

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Middle Class Fairness Act and the AMT, the alternative minimum tax. This tax was put in place years ago to basically cover a small group of wealthy taxpayers who were avoiding paying their taxes. Unfortunately, now it extends far beyond its initial intent in recent years. Now the AMT is actually punishing families and homeowners and the very credits that are in the current tax law, those credits that encourage savings, education, marriage, homeownership; they are all under attack by the AMT.

I am from the State of New Jersey. Our State has the highest percentage of people who are paying the AMT. Yet our State is the State with some of the highest taxes in the country. The solution to this problem? Well, it is relatively simple, two things: All we have to do is index the AMT, and, secondly, allow for the deductibility of taxes for those people who have to pay it. Reform is long overdue. The middle class deserves this reform in order to not any longer fall under the AMT.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Last night, the Ways and Means Committee pulled aside the curtain to show us what the direct link is between tax cuts for the wealthy and cutting programs for students and struggling families.

Dividend tax cuts for wealthy investors so they will have to pay taxes at a rate lower than a teacher or a supermarket checkout clerk. The trade-off is, well, student loans, \$14 billion in cuts. But, hey, those rich coupon clipper need the money.

Then we have food security, school lunch. Those little kids are just eating too much. We get something called look-through treatment of payments between related CFCs under foreign personal holding company income rules for the same price. Nice trade-off on the Republican side of the aisle.

Then, of course, extending further tax cuts to those who don't work for a living but live on capital gains. The small trade-off for that is depriving millions of Americans under the Medicaid program of needed essential medical care and dumping those costs onto the States and those of us who buy insurance because a lot of it will be unreimbursed care.

Great work, you guys. You're helping out your patrons and sticking it to the rest of America.

□ 1030

REVISIONIST HISTORY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, here is a quote: Others have talked about this threat that is posed by Saddam Hussein. Yes, he has chemical weapons. He has biological weapons, and he is trying to get nuclear weapons.

That is not President Bush. That is Democrat Leader Nancy Pelosi. But now what we are seeing is some revisionist history, and this Monday morning quarterbacking is a disservice to all of America.

Remember Secretary Colin Powell's testimony in front of the U.N. on February 5, 2003? One of the things that was never questioned was a tape that he played. It was between an Iraqi colonel and an Iraqi general. The colonel says, About this committee that is coming, and he is talking about the U.N. nuclear weapons committee. And the general says, Yeah, I am worried that you have got something left. And the colonel says, We have evacuated everything. We don't have anything left.

Now, what were they talking about, Mr. Speaker? What were they talking about?

It is no wonder that both Republicans and Democrats both voted to go to war. Both had the same intelligence and both saw the writing on the wall. Disagreeing about current policy is one thing, but changing historical fact is the tired, old, petty, partisan politics of the past.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about International Education Week this week sponsored by the Departments of State and Education.

International Education Week marks the importance of teaching our children and the people of our country foreign languages, traditions, cultures. This is not simply a feel-good effort of cultural enrichment. Whether it is a matter of competitiveness, economics, national security, in this era we must understand other cultures, their languages, their traditions, as quite literally now anyone on this planet could be our collaborators, our colleagues, our competitors, our customers.

Certainly this event should reaffirm our value of a strong foreign language education in which culture and traditions are taught alongside the structure and vocabulary. The acquisition of foreign languages beginning in the elementary years is found to create neuroconnections and boost various thinking processes. Those who study foreign language can pursue careers that benefit all of us here in America.

These students are gaining experiences which will serve them well in a variety of careers and serve the Nation through a better understanding of the world in which we live and compete.

MRS. RABINOWITZ

(Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, 42 million seniors can now sign up for the new voluntary Medicare drug benefit.

Yesterday I was with a senior in my district, Shirley Rabinowitz, who takes 17 different prescription drugs. Let me say that again: 17 different prescription drugs. She takes drugs for diabetes. She takes drugs for her heart condition. She lives with a number of chronic illnesses, and so she takes 17 different prescriptions. But like so many seniors, she has no retiree coverage, no Medicaid coverage, no State plan assistance, in fact, no prescription drug coverage at all. And her out of pocket expenses are huge.

So she wondered if the new Medicare plan would help her, and she went to an adviser with the Triple Area Agency on Aging and she learned in 30 short minutes that she can save \$4,000 a year. Let me say that again: \$4,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, this new drug program is a huge benefit to our seniors. Do not discourage them from getting the advice they need that is readily available to save them lots of money.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the Republican misguided and irresponsible plan to pass mandatory spending cuts and a companion tax cut package.

The Republican budget reconciliation bill cuts \$50 billion in vital programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, and student loans which are important to low-income and working-class families in this country.

The Republicans claim that these spending cuts will be used to offset the cost of hurricane relief efforts, and that is simply not the case. In recent years, Republicans have not offset the supplemental funding for the war and rebuilding in Iraq.

The reality is that Republicans are cutting vital services for the most vulnerable in our country in order to finance \$70 billion in tax cuts to the wealthy few. The budget reconciliation bill, when combined with the tax cut, increases the Federal deficit by \$20 billion.

Do not be fooled. The Republican reconciliation plan is a plan to increase the deficit and the national debt. Republicans clearly have the wrong priorities for America's working families. The budget is wrong. I urge my colleagues to protect the health and well-being of our citizens and not support this plan.