhaps ever before.

My friends, we cannot stand idly by and hope that the global forces of separatism will pass us by. That is like closing our eyes and praying that a hurricane will suddenly veer off and project a different path and spare our town. We need to steel our national resolve to the storm and solidify the ties that bind us together as a nation.

I know the majority of the people in this body have demonstrated on August 1 that they truly believe that English as our official language is the right course. I ask Members to join me once again in a continuation of that struggle and urge the Senate to take up this bill and finish the job. It is true we stop depending on divine intervention to spare our Nation from separatist forces. We have an obligation as leaders to the American people and to our posterity. Let us send a clear message and signal to our colleagues in the Senate to make English our official language.

## CITIZEN CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take the floor tonight and address my colleagues over the fact that over the past month, essentially since we adjourned on August 2 for the 3- or 4-week district work period, I had the opportunity to have a number of forums, both general forums with my constituents or specific forums or town meetings on the senior issues, on environmental issues, and also on education issues. What I heard over and over again from my constituents was that they were very upset and they were very much opposed to the Republican leadership agenda that we have seen in the Congress over this last session now almost 2 years.

What my constituents were telling me over and over again was that they did not want to cut Medicare. They did not want to cut Medicaid. They did not want to see massive cuts in higher education programs, and they certainly did not want to turn the clock back on the last 25 years of environmental protection that has been implemented by this Congress and by presidents on a bipartisan basis.

My constituents could not have been any louder or any clearer on this issue. They felt very strongly that the Republican leadership, in this case Speaker GINGRICH and the rest of the Republican leadership, have the wrong priorities, that when it comes to balancing the budget and when it comes to the priorities that have to be implemented in order to balance that budget, that Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment were not the areas where cuts should be made.

Essentially what I was getting was the impression that the Gingrich Congress, if you will, is out of touch with the American people and their concerns. I just wanted to review, because I think many times now we are getting very close to the election and a lot of times the public hears things that are very different from the actions that have been taken in this Congress by the Republican leadership in the last 2 years.

I just want to remind my colleagues about some of the initiatives that we have seen in this 104th Congress. We have seen an unprecedented Republican record of voting for extreme cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment essentially to finance tax breaks for the wealthy.

Since the Speaker NEWT GINGRICH, first pounded the gavel in January 1995, Medicare has essentially been under siege in this Congress. The Gingrich Congress again and again has tried to destroy Medicare, threatening to inflict major hardships on millions of senior citizens and their families. Also this has been the biggest anti-education Congress in history.

□ 1830

The Gingrich Congress has continually gone after education funding as a piggy bank, again for their tax breaks for the wealthy, targeting student loans in particular. What I was hearing from my constituents at the various forums that I had was that right now the cost of higher education is prohibitive, and whether you are going to a public school, public university or a private college or university, the costs continue to skyrocket. The only way that most Americans, that the average middle class American, can afford a college education today is if they have some combination of scholarship or grant or student loan or work-study program, and yet what we have seen here is the Republican leadership constantly go after those very student loan programs or those very Federal grant programs or even the work-study programs that make it possible for many people, most people, if you will right now, to go and to continue with their higher education.

And essentially, if the Gingrich Congress gets its way, students and their parents would pay thousands of dollars more for a college education at a time when tuition is already spiraling out of reach for many working families. So either they are going to pay more or they are not going to be able to afford to go to college or to graduate school, and they simply forgo that because they will not be able to get the help that is now afforded by the Federal Government.

On the environment, basically the Gingrich Congress rolled into town in January 1995 determined to roll back major environmental protections in order to pay back the special interest polluters who finance their campaigns. What we saw was that from the very beginning the polluters were sitting down with the Republican leadership at the table and writing, or rewriting if you will, environmental laws.

I do not think that is in the best interests of America's families. Obviously, people feel very strongly that they should be able to breathe clean air, drink clean water and eat safe food, and rolling back the environmental protections, which we have seen put in place on a bipartisan basis by Congress for the last 25 years since Earth Day, is clearly not the way that my constituents, and I think that most Americans, feel that we should be going.

Let me just give you an example. You know one of the things that we keep hearing is that this Congress has changed, that somehow the Republican leadership now understands that they cannot roll back environmental protection, and they are starting to do a few things here and there that maybe show that. But you know if you look at the budget that was adopted earlier this year, in the spring of 1996, you see that it still contains all these poison pills from the old budget, extreme proposals that go against America's values. It still eliminates the Medicaid guarantee of meaningful health benefits for millions of Americans, it still threatens Medicare with excessive cuts and damaging policies, it still cuts education, and it still takes the environmental cop off the beat. What I mean by that is it cuts enforcement, and I have said over and over again here in the well that it is very nice if you have good environmental laws on the books, but if you do not have the money to enforce those laws, to send out the investigators, to have the environmental cop on the beat so to speak, you might as well not have the laws on the books at all.

And this is what we are seeing, a budget that basically disregards America's values.

I wanted to go into some of the points on this budget, but I see that the gentlewoman from Connecticut, who has been so much a leader on making some of these points, has joined me, and if she would like to have some time yielded at this point?

