

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGALLS of South Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honor to come before the House. As you know, we come to the floor nightly to talk about the issues that are facing Americans and also what Members of Congress are trying to do about them. Even in cases when we are not trying to do anything about it, we think we need to bring those issues up.

Mr. Speaker, we want to take the opportunity tonight to honor some great soldiers and warriors, the Tuskegee Airmen, for their contributions to our country.

Mr. Speaker, when I traveled to Iraq, I had an opportunity to see the Tuskegee Airmen Wing there in Iraq, still running strong, still flying sorties, and still defending this country in many ways. Even in some other theaters, they have done an outstanding job.

I am so glad to be here tonight with my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), who has some comments that he would like to make; and so I yield to him.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for this opportunity to be here with him tonight, as we do every night; and I want to take this opportunity for a couple of minutes here with my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), who is also here to recognize the impact that the Tuskegee Airmen have had not only in Alabama, where they did the original training, but all over the country and the kind of impact and leadership that they have set out for all of us, quite frankly, to try to achieve.

November 11, Mr. Speaker, marks the 51st year we have honored veterans. Memorial Day recognizes those people who have unselfishly given their lives in service to this Nation. Veterans Day honors all those who defend democracy by serving in the Armed Forces.

The beautiful thing, Mr. Speaker, about the Tuskegee Airmen, when they were set up during World War II, these black military pilots were trained at a separate air field in Alabama, Tuskegee, Alabama, therefore named the Tuskegee Airmen. The establishment and the training of the airmen was an experiment to prove that blacks were incapable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft.

The true spirit of those men came through, however; and instead of the expected failure, the Tuskegee training program produced 992 graduates, 450 of whom served in combat. They flew more than 15,500 missions, destroyed 260 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and demolished numerous enemy installations. During World War II, the airmen earned 150 Distinguished

Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, eight Purple Hearts and 14 Bronze Stars.

This is what it is all about. And there is going to be an event on Veterans Day that my colleague from Ohio and I, and even our good friends from Florida, I am sure, will not be able to make, but we want to take this opportunity here on the House floor to honor those men who provided a tremendous example for our whole Nation.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I thank my friend for yielding, and it is true that as the folks gather there in Youngstown, Ohio, we will not be able to be with them, but our thoughts will be with them as we honor veterans. And especially we will remember the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen have the distinction of never having lost an American bomber under their escort. The Tuskegee Airmen overcame the enormous challenges of prejudice and racial discrimination that existed within our country, and they inspired revolutionary reform within the entire Armed Forces of our Nation.

The Tuskegee Airmen, with their courage and their dedication, paved the way for the full racial integration of our Armed Forces. The Tuskegee Airmen were not only heroes serving to protect American rights that did not extend to them as Americans, but they were also among the very first to challenge our Nation's segregationist policies. Because of them, because of the standard they set, because of the success they enjoyed through their hard work and commitment to this country, our Nation became a better country.

As we honor all veterans, we especially are thinking of these wonderful men who set such an example for all the rest of us. I yield back to my colleague.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if my colleague from Florida will continue to yield, I just want to get this into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The speaker on November 11 in Youngstown is going to be Luther H. Smith at the VFW Post 6488's annual Veterans Day program.

This gentleman epitomizes what it means to really be a hero. He received his military aviation training at the Tuskegee Army Air Field in 1942, and he then became a fighter pilot with the all-black 332d Fighter Group. He has said of the Tuskegee Airmen: "We didn't start out to be heroes, but now we are legends."

Mr. Smith is credited with destroying two German enemy aircraft in aerial combat and 10 German aircraft in ground missions. So we want to welcome Mr. Smith not only into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD but to the VFW Post 6488 in Youngstown, thank him for his service, all Tuskegee Airmen in Youngstown, and all veterans on Veterans Day.

So I thank my colleague very much for allowing me to thank our veterans for their service to our country; and with that, I yield back to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just want to say to both of my colleagues from Ohio that it is so important that we recognize not only veterans, but we recognize celebrations that hold our veterans up. The Tuskegee Airmen had a very hard time in their day to even climb into an aircraft, let alone go into a theater of battle. But it is good for our country to be able to recognize past sacrifice and commitment. I know all veterans shoulder to shoulder today know that every American fights for the freedom of this country and countries that are in our coalition in the civilized world.

