

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Mother's Day is almost here, and I have some bad news for my mother and many others. The Republicans have a new budget, and they still cut Medicare. They still want Medicare to wither on the vine.

There they go again, Mr. Speaker. In the Republican Medicare budget, they divide the elderly. They give Federal dollars over to insurance companies for the healthy and the wealthy. Then they want the Federal Government to pay for the sick and the poor.

They offer medical savings accounts to healthy seniors. So, they can use money from the Federal Government—to buy a car or take a vacation. That does not make sense. That will not help the budget or our seniors.

I call on my Republican colleagues to give us a better budget. We should not cut Medicare to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy. We should not destroy Medicare in the name of saving it.

Don't cut Medicare.

IT IS A MISTAKE TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about minimum wage and the desirability for low-income wage earners to earn more money. Of course, it is right. Raising low wages appeals to the sense of decency and compassion of Americans. But it would be a mistake.

We have a system of allocating resources in this country called the free enterprise system. It has worked very well for this country. It has made ours the greatest country on Earth. Increasing the minimum wage would impose significant costs primarily on unskilled Americans because the minimum wage is going to deprive some of those Americans from access to an entry-level job.

I ask the liberal labor union bosses if they are sure this is the way they want America to go. If employers cannot afford to pay the increase in minimum wage, then what are they going to do? They are either going to go out of business or they are going to respond by reducing hours, reducing benefits or paying less frequently.

In conclusion, I want to give my colleagues a quote from George Washington, a great man. George Washington said:

If, to please the people, we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterward defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The rest is in the hands of God.

CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

(Ms. ESHOO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, last week I received this letter from Judi LeVine's kindergarten class at Arundel School in San Carlos, CA. It is really a plea from her students for Congress to save the environment, especially our rain forests, and our animals, our endangered species.

Even 5-year-old children can see the value in conserving our natural resources. Yet Republican leaders in Congress seem unable to grasp the need to preserve our environment for the next generation.

The parents may send us to the Congress; they are the ones that cast the votes. But the children are the ones that we need to remember as we shape their future. It is their future that we are shaping, and we should never lose sight of that. Because the opinion of the American people has weighed in and has forced the GOP leaders to abandon some of their destructive attacks on endangered species and wilderness areas, we must never let our guard down against similar assaults.

So to all the kids at the school, I have gotten the message. I hope the rest of the Congress has.

RESTRICT PENSIONS FOR CONVICTED FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. DICKEY. Mr. Speaker, according to the National Taxpayers Union, the citizens of this country will pay out in 1996 over \$600,000 in pensions to convicted former Members of Congress. What kind of message is this to send out to the taxpayers, farmers, miners, all the workers, about how our Government operates?

H.R. 3310 would restrict Members and former Members of Congress from receiving congressional retirement benefits if convicted of a felony which occurred while serving in the public trust. The bill would serve to punish Members who have taken advantage of the faith of the people who have placed upon them and Members involved in activities unrelated to official duties. Perhaps no other bill than H.R. 3310 will better indicate that this Congress is willing to change the way we do business.

I urge all of my colleagues to consider the provisions of H.R. 3310.

RESPONSIBLE DEFICIT REDUCTION WITHOUT UNREASONABLE CUTS IN EDUCATION

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last year the Republican majority overreached by planning to cut

Medicare by \$270 billion and offering \$245 billion in tax cuts, and when they did not get their way, they shut the Government down. They realized that they were out of step with the American people and the Medicare trustees who said that we only needed \$90 billion in cuts or downsizing, that is all that was needed to keep Medicare solvent.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to know that they are moving in the right direction now. Their new budget only calls for \$168 billion in cuts, but they still are not quite there yet. I still believe we should continue to do the financially responsible thing by reducing the deficit. If we count the capital gains tax cut and the 4.3-cent gas cut that they want to do, then that adds up to \$176 billion, which adds up close to the \$168 billion they want to cut out of Medicare.

We have reduced the deficit 4 years in a row and will continue to do so, unlike the huge Federal deficits that were run up during the 1980's. We can continue down the road of responsible deficit reduction without the irresponsible cuts in Medicare and education.

REPUBLICANS COMMITTED TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, there they go again, distorting the record. This Republican Congress increases the spending on Medicare each and every year for the next 7 years. We increase it over \$305 billion. This Congress is committed to the senior citizens of America, but we are also committed to the future generations.

We are \$5 trillion in debt, my colleagues, \$5 trillion, costing us \$300 billion, \$300 billion in interest payments alone that could go to critically needed programs if we would get our fiscal house in order.

It is easy for the other side to make accusations, but this Republican Congress has been steadfast in its determination to balance the budget. We have done it with real numbers, honest numbers, addressing the American public's desire for reform of government. We have been in the forefront of that debate, and to be criticized for cutting Medicare once again by the other side is a lie, is a sham, and is distasteful and disgraceful on behalf of the minority party.

PERMISSION FOR ALL COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT FOR TODAY AND THE REMAINDER OF THE WEEK DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged motion and ask for its immediate consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The Clerk will report the motion.