Ms. DELAURO. Yes, I appreciate my colleague yielding. I just wanted to make two or three points.

I think we have seen that Labor Day has come and gone, the August congressional work break is over, and as

kids across this Nation are going back to school, Members of Congress head back to Washington for this final push, if you will, of the 104th Congress. In essence there is 1 more month of legislative work before the November elections.

Sometimes, and I do not know if this is a fitting analogy, but for some people the thought of Congress coming back to work makes working families across this country feel exactly what many women feel at the beginning of the fall football season. It is kind of a complete and utter dread as to what else might be wrought on them. And after what they have seen with this Congress over the last 20 months, I think that there are very few or no one wants to see Speaker GINGRICH and his leadership back at work because, quite frankly, there is just too much at stake for people in their lives and the lives of working families.

The legacy, and my colleague talked a little about this, the legacy of the 104th Congress, the first Congress led by a Republican majority and the Republican leadership, their legislative agenda over the course of this last 20 months can simply be summed up in three words, and that is ''hurting working families.''

Sometimes we forget where we started and if the natural instincts of people have been followed in this body over the last 20 months. But today, and I am sure my colleague has read the press today, a new CNN–USA Today-Gallup poll shows that American voters prefer Democrats in Congress over Republicans by a 10-point margin. This is the biggest lead for Democrats since Republicans captured the Congress in November 1994, and this is what USA Today observed, and I quote:

> The polls suggest GOP control of the Congress gained in 1994 for the first time in 40 years could be in serious danger.

The poll also showed that 60 percent of the American public has a favorable opinion of the Democratic Party compared to only 50 percent with a favorable opinion of Republicans. It is really time to take stock of what has been done over the last 2 years with just 2 months left of this session of the Congress.

What the Republican leadership advocated, what they voted on, what they pushed through the committee, the kinds of efforts that you have talked about that were in the budget, that are coming back at us in another way over and over again, what they pushed through the committee, what they brought to the floor of the House; it is really quite significant and worth recalling. Let me just mention a few things.

The Republicans started off the 104th Congress by attacking kids, cutting Head Start. Why should we prepare kids for kindergarten? They wanted to cut the school lunch program. Why should we stop kids' stomachs from growling? They wanted to cut the student loan program. Why should we help our kids with a college education?

And they did not stop there. Then they skipped a few generations and went on to seniors, the Medicare battle of cutting $270 billion to pay for $245 billion in tax breaks for the wealthy. Why should we help seniors to pay for their medical care? Rolling back nursing home regulations. Why should we protect vulnerable seniors? You know, the notion of shutting down rural hospitals. Why should we provide the underserved areas with medical care?

Then they went after the environment, my colleague pointed out. They let special interest polluters rewrite environmental laws. They actually had lobbyists sitting on the dias, which is only reserved for Members of Congress.

Why should we have clean air and clean water? They cut funding for Superfund clean ups. Why should we get rid of toxic waste dumps? And I know my colleague in New Jersey has dealt with this issue over and over again. I have in my own community of Stratford, CT, where despite the two Government shutdowns and despite the initiatives to try to cut back on the Superfund they were able to continue with a project that can bring 1,500 jobs to Stratford, CT, immediately and then be able to build on that. They threatened to open up the Arctic Natural Wildlife Reserve to drilling. Why should we conserve our national treasures?

And then they did not stop there. They went directly to working families. They stopped passage of the minimum wage increase until medical savings accounts were added to the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform legislation.

It was very interesting on the minimum wage debate. It took all kinds of legislative and all kinds of parliamentary procedures in order for us to even be able to get the minimum wage up on the floor and try to get it passed.

The whole issue of the medical savings accounts which was brought up, the medical savings accounts the Consumers Union has called a time bomb that will make health insurance less accessible and less affordable for many Americans.

But the public did not support the Republicans' leadership effort to hurt children, and they do not support these efforts to hurt seniors.

What we will take a look at in the new proposal, this economic plan proposed by Bob Dole, is about close to $600 billion in a tax cut. If you had to take, if you had to look at and if they had to look at cutting Medicare in order to provide for a $245 billion tax break for the wealthiest, where do they have to go to deal with $600 billion in a tax break?

I know my colleagues from New Jersey and I do support tax cuts for working families. Let us take a look at how we can help working families with education, with doing, you know, helping people who are going to sell their homes without having to pay a capital gains tax, providing families with a $10,000 tax deduction in order to get their kids to school or provide for education or for skills and education training. Those are the kinds of things. The HOPE scholarships, $1,500 over 2 years, a 2-year period of time, where if a child maintains a B average and stays drug-free that they will be able to get some education help. These are the kinds of ways we need to point, directly point at working families in trying to help them, not a $600 billion, you know, tax break that will wind up going after seniors once again.

Mr. PALLONE. The gentlewoman could not be more on point, believe me. That is exactly what I was hearing, as I said, for the 3 weeks before the Democratic Convention when we went to Chicago. I had forums, town meetings every night and a lot of times during the day, and that is what I kept hearing over and over again, that people want the Government to be involved in positive ways, to help them with educational programs, for example.