I can share with my colleagues that I have many Tuskegee Airmen living in my district in Florida. They come out with their red coats on, and it is so good to see them standing strong with their chests out. As you know, the NFL has built a very strong relationship with the Tuskegee Airmen. They appear at a number of the NFL, National Football League, half-time shows.

So we need to see our heroes and our sheroes while they are here, and not just look in a book and say, it was once, not only with the Tuskegee Airmen but veterans in general who come out.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both of my colleagues for bringing this to the floor tonight and putting it in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, because I think every time we have an opportunity to celebrate those who have allowed us to salute one flag, we need to take that opportunity at the highest levels.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I might mention that my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), has just joined us; and we now have another of our special guests with us, and I will leave it up to my colleague to recognize him.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, my two mentors in Congress. Really, just to see you two standing next to each other puts a little lump in the throat. The good gentleman from Massachusetts, who we have been getting e-mails about from folks that say they just love the accent from Boston.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I cannot understand why anyone would ask about my accent, because I would submit that I am the only person in this Chamber tonight that does not have an accent.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would also like to welcome our good friend and my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), who has been a voice for the underprivileged for the past 10 years in Congress. Prior to that, he was a psychologist in prisons, a very dangerous job; and he had many other careers prior to coming to the United States Congress.

So we have a heavy bunch here, along with our good friend, the gentlewoman

from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), who keeps us all together and brings a little class and elegance to the whole operation and some sense and some civility and a little bit of grace.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thanks.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, without her, I do not know where we would be as relates to being able to deliver a clear and crisp message that people can understand. She is our translator. She translates from Washington talk to everyday talk so that even some Members can understand and the American people.

With that, since we are talking about those who are underprivileged, and those that are trying to, hopefully, be a part of our workforce in the future, there is an awful lot to talk about, a lot of ground to cover tonight, so we are going to try to cover it real quickly.

A lot of action here under the dome today. The Budget Committee met. We are talking about those that play fiscal conservatives on television and those that are actually looking out for the financial well-being of our country. I might just say that as the 30-Something Working Group looks at issues that are facing young people and parents that have children that they want to be able to go to college, Mr. Speaker, and receive a higher education, there are a number of things that we have to cover.

□ 2030

Not only the budget. We have Hurricane Wilma. We have the Hurricane Katrina investigative panel. We have issues as they relate to Iraq and misspending there. And at the same time, we have a culture of corruption and cronyism and coverups going on here, right here in the capital city.

I just want to bring a quick point just to start us off tonight. Some folks run around and say, what is the Democratic position? Well, the Democratic position is making sure that the everyday American does not end up paying the bill for billionaires, billionaires, not everyday Americans, but billionaires, to run away with the U.S. Treasury and special interests to have free rein on the U.S. Treasury.

Now, I do not blame the billionaires for getting what they get. I do not blame the special interests in this town for getting what they want. I blame those that give them what they want when they want it. And it is up to us, as the representatives of the people, to make sure that that does not happen and that we work on behalf of the American people.

Representatives KIND, CAPPS, EDWARDS, MOORE, and SCHWARTZ moved in the Budget Committee today to direct the chairman, on behalf of the committee, to consider an amendment in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. The amendment eliminated all new student-paid fees to increase the cost to receive a student loan.

What they have done here, Mr. Speaker, and when I say "they," I mean the majority side, is they are saying there are not any offsets or cuts in this bill; but what they are doing is they are putting 27 percent additional fees on students that are receiving student loans. Now, that is 27 percent more that they have to pay. Some folks call it a tax. So one would think we are just talking about students. We are also talking about parents. When the students cannot pay for their education, who kicks in? Mom and Dad, family, Granddad, Grandmother. She is digging into the retirement fund to help pay to make sure that her grandson will be able to go to school. They continue to carry the message on down of adding these new taxes on to students and families on the State government.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the interesting point that our friends always make is if we tax corporations, then they just pass it on to the consumers. So they raised fees, and it is getting passed on too to the students. As we go through this tonight, let us ask other Members, Mr. Speaker, to pay very close attention. I do not think it is a coincidence that the very programs that are getting cut, student loans, Medicaid, school lunches, these just happen to be by coincidence the programs in Washington, D.C. that do not have lobbyists. There is no one down here greasing the wheels, putting money into the Republican campaign coffers for student loans, for the fees to be decreased. There is no big lobby group out there for that.

