

United States for the plan he put forth last night to balance the Federal budget by the year 2005. I further commend him for proposing that our health care and education programs be protected for the long-term strength of this Nation.

We now, for the first time in a very long time, have the House and the Senate and the President working toward the important goal of balancing our Federal budget.

We are proud that we have reduced our deficit for each of the last 3 years, the first time since Harry Truman was President that we have been able to say that. And now let the debate begin about how we can continue to stay on this path to a balanced budget.

WHAT ARE THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET SPECIFICS?

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, the freshmen Republicans sent President Clinton a letter 1 month ago encouraging him to submit a balanced budget. Up until now President Clinton had sided with his pollsters and spin-masters and made a conscious decision not to submit a balanced budget. Welcome to the arena, Mr. President. We hope your decision is a permanent one and that you do not change your mind and fall back when the going gets tough.

But if you noticed, the President was not very specific about how to accomplish his stated goal. Where are the details, Mr. President? Where are the specifics on how to achieve your balanced budget?

Republicans accepted Mr. Clinton's challenge back in January to be specific about our plan. Mr. President, give us your specifics. I will be glad to make copies and distribute them to the rest of my colleagues.

JOIN WITH THE PRESIDENT TO SOLVE THE BUDGET PROBLEM

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

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in strong support of what President Clinton is beginning to work on with the Congress.

I heard just as President Clinton heard on Sunday, and I think that the American people can be confident that we all get the message. The message is, we need to work together. We need to come together to find a way to deal with our long-term deficit problem.

Now, for people to argue that 7 or 10 years is a big difference, I think misses the point. The point is, we need to decide how we can do it without providing a huge tax break for the most wealthy, without slashing the programs that help those in our society who need help, but with a glidepath to

a balanced budget. If it is in 10 years, that is fine. That is what we need to do. But we need to do it together, and I reach out to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Please, join with the President, try to find a constructive solution to this problem.

FLAG BURNING

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

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, this Wednesday is Flag Day.

Throughout the Nation, Americans will unfurl the Stars and Stripes, flying our flag proudly as citizens of the greatest Nation on Earth.

Our flag reminds us of our heritage. It reminds us of everything that is good about this Nation, and it reminds us of all those who have served America in the Armed Forces who make it all possible.

Our flag is more than just a piece of cloth. It embodies us as a nation—our values and our beliefs. And especially, the memories of all those who gave their lives to make the United States of America the great country it is today.

That is why we cannot tolerate any deliberate desecration of the American flag.

I for one look forward to June 28 when we will vote on a constitutional amendment banning flag desecration. I will be proud to cast my vote for that amendment because I believe our flag is part of the very fabric of America, and the symbol that our veterans fought for and died for and deserves this protection.

MARRIAGE PENALTY

(Mrs. KENNELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, the American Heritage Dictionary defines the word "simplify" as "to render less complex." When it comes to the marriage penalty provision in the Tax Code, the Republican contract defines "simplify" as 20 additional pages of tax tables and more confusion and headaches.

Do not get me wrong—I oppose the marriage penalty and have tried for years to reduce it. The Republicans tried to make it better—and I applauded them for the effort. But the results do not live up to the promise.

I have with me an analysis from the Treasury Department that says the Republican contract's marriage penalty provision is an administrative nightmare. It would add dozens of pages of tax tables, all for very little benefit to the taxpayer. Treasury also estimated that taxpayers with interest from savings accounts or who itemize deductions would have to do four sets of calculations under the new marriage penalty provision. That is the exact opposite of tax simplification.

I urge my colleagues to rethink this provision. Anything worth doing is worth doing right. And things should not get more complex when we try to simplify.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

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

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, like millions of Americans, I am a supporter of the Public Broadcasting System. And, like millions of Americans, I am also a supporter of reducing the size of government and balancing our budget. Preserving PBS and balancing the budget are worthy, and not totally inconsistent, goals. I have come to the conclusion that we can do both.

At first glance, some might suggest that my conclusion is far fetched. After all, Federal dollars are becoming harder and harder to come by. The priorities are many and the dollars are few. But I believe we are overlooking a tremendous opportunity for both Congress and public broadcasting. It is called the free marketplace.

In this age of exploding technology and the revolution in the telecommunications industry, the marketplace is where the action—and the future—is. Public broadcasting's greatest asset—its educational mission—is a marketing dream and provides an attractive incentive for investment.

Interest remains high in the marketplace—and in living rooms across America—for quality programming. I believe innovative public-private partnerships hold the key, providing public broadcasting the opportunity to seek ways of lessening its dependence on Federal dollars while exploring a long-term funding strategy.

It is time for a bold, imaginative, and decisive action plan to guide the future of public broadcasting. That course can best be determined by joining together the leadership of Congress, public broadcasting, and the business community. Acting together, we can secure long term viability. But we must act now. Time is running out.

Rather than pointing fingers, Republicans and Democrats should join together in building a bridge between business and public broadcasting. Short of a private/public partnership, partisan politics will prevail. Lacking a truly bipartisan solution, Congress will lose more than Big Bird and the Civil War. We will lose the trust of the American people who look to us for leadership and creative solutions to guide the future of this treasured national resource.

SUPREME COURT DECISION TURNS BACK THE CLOCK

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

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my displeasure over