I mean I had a forum in Piscataway, which is one of the towns that includes Rutgers University or different parts of Rutgers University in my district, and people would come up and say, look, we cannot afford higher education. We like the fact that the President has expanded now a national direct student loan program, we like the fact that AmeriCorps is in place and you can work and get a student loan and pay it back through working while you are in college or afterward. Expand the opportunities, use the Tax Code, if you will, as you suggested and as the President suggested and mentioned at the Democratic Convention, use the Tax Code to give the deduction, that we can deduct tuition or that we can get the tax credit for the first 2 years of college, as the President suggested, the HOPE scholarship for example.

I love the term ''hope'' because it is so positive, and it is his hometown in Arkansas, and you know that is the kind of thing that appeals, not to cut back on these programs, not to cut back on student loans, not to say we are not going to have a direct student loan program any more, not to eliminate AmeriCorps, which is exactly what the budget that was passed in this House does.

And if I can just say that I remember during the convention when, I think it was, the Vice President spoke and said, ''I was there and I remember,'' and I think that is exactly it. I mean we were here on the floor, we have seen that they have proposed, and they cannot hide behind it now and act as if they never proposed it. They not only proposed it, they still have it out there as the budget they are trying to work with the terms of what appropriation bills they move here.

So the reality is that they are still trying to cut back on these higher education programs and other things that are so important to the average American.

Ms. DELAURO. Let me just make one more point, because I think it is very

clear this is not too long ago before we left for the August work period that BILL THOMAS of California talked about the Medicare Program as a socialist program. Last week in Congress Daily, when someone asked the Speaker how we could pay for the Dole economic plan, the $600 billion tax cut program, he said, well, we will have to go back and look at entitlement programs again maybe, and we will probably have to look to defense as well. So they added that on.

But the first, the very first, thing out of his mouth was the entitlement programs again: Entitlement, Medicare. That is what we are talking about. So they are prepared to go back to trying to cut Medicare and education again and all of the programs that people are utilizing for their families, not wasting money on. Nobody is talking about being spendthrifts and doing that. People are talking about a Medicare system that has helped people, student loans which help people, but if they are going to try to go for $600 billion and try to balance the budget at the same time and not cut defense, where is the money coming from?

□ 1845

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, as I was listening earlier, we are all kind of struck I think, after being away from here for a month, to see how at the Republican convention there was this desire to reinvent, if you will, the Republican record.

The most striking one is to come back at the end of that and to have Bob Dole come out and support this $600 billion tax cut, and then to suggest that somehow it is paid for; and then to see the Speaker say maybe they would look at defense, and to meanwhile have Bob Dole going around the country saying that the administration is not spending enough on defense, that they have to spend more.

So the presidential candidate is saying they are going to spend more on defense than we are already spending today, and so we get back to the entitlements. Of course, when we get back to the entitlements we get back to Medicare and to Medicaid, and we have struggled now for almost 2 years to try to take their $270 billion tax cut that was earmarked to come out of the Medicare funds and get that pared down to, now they are talking about 245 or 268 or some other number.

The question, in the middle of this, Bob Dole dumps in $600 billion in tax cuts and says you can afford this. We cannot get the budget passed, we shut down the Government because we could not get the budget passed, we could not afford $270 billion in tax cuts.

When we compare that to the President who has put forth a program that is in fact affordable and is targeted at populations that need it, of course, what we are seeing is this huge skepticism, because we went through the 1980's, and people saw this dramatic runup. We see now Dick Darman has published his book which says today that simply the deficits in the 1980's were caused by the fact that they spent too much money, that the Reagan administration spent too much money. As he says, it was primarily defense. They fought, they fought this Congress all the time on that.

The question is, Do we want to have a replay? I think what we are starting to see the American public say is we do not want to go backward, we do not want to go to the 1980's, we want to go to the year 2000. We want to go with a budget that is balanced. We want to go with kids that are competitive, kids that have skills, with kids who are educated, and with families who can keep their standard of living, that is what the future is about, and a targeted set of tax credits, some help for businesses, some help for education, some help for families, for older people that are going to sell their homes. That starts to make a lot of sense, and it is affordable. It is affordable.

But to watch this other thing happen, this $600 billion, and to try to pretend that it is not related to cutting Medicare, that it is not related to squeezing health care out of either Medicare or Medicaid, because when we are looking for $600 billion, that is where we are going, because so far we have not found the $245 billion without savaging those programs.

So far, what we have come to is we have kept their hands off of Medicaid for the time being; but if we are looking to pay for the Dole tax break, we are going to go to Medicaid and we are going to go right past that to Medicare. So, effectively, he has put it all back on the table, because it is so big and it is so sloppy and it is so untargeted that all it does is add to the deficit and drive cuts in programs that are absolutely vital to families in this country if they are going to have their parents and grandparents and themselves taken care of in future years.