And there is no big lobby group out there to make sure that poor people have the proper kind of health care that they need. So as we go through this tonight, it is important for all of us to remember that it is not a coincidence that our friends cut programs where there are not big lobby groups and big donors and then they keep the programs that have corporate welfare in them or that the lobbyists want. Then they are off to shakedown street, K Street, which is where all the lobbyists are. They go down to shakedown street, shake down the lobbyists. The lobbyists donate money to the Republican Party, and they keep the system going.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, that was a party-line vote. A 27-percent increase, which I call a tax increase, on students that want to go to school, 27 percent, a party-line vote. Democrats voted not to increase those fees on them. Republicans voted in the majority.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Sixteen Democrats voted to reduce the fees, eliminate all fees that would increase the cost of receiving the loan. Sixteen Democrats voted for that amendment. Twenty-two Republicans voted against that amendment.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, here is another one just today from the Budget Committee. This is not something from yesterday. It will probably come out in the hometown paper tomorrow, but the Members here in this Congress, Mr. Speaker, will get what happened in the Budget Committee today because that is where they put the cookie on the bottom shelf. I mean, that is when it happens. The same thing, a motion to link the tax cuts to spending cuts.

This is what is going to happen, Mr. Speaker, and we might as well call it so that everyone knows exactly what is going to happen and illuminate what the majority is doing right now. We are going through all of this process with all of these cuts, a real big number as it relates to the cuts; and then a couple of weeks from now when folks are doing something else, the majority is going to come up with the tax cuts for billionaires. They may give everyday Americans a little tax cut, just a little one.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, we have Katrina, which was a catastrophic storm that took out the gulf coast. We had Rita that also hit the gulf coast, and we have Wilma that we are going to talk about in a minute that also hit south Florida. And we have this thing we call a war in Iraq and Afghanistan that we need money for.

I am saying this to make this point and then we are going to go to the next level here: the President of the United States and this Congress, Mr. Speaker, have borrowed more from foreign governments than 42 Presidents combined. Since the Republic started, this President has outborrowed from foreign nations. In the 224 years, from 1776 to the year 2000, the U.S. Presidents borrowed a combined \$1 trillion from foreign governments and financial institutions, according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. In the past 4 years alone, President Bush and the majority of this Congress have been authorized and borrowed a staggering \$1.05 trillion, just in 4 years.

Folks come to the floor and they are dazzled on the other side. Why are they talking about all of these things? And we come to this floor night after night and say, you know something. Something is really wrong going on here, and we need to bring this to the attention of the American people.

I have a little chart here that I just want to get out of the way right now. We will pull it up. Forty-two Presidents, Republican and Democrat, 42, not 10, not 20, not 25, not even 30, but 42 Presidents. One President, one President outborrowed 42 Presidents from foreign countries.

What has happened here, Mr. Speaker, is that the country is now depending on foreign governments to run our government. Some folks may ask why are we talking about the billionaire tax cuts? We are talking about those tax cuts because it is weakening a country, bottom line. That is all that is happening here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am champing at the bit here because he is absolutely right, and one of the things I want to emphasize, because I think in the last few nights we have not gotten this point across to the Speaker and to the folks who might be hearing this conversation this evening, the purpose of the 30-something Group, the main purpose, is for us to help get some understanding out to our generation about the issues that we are debating in this Congress and how it affects them. And the student aid cuts that the gentleman was talking about just a few minutes ago, more than any other issue almost, is the easiest for folks in our generation to understand how it impacts them.

What maybe is not so obvious is what Congressman MEEK was just talking about a minute ago. The Republican leadership, our friends on the other side of the aisle, will try, as they put forth this reconciliation act, AKA budget cuts, because reconciliation and other words that are used inside this Chamber and in this Capitol, that is Washington speak for budget cuts, the budget cuts that they are saying they are going to need to put forward to address the deficit and to address the out-of-control spending that they have engaged in are not for Katrina relief, are not being put forward so that we can pay for Katrina and for the aftermath of Katrina. They are so that they can preserve the \$70 billion in tax cuts that they have put forward.

