

mayor of the City of Los Angeles. Believe it or not, the last Latino mayor elected in the City of Los Angeles, which is overwhelmingly Latino and African American and Asian, was back in 1872. Can we imagine what a whirlwind of change has occurred?

Antonio Villaraigosa is one of the Nation's most promising leaders of our country. I served with him in the State assembly and he served as the assembly speaker for the great State of California, where he helped to expand the Healthy Families program, which we know here as at the Federal level as the S-CHIP program, and helped to pass one of largest park bonds in the State of California which helped to identify areas in low-income communities to establish urban conservancies. And my district was a proud recipient of one of the largest urban conservancies in California.

Antonio is one of those individuals who will bridge the gap in our communities. He is about empowering people, empowering our communities, putting public safety and education first, and helping to fight crime.

I look very much toward his leadership and know that the country is looking at our great State of California, and especially Los Angeles; and I am proud to say that a portion of my district, he and I have similar jurisdiction in the community of El Serreno. So he is a champion, someone I continue to work with, and I extend the best wishes to him and his family.

THE ECONOMY AND JOBS

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, last year's trade deficit reached \$670 billion. Our Federal deficit was over \$300 billion. Top-rate jobs have gone overseas. How did we get in this situation? How did we get in this position?

Mr. Speaker, over the last generation Congress has passed laws with good intent, but with terrible consequences. Our government has created barriers to creating jobs, and the results have not been good.

Other nations are rising to the challenge of tomorrow's economy. China is graduating 350,000 engineers every year. India graduated 80,000 software engineers last year. While we are reducing the number of visas for creative talent in America, other countries are developing their talent.

Mr. Speaker, we have to change the environment in America and remove the barriers created by Congress. If we are going to avoid becoming a third-rate economy in the future, we have to pass legislation like the Central America Free Trade Agreement so we can create jobs, strengthen our economy, balance the trade deficit, balance the Federal budget right here in America. We can do it by passing this legislation along with others, Mr. Speaker; and as

we lead the challenge for competitiveness in America, we hope that our colleagues will join with us from the other side of the aisle.

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SENATE AS THE NEW WHITE HOUSE RUBBER STAMP

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, Senate Republicans, at the prodding of the White House, will soon attempt to abolish the use of the filibuster when it comes to judicial appointments. It is clear that the White House is encouraging this action so it can have more control over the United States Senate. For over 200 years the right to filibuster, or the right to unlimited debate, has been a Senate tool that encourages compromise and moderation. Compromise and moderation, not two words that you equate with either this House or the White House unfortunately.

President Bush does not like to compromise. That is why he is unhappy with having 95 percent of his judicial appointees approved by the Senate. Despite the fact that he has had more judges approved than any President since Reagan, Bush encouraged Senate Republicans to take the nuclear option by reappointing judges that could not receive bipartisan consensus during his first term.

The President is also not a moderate. He said that conservative judges Scalia and Thomas are his favorites on the Supreme Court.

The President is encouraging this extreme action so that he can eventually have Senate Republicans rubber stamp conservative justices to the Supreme Court, without any attempt to find common ground. This democracy should not tolerate this abuse of power.

SOCIAL SECURITY DEMOCRAT PLAN

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, goodness gracious. The day has finally come. The Democrats, after 5 months, have proposed a way to fix Social Security, and they will fix it all right, by raising our taxes. That is right. The new Democrat plan would increase taxes to fix Social Security.

The proposal would hike taxes by 6 percent on middle class families and small business owners. What more can we expect from the tax and spend party, Mr. Speaker? Instead of transforming the program, by modernizing retirement security, the Democrats want to use an old method, by raising taxes.

But there is a new, better solution, Mr. Speaker: personal savings accounts, personal retirement accounts.

By allowing younger workers to put a portion of their Social Security taxes into personal retirement accounts, we lessen the liability on the program and we fix Social Security in a lasting and sincere way.

When folks have personal retirement accounts, there is no Social Security surplus for politicians to raid, and we do not have to worry about Democrats raising taxes to do it.

Personal retirement accounts, Mr. Speaker, a new solution to update and strengthen an old program.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE SUPREME COURT

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the extreme action Senate Republicans want to take later this week has nothing to do with seven judges who have yet to be approved by the Senate. No, the Senate has approved more of President Bush's nominees than any President since President Reagan. In fact, he has had so much success that he is now presiding over the lowest court vacancy rate in 15 years.

The Republican power grab is about clearing the way for a Supreme Court nominee who only needs 51 votes instead of 60 votes.

Conservative Senate Republicans do not want a David Souter or a Stephen Breyer, judges who were confirmed with nearly unanimous bipartisan support. Instead, they want a Clarence Thomas, who was confirmed with only 52 votes and has since been proven to be an extremist on the Court.

Mr. Speaker, Senate Republicans are preparing to blow up 200 years of tradition in the U.S. Senate, abusing their power now, so they can have greater control over the judiciary later on. That is not how our Founding Fathers envisioned the checks and balances that exist between the branches of our government. The sad fact is, I do not think my colleagues on the other side of the aisle care.

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days Congress will consider legislation to make taxpayer dollars available for what is known as embryonic stem cell research, setting the case for an imminent Presidential veto.

In 2001, President Bush made the moral dimensions of scientific testing on human embryos clear. These are the principles.

It is morally wrong to create human life to destroy it for research. Also, it is morally wrong to take the tax dollars of millions of pro-life Americans