I want to thank the gentleman for taking this time to point out this incredible inconsistency. It was one thing, there was sort of this one CONGRESSIONAL RECORD when the whole world was watching, but for 18 months when people were rather confused about what was going on, these guys were hacking and hewing and slashing every program that moved, every benefit working families needed, that college students needed, that children needed, and nutrition programs and school lunch and Head Start Programs. They were in here slashing away. Then one day they found out the public was watching, the public found out about it, changed its mind, and now they are trying to change their clothes. They are trying to put some other patina on what it is they were doing.

The fact of the matter is we want to judge people by what they are doing when we are not paying attention. What they were doing was destroying the basic fabric that is helping to hold many American families together in very difficult economic times with respect to wage increases and standards of living. I thank the gentleman for taking this time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the thing that I liked best about the President's speech at the convention is that he was basically talking about very modest proposals; progressive steps, if you will, that could move us forward toward helping the average American, and basically giving them responsibility and opportunities so people could do things for themselves, in a very modest way. He did not talk about any grandiose scheme that was going to solve all the problems of the world.

That is the kind of thing that I get from my constituents. They come up with very commonsense proposals, like we talked about the education proposal with the tuition tax deduction or the credit, $1,500 a year, something like that; modest things that will move us forward.

I was very happy when the President came out with some new environmental initiatives. Again, they were not anything grandiose, but he talked about how in the last 3 years since he has been in office, in the Superfund Program, we have cleaned more Superfund sites in the past 12 years, and he says he is going to make a major initiative over the next 4 years to clean up, I think, two-thirds of the sites or something like that; you know, use the existing program to try to do the right thing, to clean up these sites. That is what I hear.

I had a couple of environmental forums in towns that have several Superfund sites. In each one of them there has been significant progress on cleanup, real cleanup, permanent cleanup, not just capping the site with asphalt or something like that. They understood when we said, look, we are making progress progress, but we want to do more. We want to accelerate the progress. That is understood, as the President said.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I assume the gentleman is getting the response that I do in the district that I represent. City officials for the first time feel like the EPA and Superfund is there to help them. They have spent 10 years languishing, trying to get through this morass of complications, and all of a sudden here is this administration, Carol Browner and our regional person, Felicia Marcus, who are going out meeting with cities, the city dump, dealing with providing efforts to bring in new economic activity, cleaning up the Superfund sites, committing resources, committing personnel to doing this.

For the first time, the mayors and city council people in my area that have had these problems from many years ago are talking about this as a positive agency. For 10 years they looked at them like all they were doing is hindering the city that was trying to

get going. For the first time we see this.

So we do not need a grandiose plan, what we need is someone who is committed to carrying out the intent and purposes of the Superfund law, and getting our communities cleaned up so we can get on with the kind of economic activity that is possible in those areas. This is the first time I have ever heard this from local city officials about that program.

Ms. DELAURO. If the gentleman will continue to yield, it is so clear, because I have Stratford, CT, where since 1918 the Raybestos Co. has been dumping, it was just toxic soup here, and despite two shutdowns, we have had the Superfund Program working. There has been such a cooperative effort between the Federal, State, and local government, working together to clean up this site to put the cap down. There is a developer who will come in and put up a shopping mall. We will have construction jobs, we will have revenue to the State of Connecticut and an increase in jobs. It is one of the best examples of cooperation and of partnership.

And as I mentioned a few minutes ago, during the shutdowns, even during the shutdowns the Superfund Program continued to work with the project, help to provide money to keep it going, to keep it going, because of what it means for the future of that community. If the Republicans had had their way over this past 20 months, EPA would be gone. It was over.

That is why what we need to do is, on a whole number of issues that have been talked about, whether it is school lunch, college loans, the direction that this march was moving in in terms of what it wanted to do, it was halted because of the public outcry. People said no, these programs work. School lunch works. Medicare works. The environmental regulations are good for us. They said no, so we had a stopping of it.

My colleague, the gentleman from California, is right; it was almost unbelievable that the group who brought you the last 20 months was nowhere to be seen in San Diego. They were taken off the screen. But if they had followed their natural instincts, so many of these efforts that were really products of bipartisanship in years past would have been gone.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to follow up also with what the gentlewoman was saying about this whole idea of empowering the local people or citizen groups to get involved. One of the things that the President mentioned also as an environmental initiative for the next 4 years was expanding right to know.

When you talk to your local citizen groups that had been involved in Superfund or clean water, whatever it happens to be, they all say the same thing: We are playing a major role in finding out what the pollution problems are, in investigating, going to outfall pipes or looking at the Superfund sites.

A lot of the remedy selection, if you will, for the Superfund sites in my districts were actually put together by local citizen groups that got a grant from the Federal Government or from the State, and actually had input to put together what the remedy should be to clean up the Superfund site. So when you talk about citizen rights, expanding citizens' ability to sue, right to know, the kinds of things the President was talking about, these are the kinds of tools to empower them that people want to use. They see Government as this partnership to empower them to take on more responsibility and to work locally with the Federal dollars and with the State government to accomplish the goal.