Let us boil this down to its simplest terms. They will represent and have been representing that they have to do these cuts because the impact from Katrina is so significant and we have got to do something. We have got to get a handle on the spending. Why does getting a handle on the spending have to be on the backs of the people who can least afford it and we are going to enrich the backs of the people who do not need help?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Florida will continue to yield, I think it is quite interesting too that our good friend Jim Wallace, an evangelical preacher, and several others from religious organizations, are stepping up and trying to pressure the Republican Party, who have called themselves Christians and who have utilized the Christian right and the label of the Christian Coalition and yet in the very next breath they cut poverty programs, cut programs for average people. I find that horribly hypocritical.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to be even more specific, because he is absolutely right. The groups that are out there trying to help those in need are opposing these cuts. Every major religious institution has sent letters to our Speaker, to this Republican leadership, asking them

not to do what they are trying to do, not to harm people who are most in need, particularly in exchange for preserving tax cuts for our wealthiest citizens.

Just in student aid alone, they are proposing a cut of more than \$14 billion from the student aid program, which is the largest cut in history to Federal student loan programs. On top of that, it increases the cost for student borrowers who are already saddled with about \$17,500 in debt. They will be forced to pay \$5,800 more for their college loans. In my community that is really real money.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is a lot of money.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is real money. I do not know a lot of people who can just reach into their pocket or go down to their local bank branch and yank out \$5,800.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Nevada.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am not part of the 30-something Group, but I was about 20 years ago.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You are now.

Ms. BERKLEY. I thank the gentleman. I have to tell my colleagues here that I have been watching them speak up about the things that I care very passionately about, and I thought it was about time that I came down here and lent my support and my voice because they should not be carrying the burden for the rest of us.

When they talk about student loans, I went through college and law school on student loans. My dad was a waiter when I was growing up, and there was not very much money, and no one had gone to college in my family until I went to college. And without those student loans, I guarantee I would not be standing here today. So I put myself in the place of thousands and thousands of Nevadans and millions of Americans that are depending on those student loans to make a difference in their lives. And getting that college education does not change only one's life. It changes the entire direction of one's family. It is an investment in our future.

And I wanted to share with my colleagues that a couple of days ago when Senator REID took to the floor of the United States Senate, as a fellow Nevadan, I do not think I have ever been as proud of him as I was a couple of days ago, and I have been pretty proud of that man for a number of years. But I think he gave us all a voice. And what he said was that we wanted to give this government back to the American people. The American people are entitled to know what went on in the decision-making process to take this country to war.

I sit on the Committee on International Relations, and I went to every classified briefing and every confidential briefing because I am the mother of two sons who are 20-somethings, and

I knew that I would be sending other mothers' sons and daughters into a theater of war, and I wanted to make sure that I had my facts straight. And when they told me that there were weapons of mass destruction and they located the location, they showed us on the map where these weapons were located in Iraq, and when they talked about nuclear capacity within 6 months to a year and shared with us the strong al Qaeda ties to Iraq and assured us that there was an imminent threat, I supported the President based on those issues.

□ 2045

But I bring that up because that is so much a part of what we are seeing now. There is deception, there is deceit.

Remember when they said it would only take about 100,000, 150,000 troops to go in? There was one general that said we would need half a million troops. What did they do? They retired him.

When the Budget Director, Mr. Lindsey, said it would cost \$200 billion, and we are there now, they said, no, no, no, it is not going to cost us anything. It is going to be the oil revenue coming out of Iraq that is going to pay for this war. We went ahead with that based on their justification and what they said.

I want to know and I want to have an investigation. Because when I voted, I voted on a certain set of circumstances, and the American people are entitled to know why their sons and daughters are dying in a foreign land.

Did we have to do this? If we did, where are we going? And I want to tie this in to the budget, because we are standing here today and knowing that next week we are going to be voting on a budget that is an embarrassment to me.

When I was growing up, I always wanted to serve and be a public servant and be in this great body. I never believed I would be taking student loans away from youngsters who are just like I was. I never dreamed I would be taking poor children and keeping them from getting the health care that this Nation should be providing for them so that they can grow up to be strong adults. I never dreamed that women that depended on child support for their children, that we would be taking away the money to find the deadbeat dads.

This, to me, is absolutely an affront to what it is to be an American. We have an obligation to our fellow citizens, and I am afraid and I am embarrassed that we are not living up to our obligations.

But we are in the minority. We cannot get anything done in this body. It is the leadership of this body in particular that has to do what is right by the American people.

As the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) said, why would we be giving more tax cuts to the wealthiest people in this country

and taking it from the backs of people that cannot possibly afford to pay for these things? Why would we take student loans away from youngsters? Why would we take quality health care away from children? Why would we take the opportunity to get your dead-beat father to give you the money, to pay their child support, why would you take that away from people?

