

importance of a balanced budget amendment. Much to my chagrin, there was an announcement yesterday that probably certainly weakened the effort for a balanced budget amendment in the Senate.

In 1969, if you read the newspaper, you probably would have read about Charles Manson. The number one song was Simon and Garfunkle's "Mrs. Robinson." The Mets won the World Series. I was an 8-year-old boy growing up in western South Dakota and had the opportunity to watch on a black and white television, Neal Armstrong take one giant step forward for mankind by walking on the Moon.

Little did I know at that time that that was the start of our taking one giant step backward fiscally, because 1969 was the last time that Congress and our country has been able to balance its budget.

It occurs to me, it has been my long-held belief that every generation of Americans has an appointment with destiny. For my grandfather who came to this country from Norway back in 1906, it was to help build America. He worked on and helped build the railroad that went across our State of South Dakota. Later he went on to be in the hardware business.

For my father, his appointment with destiny was to defend America. As a decorated World War II fighter pilot, when the call came for him to defend America in World War II, he was there.

I believe that for this generation of Americans, it is our responsibility to preserve America for the next generation. I think we are failing in our duty and the obligation we have to make this a better place for the next generation of Americans.

When it comes time to vote on a balanced budget amendment, the issue really is about our future and what will we do for our children. A lot has been made, there are a lot of distractions and diversions in this whole debate about reasons why we do not need a balanced budget amendment. But the fact remains that 1969 is the last time that Congress has had the political will to submit a balanced budget and to do what is right for the future of this country.

If we look at where we are today and the burden we are passing on, the legacy we are handing on to the next generation of Americans, in my view it is immoral, it is wrong. We have an opportunity this next week to vote to do something that will be meaningful. It is the most important vote I think that we will cast for the future of our country.

I am hopeful that we will see, when the Senate votes on this next Tuesday, that there will be some of the people, some of the Democrats who are currently opposed to it, perhaps one of the two from my State of South Dakota, who will come forward and recognize the importance of this important move to the future of this country.

We cannot afford to continue to mortgage the future for our kids and

for our grandkids. So as we continue to engage the debate in this town and around this country, and as I traveled in my State of South Dakota for 9 days last week, I had the opportunity to raise this issue and to talk about it and its importance.

One of the questions that was repeatedly asked was what about Social Security, because they had heard a lot of radio ads that had been running in my State by opponents of a balanced budget amendment attacking me for my vote on it.

The point I come back to is if we do not do something to balance this country's budget, and if we do not impose the discipline necessary to do it, not only is Social Security jeopardized, but so is every other Government program. The only way we can protect Social Security for the long-term and make it a program that is there not only for today's seniors but for tomorrow's seniors is to pass a balanced budget amendment.

So, as I heard and listened to the discussion that was held last week in my State of South Dakota about this issue, I kept coming back to the same point. That is that as a young 8-year-old in western South Dakota in 1969, I had no idea of what was about to begin. But for the past 28 years, we have accumulated and amassed in this country \$5.3 trillion in debt, or \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in America.

I am calling on, today, hoping that our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol, when this vote comes up next week, will look into their hearts and see if this is not the right move. It is not only the right move, it is the only move if we are to preserve a future for our kids and for our grandkids.

I hope we will have the opportunity in this House, if the Senate goes first and votes and will approve a balanced budget amendment, that we can do it in the House and make this a better place for the next generation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS). The Chair reminds Members to refrain from references to Members of the other body urging action by the other body.

EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, today I continue my series on talking about what works and what does not work in education and why it is such a needed focus. But before I do that, I just have a few miscellaneous comments on some issues that have been in the news over the last couple of days that I would like my colleagues to be aware of.

Mr. Speaker, in the last Congress I introduced a constitutional amendment. I introduced a constitutional amendment which would allow for a procedure where voters could recall their elected officials. So far in this Congress, I have not reintroduced that bill. But yesterday I decided that it was again time to perhaps make a few modifications to facilitate that process. But it is time to reintroduce the bill that allows public citizens, it allows the citizens of this country to hold their elected officials accountable for the promises and the commitments that they make during an election.

Over the last few days, we have seen where individuals who campaigned and were elected during the campaign process made a series of promises and commitments to the voters that said, if I am elected, this is what I will stand for. This is what I will do. And these are the kinds of actions that you can expect me to take as your elected Representative.

It appears that too often that is all they are, is campaign promises. They are a great way to get a vote, but when they get to Washington, they all of a sudden decide that maybe it is a lousy way to govern. Well, it is about time that voters started to recognize and have the opportunity to tie candidates to their performance, that when they run a campaign, they see a direct link between what an individual promises in a campaign and what they do once they get here. And that when they fail to see that link between a campaign and a performance, rather than just having to stand back and say, there is nothing that I can do about this, there is nothing that I can do about somebody that I voted for, somebody that I supported because they said they were going to do these things and then they go to Washington and they do something else. They now will be empowered with a tool that says, you said you were going to do that and you got to Washington and you decided that something else was going to happen and that your behavior was going to move in a different direction.

Well, as a voter in your State, I now have the opportunity to say I voted for you because this is what you were going to do and, now that you have decided to do something else, I would like the opportunity to clarify and to hold you accountable for breaking the promises and breaking your commitment to me. It is time that the American people or at least the States in this country, it is time that the States had the opportunity to design a mechanism which will more effectively and more immediately allow the citizens to hold their elected officials accountable.

It is unconscionable that we keep finding individuals on key issues who say one thing and do another. We are going to have a voter empowerment. In the States it is commonly known as the ability to hold elected officials accountable through a recall mechanism. We will have a recall bill. I urge my