Mr. MILLER of California. If the gentleman will yield, that is the point. The President talked about Mr. Dole, talking about being a bridge to the past and a bridge to the future. In effect, what you saw out here for 18 months was an attempt by the Republican Party to go back to the past, to a time where there was not the EPA, where we did not have the Clean Water Act, where we did not have the Safe Drinking Water Act, where we did not have nutrition programs for children, when we did not have a Medicare program to take care of the elderly.

The fact is, that is being rejected. That is being rejected throughout the country. Each and every time, as the public learns more and more about what this agenda was, what the ramifications of this contract were on regulatory reform, on environmental laws, on the nutrition laws, on our education program, that has been rejected, and it is being rejected overwhelmingly.

We ought not to go back to those days, because in fact our communities have benefited from these environmental laws, our elderly have benefited from programs like Medicare, and poor populations have benefited from the Medicaid. We just cannot go back in this country. That is really what the contract was about. It is about what the first year was about. It is what the shutdown was about.

It was about if you do not let us, to go back to a time without Medicare, without Medicaid, without nutrition, we are going to shut down the Government. We have seen that show. We have been there, we have done that. That is unacceptable to the American public. I think what we are starting to see is people want to focus on the future, and about the opportunity to have better communities, safer neighborhoods, and more secure families as we go into the next century.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentlewoman from New York.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. It is a pleasure to be here this evening.

Mr. Speaker, as I just came back from a few weeks in my district, talking to seniors, talking to parents, understanding the needs of the people in my district, I come back here ready to fight once more, just to stop this amazing, amazing move to take us backwards.

I sit on the Committee on Appropriations, where I remember in the late night seeing our colleagues on the Republican side trying to cut student loans, cut drug-free school money, trying to cut after-school jobs for youth. The gentleman and I know, and it is the same in New Jersey and New York, that the families, the mothers and fathers with whom we speak, want us to be investing in education. They want to take our kids forward to the 21st century. They do not want to see us go back. In fact, many of our communities are really distressed about seeing school buildings that need so much work.

I was delighted when the President suggested that we put forth a bill that would invest over $5 billion in rebuilding our schools.

□ 1900

We have a lot of talk about computers and bringing us forward to the 21st century. Yet these kids go to schools where they are crumbling. We should be really investing in our young people, in education, so we can move forward.

I also live in a district where we are bordered by the Long Island Sound on one side and the Hudson River on the other side. What a year we have had, where we have seen so many environmental regulations by our colleagues in the Republican Party; we have seen these regulations, at least attempts to destroy these regulations. The gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] has been a real leader in this area.

I know the majority of our constituents want us to, yes, try and reform some of these rules so that they work more effectively, but they do not want to see us go backward. They want us to continue to fight for clean water, clean air. The gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] and I have been working to upgrade sewage treatment plants, as the gentleman from New Jersey has, because we understand that there is a real balance between jobs, economic development and cleaning up our environment. So we do not want to go backward. We want to go forward, whether it is fighting for a clean environment or fighting for a strong education, just to make sure that our families and our children have a bright future ahead. That is what this is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I was just in my office doing some work. I heard the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] and the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] talking about the important challenges ahead, and I am so pleased that we have leadership in the White House working with us to make sure that we go forward to the 21st century. We have a lot of work to do, and working together I know that we are going to accomplish our goals.

As I am thinking about these various issues, I remember sitting on this committee and seeing my Republican colleagues trying to cut out 60 percent of the funds for prevention in trying to make sure that our youngsters do not go near drugs. We need programs like DARE, other substance abuse prevention programs, to be sure that the kids understand in their gut that drugs should not be part of their lives. We hear a lot of talk, a lot of rhetoric about drugs are no good and we have to do more. Yet the bottom line is on that committee the Republicans cut out 60 percent of the funds for substance abuse prevention programs.

I am hoping that we can continue to work together to make sure that our schools are strong, that our environment is clean, that we protect our family and our children and the future and make sure we get that bridge to the 21st century, not let any of our colleagues take us back. I thank the gentleman for all the work he his doing and the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO]. It is a pleasure to stop by and talk with them.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments. I think she is making the point that money is the key. The gentlewoman is on the Committee on Appropriations. She pointed out that in many cases the whole emphasis in this 104th Congress was on cutting money for environmental programs, for example, for education programs.

Again we started out this evening by saying that, if you do not have the money to hire the investigators to do the enforcement, to upgrade the sewage treatment plants, for example, then what is the use of having the environmental laws on the books? That is what we saw. We saw, I think, initially an effort to try to cut back on some of the substantive environmental programs. And then when the Republicans could not accomplish that, they went to the Committee on Appropriations, and they tried to cut back on the money for enforcement, the money for investigation and then also put those legislative riders.

Remember that we had, I think there were 17 legislative riders that were put into the appropriations bill that my colleague and other Democrats on the Committee on Appropriations fought so hard to try to get eliminated, and eventually all the riders were eliminated. But it was a hard-fought battle. The public has to remember what this battle was all about. It continues. The budget that is out there now would again cut back significantly on all these environmental programs.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman mentioning those riders again. As we know, if the President did not stand firm working with the Democrats in Congress and eventually some of our colleagues on the other side hearing from their constituents in the district came around, if we did not stand firm with strong Presidential leadership, where would we be today? Those riders would be in place.