This is foolish and shortsighted, and it is desperate, and the reason we are desperate is because of that war and the mistakes that we made going in to it. This administration had better come clean. We owe it to the American people. This stonewalling truly has to end. It is an embarrassment, but it is bad for this country.

That is the main reason why I am standing here today, because I care enough about the American people, I care enough about my constituents. My constituents are going to be hurt very badly. Two hundred thousand of my fellow Nevadans are going to be without health care if they cut that Medicaid. I have got 18,000 students that are going to be cut away from that student loan program. Over the next 5 years, funding for that child support collection is going to be cut by \$60 million. We should not be doing that.

I am here to share these statistics with you so you know how devastated the State of Nevada would be if this Republican reconciliation plan goes through.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, if I can just say one thing, first of all, it is such a pleasure to see you and have you join us tonight. The gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) has been an amazing advocate for the people who are on this floor tonight championing their cause. Those of us in the 30-something generation have had an opportunity to stand on your shoulders for the years you have been in Congress and been in the legislature in the State of Nevada fighting for the people that have no voice. That is really why we are here. We are so glad and privileged to have you join us tonight to take up this fight.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I think the gentlewoman is being overly gracious in her compliments. I appreciate it, and I want to return them by telling you how very proud I have been of the three of you standing here every night in the well of the House telling the American people the truth. That, unfortunately, has become a rare commodity in this House.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I am just so impressed with my friend from Nevada, and I really do mean that so sincerely, to come here and to acknowledge that the vote that was taken 3 years ago was a mistake because the American people and Members of Congress were misled. It is that simple.

Ms. BERKLEY. If the gentleman will yield further, if I could chime in a

minute, I think what hurts me and offends me the most is I took this information, I went back to the people I represent. I was on every television show, I was on every radio program, and I shared with them the information that I received, and I defended my position. Not only did I defend it, I was an advocate for it. If it was wrong and based on faulty information, I owe it to my constituents to let them know that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Members should be aware of the fact that the Republican chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, PAT ROBERTS, it was reported, recently said that if the information had been available, he doubted that the resolution authorizing the invasion into Iraq would have passed the United States Senate. That, to me, really spoke volumes.

But if I could just for one moment get back to a point that was raised by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) earlier, and if he could again just show that chart to our friends and colleagues.

Let us just read the title again. "President Bush does in 4 years what 42 presidents managed in 224 years," and that is borrow from foreign governments, borrow from foreign governments the moneys needed to finance the war and finance a tax cut that is primarily created to benefit 1 percent of the American people.

Now, the President speaks of an "ownership society." We have heard that term before. I think it was interpreted by most of the American people that they would have the American dream realized for themselves and their children. But what is happening is America is being mortgaged. America is being sold.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you are aware of this and many of our colleagues, that when debt issues from the Treasury Department, who is purchasing that debt? It is the Chinese Central Bank, the Japanese Central Bank, the Korean Central Bank, individuals and governments in the Middle East. We are being bought by foreign governments that do not share our values.

So not only are we becoming economically dependent on this debt that is being purchased by, in some cases, potential adversaries, but we are eroding our own national security. What if we have political differences with any of these nations?

We constantly hear from the Republicans a concern about Taiwan and what the Chinese are doing in the Formosa Straits. There is a lot of chest-thumping about we cannot let that happen. But if we get right down to it, we are beholden to the Chinese Central Bank. We are selling our country to foreign interests. That is why this is so shocking. Now it is something that I dare say most Americans do not understand, but it is the reality.

If the Chinese wish to leverage our political decisions, all they have to do

is say, "We are not going to continue to finance your debt, the debt that you used to give tax cuts that benefited in a disproportionate way to the billionaires, the 1 percent of Americans."

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the gentleman is hitting it right on the head. We talked about the carpenter hitting the nail right on the head the other night. I can tell you that, even now as we speak, in committee today a budget passed out of the committee on partisan lines with one Republican, one Republican, voting with the Democrats to stop this madness.

One day, if this continues, if this continues, let me just say, in all fairness to President Bush, he did not do it alone. The majority had to be along with him on this. The majority Senate had to endorse this, that it is okay for you to knock on the door of the Bank of China and say, and when I say China, I knew the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) was going to get excited, but knock on the door and say we need more money. If this continues, one day one of these countries is going to rise up and say "we own you" on behalf of the majority.

