We just plain lied to young people. We heaped debt on them and scorned them because by and large they did not vote and now the bill comes due for them.

The sad fact is that more Americans believe in unidentified flying objects and UFO's than believe that Generation X will ever see one dime out of their Social Security.

Mr. Chairman, this is a moral crisis. This is a moral obscenity. We have broken the link of trust between generations in this country. But today, tomorrow, we can begin to restore, to repair that link, to restore that trust.

Mr. Chairman, we can do it with this reconciliation bill, which makes deeper changes to Government than anything we have done on the floor of this House in the last 60 years. But it is not a wrecking ball, it is a mason's trowel, carefully reworking and rebuilding the walls and the floors, the doors and the windows of this edifice.

At the end, what we will see is a castle, a castle that is good to live in for all Americans; a castle built on a sound fiscal foundation; a castle that is lighted with the shining light of compassion and caring by all those who live within it; a castle that is filled with hope, because there is opportunity for all to grow, to have a better life.

This, Mr. Chairman, is what it is about. It is about our future. It is probably, the most important vote in the careers of any of us here, no matter how long we have been here or how many more years we will stay.

We are often accused of casting our votes for today's special interests and for tomorrow's votes, but today we have a historic opportunity to do something different; to cast our vote for the future.

Mr. Chairman, I know we will do the right thing. We will vote for the dignity of senior citizens. We will vote for the opportunity of working Americans. We will vote for our children's future. We will vote to pass this reconciliation bill tomorrow.

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to this legislation. I do not disagree with the goal of reducing the Federal deficit. I do, however, disagree with the way in which this legislation attempts to achieve that goal.

Some changes in Federal programs are necessary in order to control Federal spending and bring the budget under control, but this legislation makes deep cuts in programs that help average Americans—programs like Medicare, Medicaid, the earned income tax credit, and the low-income housing credit—in order to pay for $245 billion in tax cuts that will disproportionately benefit the wealthy. I find such a trade-off totally unacceptable.

Last week the House passed legislation cutting $270 billion from the Medicare Program. This legislation has since been incorporated into the reconciliation bill before us today. This legislation makes cuts that are much deeper than those necessary to keep Medicare viable over the next 10 years. Most Democrats, myself included, supported an alternative Medicare reform package that would have made only $90 billion in cuts in Medicare, but which would have kept the program solvent for the same period of time. The reason the Republicans want to make $180 billion in additional Medicare cuts is that they need the extra savings if they are going to balance the budget and pay for their tax cuts.

For the same reason, they plan to cut Medicaid by $180 billion over the next 7 years. The Republican plan would block grant Medicaid and transfer control over the program to the States. While the bill before us today does increase spending on Medicaid, it does so at a rate that is not sufficient to keep up with the program's anticipated increases in caseload and health care costs. The net result will most likely be an increase in the number of uninsured people in this country, a lower quality of health care for those who are still covered by Medicaid, and an increase in cost-shifting—transferring the burden of paying for health care for the poor from the Federal Government to other patients with private health insurance.

This legislation also makes $22 billion in cuts to the earned income tax credit. These cuts will affect 14 million working families—three quarters of all current recipients of the EITC. These people need tax relief more than most families, and yet, they will have less disposable income than under current law if this legislation is adopted in its current form. Marginal tax rates for many of these families will increase by more than 2 percentage points if this legislation is passed. This appears to be the only case where Republicans are unconcerned about the effect of increased marginal tax rates on work decisions; apparently, if you do not make much money, you do not deserve their sympathy.

The impact of the proposed changes in the EITC would be compounded by the welfare reform provisions contained in this legislation. Taken together, these provisions would have a devastating impact on people on the margins of the work force, many of whom are already working full-time at minimum wage and are still unable to make ends meet. The welfare reform bill passed by the House earlier this year would force single mothers off welfare after 2 years without adequate health care or child care assistance in many cases. Thanks to the cuts in the EITC, welfare mothers who eventually manage to find a job—or several jobs—and earn less than $30,000 would have less disposable income than under current law. Are these policies the mark of a family friendly Congress? I do not think so. The EITC provides a positive alternative to welfare by making work pay. Apparently, now that the Republicans have succeeded in cutting welfare dramatically, they no longer see any need to maintain such a generous work incentive. Social Darwinism has returned with a vengeance.

And, of course, that is not all. The Republican reconciliation bill would phase out the low-income housing credit as well. This credit has helped provide affordable housing for more than 800,000 low-income families. Without the continuation of this credit, less affordable housing will be available for these families, and they will have to spend more of their meager income on housing.

And to make matters even worse, the Republican reconciliation bill contains language that would allow companies to withdraw to $40 billion from their employees' pension funds over the next 5 years. This action could jeopardize or reduce the pension benefits of millions of working-class families. It looks as if the Republicans want to make certain that if families do work hard, struggle to get ahead, and manage to land a job with a pension, they would not enjoy the fruits of their labors when they retire.

All of the cuts I have mentioned would fall disproportionately on the working poor, the elderly, and poor children. Are these really the groups we want to bear the burden of deficit reduction? Are these folks really failing to hold up their end of our social contract? Are the affluent families that will benefit most from this reconciliation bill's tax cuts the families most in need of assistance?

By all means, Congress should address the deficit, and the Federal Government should provide the most hard-pressed American families with a little tax relief. What amazes me is that the Republican party believes that the 10 or 20 percent of households in this country with the highest incomes are the families most in need of government assistance. It seems as if the Republicans consistently attempt to solve society's problems at the expense of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

I find such actions reprehensible and shortsighted. They certainly undermine Republican professions of concern for children and the family. The policies in this bill will do more to destroy communities and hurt children than all the excesses—real and imagined—of the New Deal and the Great Society combined. I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, October 24, 1995, all time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of that day, the Committee rises.

Accordingly the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida) having assumed the chair, Mr. BOEHNER, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill, (H.R. 2491), to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 105 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1996, had come to no resolution thereon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KOLBE. 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 in the RECORD on H.R. 2491, the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.