Mr. PALLONE. Exactly.

Mrs. LOWEY. I think it points up how important a role all of our constituents have. They attended town hall meetings. They wrote to their Members of Congress. They wrote to the President saying, we want to go forward, we want to continue to work, to clean up bodies of water like the Long Island Sound and the Hudson River and other estuaries around the country. They do not want to go backward.

They understand that, yes, you can make these laws work better, you can cut out a lot of the waste, and we know there is plenty all over the place. But they still want us to invest in cleaning up these bodies of water because they understand that, in order to create jobs, in order to create businesses, in order to keep our economy strong, our environmental regulations have to be in place because it is that balance that you, I, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] and so many of our colleagues are trying to preserve.

Mr. PALLONE. Exactly.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I think one of the key issues is remembering, remembering this last 20 months and what it has been about.

If the natural instincts of the Republican majority and leadership had been followed, we would have seen the single biggest cuts in education that the United States has ever seen. We would have seen the biggest assault on the environment, as both of my colleagues here have talked about, that we have seen since we started to try to do something in a bipartisan way on cleaning up the environment.

Mr. Speaker, we would have seen the program that has probably been the most responsible for helping American seniors out of poverty, the Medicare Program, we would have seen that transformed into something else and leaving people who have worked hard all of their lives, people who only truly want to have a decent and a secure retirement, something that they have earned, we would have seen that program devastated.

What is very interesting is that that was stopped, by the public primarily, by the outrage of the American public, and the Democrats in the House and the Senate and the President. But what is very interesting to note is that, and you can make reference to what happened in this Congress to nightmare on Capitol Hill part I; and I think, if given another chance, we would see return of the nightmare part II, not by my commentary but by what has already been in print by Republican leadership. The Speaker, saying that to enact a Dole economic plan would mean cuts in entitlements.

The third person in charge of this House in the Republican leadership, TOM DELAY, in a response to columnist Mort Kondracke, when asked if they would do things differently or do them the same, talked about doing the same things over again. There has been recent commentary about the Medicare system being a Socialist system. The public in no way can feel that they can put their trust in people who do not believe in Medicare, fundamentally do not believe in it, who want to cut back on the opportunity for education, make it more costly for them to be able to get their kids to school and to jeopardize what their retirement security is all about.

Mr. Speaker, one thing we totally have not talked about at all is the raid on pension funds. They were going to allow corporations to raid employee pension funds, not to utilize for health care or some other reason but for anything they wanted. It was going back to the 1980's, to the corporate raiders who wound up taking the pension funds, investing in savings and loans or junk bonds, and so forth, went belly up and put people's pensions at risk.

That was on the table to happen. It was stopped. But it is good to review and to understand where their inclination would have taken this country, how they truly threatened the standard of living for working middle-class families in this country, and given the chance again, would do it again.

Mr. PALLONE. Just to fall back again on what I was saying before, I had, I think, 3 senior forums, at least 3 senior forums during the break, When I started the forums, each of them had 200 or 300 people. I was amazed at how may people came out because they were concerned about what the Republicans were doing on Medicare and Medicaid. They started out in each case by giving me very positive suggestions about how Medicare could be changed to save money but actually accomplish more, things like, well, we should include prescription drugs, maybe we have to pay something, $5 or something like that but cover everything else for prescription drugs because if you do that, that will prevent us from having to go to the hospital or having to go to the nursing home. Preventive.

People started to talk about nutrition programs, better diet or whatever for seniors as a method of prevention. Or about home health care and how the Medicare was so limited in home health care and if you included that home health care, it would prevent institutionalization.

Prior to this Congress, in Democratic Congresses, we were talking about expanding Medicare to do those things with the idea that you could save money. But all of a sudden that was off the table. We have not heard anything like that for the last 2 years. These were just commonsense things that I was getting from my constituents. They were saying, those are the ways you can change Medicare to save money but be more helpful to us as senior citizens in terms of our health care.

I had to basically say, well, the reason the Republican leadership is not doing that is because they are really not trying to save or improve Medicare, they just want to cut it so they can give back these huge tax breaks for the wealthy. They want it to wither on the vine. They did not even want it from the beginning. You talking about positive ways to improve this. That is not what this Republican Congress has been all about.

It is hard, though, to convince people of that because they have a hard time believing that elected representatives would come down here and actually try to dismantle something that has been so effective, but that is the reality.

Mrs. LOWEY. The gentleman from New Jersey brings up a very important point and why this session for me was like a nightmare. It is hard to believe, first of all, that Members of Congress who were duly elected would want to shut down the Government as these Republicans did. It reminds me of, as the mother of three children, we have seen some kids that want to stand in the corner and said, ''I'm going to scream and scream until I get my way.'' It is kind of hard to believe that they would have shut down the Government.

Ms. DELAURO. Twice.

