

we did the prescription drug bill. When we had a \$5 billion problem to fix with Europe on the corporate trade tax issue, what did this Republican Congress do? Of course, \$150 billion tax giveaway to corporate America to solve a \$5 billion problem. Only using their type of math do you work like that.

Pharmaceutical companies. Big oil companies. Corporate special interests. Selling away America. The Speaker's gavel is intended to open the people's House, not the auction house, and the United States Congress had better start acting like the people's House, because lately we are giving Christie's a run for its money around here.

You cannot give out money fast enough to the energy companies, who are making massive profits, and on the other hand cut those who are most needy. You cannot have a policy in the country that says to oil companies, who are reaping huge profits, and that is their business, but we should not subsidize their business, we are going to give you more while cutting those who are struggling. These are not the values of this country, these are not the values of the Democratic party, and, thank God, they are not the values of the American people.

We need a change. We need new priorities that focus on America's future. We can do better, and it is high time we turn the people's House back to the American people.

#### THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I know I get a big kick, Mr. Speaker, out of listening to my colleagues come down here and talk about the sky falling. After 9/11 we had an economic downturn and tourism suffered and all the ancillary industries suffered, airlines suffered and the economy started going down. We had scandals on Wall Street, and those scandals led to further economic problems. President Bush suggested to the Congress that the way to stimulate economic recovery and growth was the same thing that President John F. Kennedy did back in the 1960s, and that was to cut taxes. And so we cut taxes.

And because we cut taxes, there has been growth in the economy for the past several years. The unemployment rate has been down. The economy has been growing. Everything has been going well.

Now we have been hit with some other things that are very, very disconcerting. We had the Katrina hurricane, and we had another hurricane that hit Florida recently. These hurricanes are going to cost a lot of money. Some people think it will cost \$60, \$70, or \$80 billion before it is over. It will not be the \$250 billion that was talked about, but it will be around \$50, \$60, or \$70 billion at least.

Now I would like to say to my Democrat colleagues, for whom I have great respect, to join with us in the next few days in passing a cost-savings bill, a cost-savings bill that will cut about \$50 billion out of spending. That \$50 billion can be used to offset some of the costs for the Katrina disaster and the other disasters we have experienced recently.

I know it is going to involve some hard decisions. I heard one of my Democrat colleagues just a few minutes ago come down and start talking about some of the programs that are going to have to be cut. And I admit there will be difficult choices to be made, but that is what we are all about around here, making difficult choices, difficult decisions. It is extremely important that we make the hard choices so we control spending and make sure we do the right things for economic growth in this country.

The way to do that is when we have this cost-savings bill come before the body in the next few days, my Democratic colleagues who are concerned about the deficit, who are concerned about spending, who are concerned about Katrina and the costs involved, join with us in this cost-savings bill to save about \$50 or \$60 billion in rescissions and across-the-board spending cuts. Because if you do that, we can keep this country on an even keel. So please join with us when this bill comes to the floor.

□ 1845

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### NATIONAL INSTANT BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, last week the Washington Times ran an editorial stating that people who advocate responsible gun laws are disappointed that there has not been an increase in killings since the assault weapons ban expired last year.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. That the crime rate has not increased dramatically with the end of the ban is not a surprise. Nobody thought the end of the assault weapons ban would create new criminals, but we feared it would give existing criminals better tools to do their jobs. The fact that sales of these weapons are not skyrocketing does not surprise me either. Law-abiding gun owners have no practical need for these weapons. Why would a responsible gun owner want an

AK-47 or an Uzi? They cannot hunt with them. There would not be much animal left after one pull of the trigger.

Assault weapons are not even practical for self-defense. Innocent bystanders would be injured or killed by the spray of the bullets released.

But I want to reduce gun violence in this country, not to keep the status quo. The Washington Times might be satisfied with 30,000 Americans dying from gun-related deaths every year. I am not. The Washington Times might think it is acceptable that 5,200 American kids die because of gun violence each year. I think it is deplorable.

But I am a realist; and I know that this Congress, this Congress, will not reinstate the assault weapons ban. But we can make it more difficult for criminals and terrorists to get their weapons.

As we continue to weaken our gun laws, we increasingly rely on the National Instant Background Check System to ensure that guns do not fall into the wrong hands. However, the NICS database is dangerously incomplete. For example, half of all States have entered less than 60 percent of their convicted felons into the NICS system. Thirteen States have failed to enter the subjects of restraining orders stemming from domestic violence into the NICS system. And, of course, in all 50 States, people who are listed on terrorist watch lists certainly can go out and still buy a gun.

The same people whom we do not trust to board a plane can buy one of those AK-47s or Uzis the Washington Times editorial page raves about. This defies common sense.

I have introduced H.R. 1415, legislation that will require that States enter in all NICS information as quickly as possible. My bill will also provide grants to States to make sure that their databases are kept up to date.

This legislation poses no restrictions on law-abiding and responsible gun owners. It poses no infringement on second amendment rights. In fact, it passed the House during the 107th Congress via voice vote. Unfortunately, time ran out before the other body could take up the bill.

But the bill had the support of several Senators on the other side who are known strongly for their support of gun rights. Nobody believes criminals and terrorists should be allowed to legally buy guns in this country.

So before the Washington Times and others begin to celebrate maintaining the status quo for gun-related deaths, let us pass legislation to enforce the gun laws on the books.

Nobody wants to see crime reduced more than I do. H.R. 1415 can fix the loopholes in our background checks. Thirty thousand deaths a year is nothing to turn a blind eye to no matter what the Washington Times says.

We can do better, Mr. Speaker.