Mr. RYAN of OHIO. If the gentleman will yield, the Republican Party has been in charge of this Chamber since 1994. They have had control of the Senate for a number of years. They have had the Presidency since 2000. They cannot govern. They are incapable of governing this country.

We have poverty rates up, we are cutting programs that are investments into the United States of America, and we have borrowed over \$1 trillion in just 4 years from foreign countries, and the national debt is above \$8 trillion. That is not governing. That is not providing a bright future for the country.

Talk about reducing the tax burden. The burden on average people is higher now, and these kids that we are also cutting their student loans and health care for are the same kids that are going to have to pay the interest on the money we are borrowing, which never seems to be recognized by our friends.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If the gentleman will yield, \$8 trillion is a really, really big number, a difficult number for a lot of people to get their minds around in terms of a concept. Tell us, how much money does that translate per man, woman and child in America?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is \$27,000 for each person. So if you are a baby born today, right now, my nephew, Nicholas, born 3 weeks ago, he owes \$27,000 to pay for the debt.

Now as we look at the numbers, as the gentlewoman stated earlier, he is going to go to college and have to borrow money, \$17,000, \$18,000, now an additional \$6,000. So this kid before he even gets out into the workforce to have a full-time job is going to owe \$27,000 on the debt and \$23,000 on student loans. That is \$50,000. Run that

out 22 years, plus the additional burden we are putting on this young fellow, and what kind of future are we leaving to this kid?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. He is not even walking yet.

Mr. RYAN of OHIO. He is still sleeping 23 hours a day.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They cannot get out of the hospital, and they already owe the Federal Government, and we owe foreign countries all kinds of money.

Mr. RYAN of OHIO. Is that an ownership society?

Mr. DELAHUNT. He is going to own that interest rate, too, because that is interest rate is going up.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me tell my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), it starts right here. We talk about third-party validators, and we believe in that in our working group we have here.

I hold in my hand here from the Republican Study Committee, which it seems like the majority is following the lead of this group, and they have said originally in this report that they wanted \$35 billion in cuts. Let us talk about those cuts.

□ 2100

Let us talk about those cuts: \$35 billion in cuts, and all of this is on the table and a majority of it is in this budget, Mr. Speaker, that was passed by the Republican majority out of committee today. Cuts to Medicare, cuts to Medicaid, student loan cuts, we talked about that; food stamps, school lunches. But not a mumbling word, not a mumbling word about taking back tax cuts from billionaires. Not a mumbling word.

Not one, Hey, you know something, we are at war. Maybe we need to ask these folks who have never given anything. As a matter of fact, I do not blame them. I go back to not blaming the billionaires. We never asked them, we never told them that they need to do something. Let us just keep it going.

This is the document. I want to make sure that the Members who did not see this document, they can go online to www.john.shadegg.house.gov/rsc/, that is www.john.shadegg.house.gov/rsc/. Do not take it from me. Go find it for yourself.

So how do we get to the point where we are?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I think we should put a link on the 30-something Web site.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, why do we not do that? We are going to get staff to put this on the Web site, because this stuff just does not fall out of the sky. This does not just fall out of the sky. The President cannot do it by himself. Take it from me, he cannot. He has to have his Republican majority, he has to have a majority, obviously, over in the Senate to do it; and he cannot do it by himself.

So folks start talking about what is going on here. Why are these foreign

countries owning our debt? Why are they owning our debt? Why are we taxing our students? This budget that was passed through the Budget Committee on a partisan vote, with the exception of one Republican, and I am going to write him a thank-you note tomorrow, the bottom line is \$14 billion and a tax on students. Not just students, but parents who have to take up the cause because the kids can no longer try to pay for their own college or the majority of college. If parents have a college fund going now, they need to go back and talk to their financial adviser and put some more money into it, because if this Republican majority continues to go out of control, there will not be any assistance for your child. That is not just me presenting a budget. You can go online and see this for yourselves.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, could I just for a moment speak on behalf of those who have white hair and are looking towards receiving Medicare. The United States Senate is sending over a budget to this body, and there will be a so-called conference committee that will reconcile the differences; and in that Senate budget is, for the first time in my experience, and I have been here 9 years, a significant cut not in Medicaid, but in Medicare.