Mrs. LOWEY. Twice. But it is that kind of attitude that is amazing. When you think about it, it really is extraordinary that elected representatives would do that.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in Congress now for about 8 years. We have had differences of opinion among Republicans and Democrats, among Democrats and Democrats. But eventually you sit down, you discuss it, you come up with something that is common sense, that makes sense. The gentleman mentioned the kinds of reforms and changes that we have been talking about all along. We had the 30th anniversary of Medicare this year. We talked about various ways to improve the program, to make it better, ways that we can root out real fraud and abuse. We know that. But we have been talking all these years, not about getting rid of it. The American people had one revolution. They do not want another one. We have been talking about how we make it better, whether it is Medicare, Medicaid, or even Social Security.

We know that women, for example, who are the majority of the poor elderly in this country have been penalized for the years that they took off from work to raise their children. We have been working together to improve these programs so that women will not be penalized if they stay home. In fact, the bipartisan congressional caucus on women's issues, and there are very few things that are bipartisan around here these days, has been working on a group of what we call economic equity bills so that we can improve the lives of seniors as they get older.

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We should be there working on those kinds of changes, making it fair, and not trying to get rid of Medicare and Medicaid, not making deep cuts in the programs so they cannot function.

Now, we know we have held off the Republicans in this session because there has been such an uproar in the community. But I am hoping that with the Democrats actively working with the President, and with those colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle who want to join us, we can continue working on changes to Medicare and Medicaid to make these programs more efficient, but not cut back, not have deep cuts, because that does not accomplish anything.

So I am very glad that the gentleman brought up the kinds of things that he discussed in his town hall meetings, because I see that, too. I have been going to senior centers, I have been talking to my seniors. I have been talking to families.

It is not just seniors that care about this, because the average family that it feeling squeezed because they have to pay tuition to send kinds to college, the average family that has a couple of kids is worried that if there are these deep cuts in Medicare and Medicaid that are proposed by our Republican colleagues, they are worried that they are going to be caught in the middle. They are going to have to pay their college tuition, they are going to have to take care of their seniors that they love, and they just cannot handle it all.

So I am very glad that we were able to hold off these draconian cuts, and hopefully we can work together in a bipartisan and constructive way in the future to really continue to make changes, but not to cut back.

Mr. PALLONE. I agree. In fact, one of the things, I did have two forums, I guess there were three forums where we talked about the family first agenda, the Democratic family first agenda which, again, is a very modest series of proposals, but realistic in terms of our ability to pay for them and I think our ability to get them enacted. Again, it kind of reiterated what you just said, which is that the families are hurting and that they need the Government to help in some ways to make it so they can take on more responsibility and work together with the Government to improve everybody's lives.

Going back to health care again, there was a lot of support for the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill which the President signed while we were in our district work period. But people also said they would like to see some of the additional changes that were in the family first agenda, the idea of kids-only health insurance for people that cannot get health insurance just for their children, addressing the drive-through deliveries. I was so pleased to see that the President mentioned that at the convention, in his speech, that he would sign the bill that would prevent drive-through deliveries so that women would be guaranteed, I guess, at least 48 hours for natural delivery and 4 days, I guess, for a C-section.

These are the kinds of incremental proposals on health care and dealing with health care issues that I think we can get passed, and that the President has said ''Send me this legislation and I will sign it.'' But, again, we have had a difficult time, an impossible time with this Republican leadership, in moving on this agenda.

Ms. DELAURO. The gentleman mentioned the families first agenda which I am terribly proud of. That effort was put together by Members traveling through their districts for the last several months and listening to people and what their concerns are, some of the things we have talked about here tonight: How are they going to afford to send their kids to school? How do they make sure they are meeting their obligation to their parents and meeting their obligation to their kids? And their concern about their children in schools, with violence, how are they going to maintain their standard of living, all of those kinds of things.

I know so many Members spent a lot of hours, I know my colleagues here did, just really in living rooms. I did so many meetings just in people's living rooms, listening to what they have to say. The families first agenda is about that. It is saying that families are first and not last.

The Contract With America was, and my gosh, they cannot run away fast enough from it now, they are running away from the contract, from the leadership, with good reason, because it in fact had nothing to do with how we were going to try to help people raise their standard of living and take care of these kind of kitchen table issues and discussions that people have.

But the families first agenda is modest. It is not big government. They are not large bureaucracies, not grandiose ideas. It is some very basic, simple principles and initiatives which can be implemented, around which there can be a consensus to get implementation: the targeted tax cuts for education that we talked about; health care insurance for children from zero to 13.

Let us make sure our kids have health insurance. There are so many young families today where they cannot afford to have insurance, and kids get sick. Kids get sick. That is a fact of life. Where the heck do you get the money to be able to take care of that insurance?

Pension reform, making it easier for businesses to offer pensions, making sure that pensions are accessible, making sure that that kind of corporate raiding of pensions is prohibited in some way. And there are proposals to deal with that.

Child care proposals for working families, a big issue. How you are able to work? You have both parents working today. What do you do about child care?

