

placed on them by the Federal Government.

The Government is burdening seniors with tax rates as high as any millionaire could pay. I read in the paper the other day that the new top marginal tax bracket for some retirees is 51.8 percent.

The Government is burdening them with disincentives to work and contribute beyond retirement age. Current law requires that seniors between the ages of 65 and 69 lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn above \$11,280.

Most important, the Government has been burdening them with policies that say no. Policies that just don't make sense.

Where is the common sense in a national policy that says don't plan and don't save for your retirement years. Don't continue to work and contribute to society past age 65. Don't expand your long-term-care insurance.

These policies just don't make sense.

It's time the naysaying of the Federal Government stopped. It's time Congress stood up and said yes to our seniors.

Yes to lifting the earnings limit to \$30,000. Yes to repealing the 1993 tax hike on Social Security benefits. Yes to providing tax breaks for long-term-care insurance.

There was no good reason to increase the Social Security tax on benefits in 1993. It was unfair to single out Social Security for a 35-percent tax increase. We are going to repeal it.

It is bad policy to hold older American's earned income to \$11,000 a year.

The earning limit is an antiquated policy that punishes older Americans for being productive citizens. Many older Americans must work to make ends meet. Senior citizens have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share.

The time has come to stop punishing senior citizens. The time has come to recognize hard work, savings, and contributions to society. The time has come and it is now.

We are going to move forward with the Senior Citizen's Equity Act by passing the Tax Fairness and Deficit Reduction Act tomorrow.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL BENEFITS WEALTHY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BILBRAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BISHOP] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, as the 100 days come to an end, I want to compliment our friends on the other side of the aisle for the positive things that have happened, including, for example, the enactment of measures to put Congress under the same laws that we impose on others and to restrict unfunded mandates on the States and on communities

Unfortunately, though, these bright moments have been too few and too far between. All too soon, the 100 days became excessively partisan and very extreme. In too many instances, the Contract With America became a means of lining the pockets of the wealthy at the expense of the poor and middle-income working families. It became a flamboyant, circus-like, promotional vehicle worthy of P.T. Barnum at his best. And yes, tomorrow the circus does come to town.

As we consider the Republican tax bill and the offsetting spending cuts, just consider who the winners really are. The wealthiest 10 percent of our population get 47 percent of the benefits. The wealthiest 5 percent get 36 percent of the benefits. The wealthiest 1 percent get 20 percent of the benefits. This causes a revenue loss of \$178 billion in the first 5 years, and \$458 billion in the second 5 years.

Is this loss of revenue going to reduce the deficit? No. Is this loss of revenue going to balance the budget? No. It is going to the rich.

Who is going to pay for it? I will tell you who is going to pay for it: hungry children who are cut from school lunches, mothers and infants who depend on WIC for healthy births and early childhood development, promising students who cannot afford higher education without student loans, older citizens whose lives depend on heating assistance.

These are spending cuts, Mr. Speaker, but they do not go to balance the budget as Republicans claim they want to do with spending cuts. No. Instead, they choose to take money from children, from mothers, from students and from the elderly and give it to the wealthy 10 percent of our population.

This is a tax bill that robs the poor and working families to pay the rich. This is a tax bill that hoodwinks the American people. This is a tax bill that is immoral. This is a tax bill that ought to be sent to purgatory.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL BENEFITS REAL PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear my colleague from the other side of the aisle talk about immorality and how tax breaks go to the rich.

But let me talk a few minutes about what this tax bill will do for people, real people, people who are 65 years of age. And because they have never been very wealthy all their lives or never had great jobs all their lives they do not have big pensions, and they do not have a lot of income coming in from other types of investments, investments in rents and other things. But, lo and behold, people who have to work, people who have to work to make ends meet, people who have to

work to pay the taxes on their homes that they live in and, heaven forbid, maybe even buy a new car someday, real people like your mother and father and your grandparents, people in your lives that you know every day, day in and day out.

What happened with the 1993 tax bill is something called the earnings test on Social Security. The earnings test on Social Security says once you earn \$11,280, you have to pay \$1 out of every \$3 in penalty that you make on your Social Security.

So when you add up all your taxes and all your tax liabilities, if you are a senior and you are 66 years of age and you have to work to keep your family together and maybe pay your taxes on your home and maybe groceries and things like that, all of a sudden you are paying a marginal tax of 56 percent, twice the amount that millionaires pay.

But you know in the tax bill that our friends on the other side of the aisle talk so vehemently about, there is some real relief for seniors that have to work, that have to take care of their families, that want to live a life like everybody else, that want to be productive.

Mr. Speaker, what happens there is that seniors get a break with this tax bill, that we raise over the next 5 years the earnings test to \$4,000 a year, and so in 5 years you can earn \$30,000, not a lot of money in our day and age but enough for sustenance to keep a family together and not pay that penalty on your Social Security.

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Now we think this is a fair bill. The President thought it was certainly something fair because he included it in his campaign report. But let me talk to you a little bit about some real people, real people who live in my district and probably in your district and across this country:

Betty Bourgeau: Betty entered the work force at age 50 when her husband left her and her children. She worked two part-time minimum wage jobs at a department store and for a security company. She then became a teacher's aide for a HeadStart program, went back to school and became qualified to be a HeadStart lead teacher. However, Betty quit teaching HeadStart, the job she loved, when she began taking Social Security. She would lose most of her benefits with both jobs. Her department store job included health care benefits she needed, so she remained employed there.

Betty has received several "Employee of the Year" awards at the department store over the years, accompanied by pay raises. However, when she takes the raises, she must reduce her hours or lose more of her benefits to Social Security. This puts her in a particularly difficult situation because her health benefits are predicated on working a certain number of hours for the department store. Regulating her