If my colleagues remember, there was a former Speaker of this body by the name of Newt Gingrich. He would come to this floor frequently at this hour of the night, have conversations that were noted by the American people, and he talked on one occasion about beginning to reduce Medicare and allowing it to wither on the vine.

Well, every American who shares the color of my hair ought to be aware of what has happened in the other branch, in the Senate, in terms of Medicare, because I do not want to say it is the beginning of the initiative or the concept of allowing Medicare to wither on the vine, but every American should be aware that there is a cut to that particular program that has saved the lives and extended the lives of millions of elderly Americans.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am also going to speak up for those of our colleagues with white hair, because Mr. MEEK and I represent tens of thousands of folks with white hair.

When the President talked about an ownership society, I think he was talking, well, I must have misunderstood him because, apparently, he is more interested in making sure that the top 1 percent of the population owns everything and that they are the only ones in a position to own anything.

Because if you look at people's ability to afford housing, in almost every major city in America, it has become virtually out of reach. The average price of a house in just my county is \$348,000, the average price of a house. Now, that is not an attainable price for an average middle-class person, never mind somebody who is on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

But let us talk about senior citizens. Let us talk about the folks who are living on fixed incomes. And then, let us turn to the people who are in our community, in south Florida, who just got hit by a category 3 storm who, right after the storm, were in a bad enough situation to begin with, because we got hit much worse than anyone expected. But then, 2 days ago, it started pouring rain on the houses that were already blown out by the wind and the rain.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I cannot help but see that picture behind you and see a lady there with silver hair. So if the majority has its way, not only did she get hit by a category 3 storm, Wilma, but she is going to be hit by a Republican majority Congress at the same time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Oh, yes. These people in this picture, this lovely couple who happen to be constituents of mine, they live in a condominium in my district where I just went door to door giving out self-heating meals. These are people who are frail. They were told that they had to leave because many hundreds of the apartments in this condominium complex alone are being condemned after the rain because there are gaping holes in the roof. And on top of that, with thousands of people now, thousands of people in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties who were hit by Wilma and whose homes are being condemned, there are numbers in the thousands, and that is just after this week's rain, we expect more rain in the future; and they are not even done counting the number of buildings that have been affected.

This budget reconciliation, these budget cuts cut housing vouchers, cut affordable housing programs. Just in our State, we would take a 3,500 section 8 voucher cut. So we are talking about people who are hit by a natural disaster who are being forced out of their houses, and now they will have the manmade disaster of this budget cut, these budget cuts that will force even more people out of their houses.

But "we want to create an ownership society in America." The President of the United States was elected to help people own things and to accumulate things. All I can see anyone accumulating is people who already have a whole lot and could live their whole lives not accumulating one more thing.

When is it going to stop? When are we going to be able to be in a position here in this Chamber to move this country in a new direction and start helping people again?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, there is another crisis coming too, and that is the cost of home heating fuel in the Northeast and in the Midwest that is going to strike particularly the elderly. As we know, gas is about \$3 a gallon, and the utilities are now predicting that families could pay as much as 70 percent more in terms of their heating bill. The Energy Department predicts that the cost of natural

gas is going to go up by some \$350 next season. At the same time that that is happening, we hear that Big Oil has done rather well.

For example, Exxon-Mobile recently reported that its profits in this past quarter, the third quarter, increased 75 percent.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Wow.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not a bad quarter. In one quarter, Exxon-Mobile had a net profit of \$10 billion. Simultaneously, today in the Budget Committee, there was a motion, a motion to increase the so-called LIHEAP program.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, can the gentleman explain who offered that motion, what party?

Mr. DELAHUNT. It was a Democratic motion. It would have increased the funding for that particular program, which allows low-income people, primarily elderly people, to benefit from a purchase of discounted energy, whether it be oil or gas, but primarily oil.

While Exxon-Mobile is making \$10 million, in the Budget Committee today, Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority said, no, we are not going to increase that program. And, by the way, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee said no to any rescission of the \$16 billion that this Republican-controlled Congress passed in the form of subsidies for Big Oil this year. If you are investing in oil this year, it was reminiscent of the gold rush back in 1849. You really scored well. Now, is that what we are about as a people? Are we not violating a social compact, a covenant, where we all come together and get through the hard times?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, there is a certain amount of corruption within the system, is there not, when that happens? There is just a certain amount of corruption and incompetence in the system.