There is also an initiative about working with State government on

jobs and looking at how we try to implement a program that gets money to the State. States put in matching funds so we can create jobs around school construction and airports and roads and bridges and so forth.

So a modest set of proposals that can be implemented. I think we can all be proud of the families first agenda.

Mr. PALLONE. The other thing, when you were talking about the pensions, I heard a lot about the portability. In the same way we were talking about the health insurance portability in the families first agenda you have the pension portability. A lot of people came and said, ''You know, I can't take my pension with me if I change my job.'' That I think is part of the families first agenda too, which is a great idea, because so many people today have many jobs over the course of their time they are working.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am glad the gentleman mentioned all of the factors that really working women are not just concerned about, many of them are frantic about. In my district in Westchester County, this morning Secretary Reich spoke on the teleprompter, or whatever those big TV screens are called, to a large group of women that were there for a Working Woman Conference. They got together because these women are so frustrated.

It takes two to support a family today, both the husband and the wife are there working, and there are a whole lot of discussions about child care, how are they going to pay for child care, how are they going to send their kids to college? They are worried about everyday living. That is why the President's proposal for a $10,000 tax credit was talked about today, because it is so important.

I am hoping that we can really work together to get some of these proposals in the families first agenda through this Congress, because they are not pie in the sky, they are practical proposals, creating partnerships between the public and the private sector to create more child care positions, to make pension reform a real part of our congressional agenda, to help women go out and start businesses.

We have been involved with the glass ceiling, and you know what happens when a woman hits that glass ceiling in a big corporation. She takes all the skills she has learned in the community as a mother, as a boss, and goes out and starts her own business. But a lot of these proposals in the families first agenda are real, they are doable, and we can get them done, if we really focus and work together.

So with President Clinton's leadership, working with those of us who have been fighting for women and families and children for a very long time, I think we can achieve our goals.

Mr. PALLONE. I appreciate that. I just want to thank the two of you for joining in this special order tonight. We sort of started out by saying how the GINGRICH Republican leadership agenda was really out of touch with America's values and what people think we should be doing here in Congress. But, at the same time now, as Democrats we have our own agenda, the families first agenda. More and more what I found during the August break was that people understand that, and they think that is the way to go, modest proposals to move forward in a progressive way to help the average American.

## REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3719, THE SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1996

Mr. SOLOMON (during special orders), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–773) on the resolution (H. Res. 516) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3719) to amend the Small Business Act and Small Business Investment Act of 1958, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

## REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3308, THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SOLOMON (during special orders), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–774) on the resolution (H. Res. 517) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3308) to amend title 10, United States Code, to limit the placement of United States forces under United Nations operational or tactical control, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

## PRIDE IN THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYWORTH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to use about 30 minutes, give or take, and then yield back time which then will be claimed by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON].

With that, I would like to just thank you for serving as Speaker, as Acting Speaker, and to tell you that I was looking forward to addressing this Chamber tonight, particularly more so after hearing my colleagues who just preceded me. For a variety of reasons, I just strongly disagree with their attempt to really spin what this Congress has done.

Let me say from the outset I have never been more proud to be a Republican in this 104th Congress, to serve with so many other men and women who believe deeply in doing some very important lifting for this country.

Preceding the 1994 election, Republicans who were in the minority made a determination that we wanted to present a very positive plan for the American people, and that this plan would be a statement of what we intended to do if in fact we became part of a new majority.

We decided that we would set forward this plan in a Capitol steps event, and not just invite incumbent Members of Congress, but those that were challenging incumbent Members of Congress. We also decided we wanted people to have a sense that if there was this new Congress, there would be a major shift in policy and direction, and that we would promise to do much like what might happen in Britain or Canada or Israel, that when you had a change in government, you really had a change in direction.

So we set out with what we called the Contract With America. It was a contract that we collectively, Republicans, both incumbents and those challenging, put together. When we started working on our Contract With America, there were things we took out because we could not sign if they were still in. So what remained of our contract was a piece of effort that really had the support of almost everyone, 390-plus Members and challengers who signed this Contract With America, and I was one of them.

I remember when I was being interviewed by one of the editorial boards before the 1994 election, I was asked how could I as a moderate Republican sign on to the Contract With America, as if somehow this contract was something that I would not be proud to be associated with.

So I thought about it a second, and I said to the people asking me the question, ''What do you think of the Democrats' Contract With America? The 8 reforms they want on opening day, the 10 reforms they want in the first 100 days?''

I asked the question and waited for an answer, and I waited. And finally I said, ''Isn't it interesting that the majority party,'' the then Democrats who were then the majority, ''had no plan, didn't share what they wanted to do, no sense of direction?'' And here you had a minority party that was not sure it would be in the majority, promising they would do certain things.

I said, ''Isn't it also interesting that our Contract With America did not criticize President Clinton or the 103d Congress or the 102d Congress or the 101st Congress?'' There was not any criticism of Democrats. It was just a positive plan of what we wanted to do.

The reforms in the first day of Congress, those eight reforms, getting Congress to live under all the laws that we imposed on the rest of the country, Congress had exempted itself from the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the age discrimination,