Now, I know our friends, they like to say, well, all the Democrats, all they want to do is spend, spend, spend. But they have borrowed and spent over \$1 trillion just in the last 4 years from foreign countries, more than the past 42 Presidents.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Record breaking.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Record-breaking spending, record-breaking deficits. The party of fiscal conservatism has become an absolute joke. It has become a caricature of itself.

Here is a conservative that we may disagree with on many, many issues, Cal Thomas of the Washington Times, a conservative newspaper, a conservative columnist, one of the most conservative in the country who tries to provide a little advice to the Republican majority: "Here is a suggestion on your budget cuts: Don't start with the poor, start with the rich."

Mr. DELAHUNT. The oil companies are a good place to begin.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. A good first step, \$16 billion in subsidies to them. They have not done anything with trying to

reduce the cost of prescription drugs, allow for reimportation, allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate down the drug prices of a \$700 billion bill that we were told that night was \$400 billion.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Can someone explain to me, anybody, why the oil companies, that had revenues in the last quarter of some \$100 billion, each and every one of them saw huge increases in terms of their net profits, why they need subsidies?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I will tell the gentleman why. Because according to the Republican leadership, they do not want an ownership society; they want an own-everything society. That is why. Because they fall into the category of groups and individuals that the Republican leadership in this country clearly believes should own everything.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I think the Republican Party, after they give the \$16 billion in subsidies, will head out to shakedown street, K Street, where all the lobbyists are, and they will say, hey, we just gave you \$16 billion in public taxpayer money, and average people, middle-class people, people who need LIHEAP, who have high heating costs and everything else, they took that public money, they gave it to the oil companies, the oil companies are going to make tremendous profits and have made tremendous contributions to the Republican Party.

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Mr. MEEK of Florida. I want to say quickly just today, news flash from the Budget Committee, happened over there in the Cannon Building, really nice building named after Speaker Cannon, who used to walk around here smoke cigars and all and is well known.

But I can tell you this. There is a heating program that is out there to help poor people. Since we are talking about these big companies that are making all of these big profits, it would have increased the funding to provide for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program from \$1 billion to \$3.093 billion. That would impose a temporary windfall profits tax on the oil companies to assure that the amendment is deficit neutral.

Now I am going to tell you something. You want to talk about this budget is keeping not only everyday Americans in the cold but is definitely keeping poor people in the cold.

But I cannot tell you, when you say, can you explain it to me, well, I cannot explain to you the reason why we have CIA agents being outed, not only one but a number of them.

I cannot explain to you the reason why we still have Michael Brown on the Federal taxpayer dollars, on the dole, at the same salary he was making pre-Hurricane Katrina, and why the Secretary of Homeland Security extended not only the 60-day contract they had with him but another 30 days,

saying we have to learn something from him.

I cannot explain to you why the majority side puts together a report talking about cutting, and I am going to tell you, we gave the Web site out earlier. This is third-party validators, cuts to Medicare, cuts to Medicaid, cuts to student loans, cuts to food stamps, cuts to school lunches for poor kids. I cannot explain to you why.

I cannot explain to you why veterans have to wait so long for assistance. I cannot explain to you why that was the case.

I cannot explain to you why this administration, after this Congress acted, with many Members on this side pushing for military families to be reimbursed for equipment they had to buy for their loved ones while they were in theater to save their lives, to give them the Kevlar and the vests that they needed, I cannot explain to you why the Defense Department waited for the regs for that program for them to even get the money back, back in February. Senator DODD from Connecticut had to write the Defense Department, who is a Democrat, had to threaten them to write the regs, and they finally wrote it. I cannot explain to you why.

This is to reimburse military families for equipment they bought, husband, wives, what have you. I cannot explain to you why.

But one thing that I can tell you, that it is important that we illuminate these issues so not only the Members know that we know what they are doing on the majority side but the American people know.

Now I am going to say back for the one Republican that voted with Democrats on this budget, on the backs of the American working class, on the backs of retirees, on the backs of those that wake up every day and try to provide for their children, provide for their family, I am glad that he voted with us. Maybe, just maybe, this hour is working on the conscience of some.

Real quick, since we are going out of time, you want to give the site out? Then we can close out.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with that, we would like to yield back the balance of our time and thank the Democratic leader for the time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the special order of the gentleman of Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) given earlier this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.