

advocate for disabled veterans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of Secretary Brown, the Department of Veterans Affairs has entered a new level of commitment and service. These accomplishments are the direct result of Secretary Brown's strong leadership. During his tenure, the Veterans Department has expanded benefits for veterans who were prisoners of war or exposed to agent orange, radiation or mustard gas. The agency has also expanded treatment for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Further, Secretary Brown has undertaken an aggressive research initiative to determine the cause of illness for military personnel who were involved in the Persian Gulf war.

Secretary Brown has to his credit the fact that they convened the First National Summit on Homeless Veterans during his tenure. He oversaw the reorganization of the veterans health care system to broaden access to the system and offer the highest level of comprehensive care.

Mr. Speaker, I am the former chairman and now ranking minority member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs—Housing and Urban Development—Independent Agencies. I know of no one more committed to service than Jesse Brown. Veterans and their families are the beneficiaries of his hard work and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, as he prepares to depart his post, we take this opportunity to recognize and thank Secretary Jesse Brown for a job well done. We salute his tireless efforts and wish him well in his future endeavors.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order, Secretary Jesse Brown.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PAPPAS). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

#### THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, perhaps I will not take the entire hour. There may be some colleagues coming down to join me in this special order tonight.

I want to talk a little bit about where we have been as a country; in other words, where we were, where we are and where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, it is my observation that for 40 years Washington had it wrong. For 40 years Congress thought that Washington knew best, that big bureaucracies could solve social problems. And so for 40 years, spending increased at double the inflation rate, taxes went up faster than the family's income, the debt ballooned and social problems got worse. Washington had it wrong.

Washington waged a war on poverty. We spent over \$5 trillion on a war on poverty. But, Mr. Speaker, I encourage you to take a walk through any burned-out inner city, and you will see the victims of that war on poverty.

I ask you to ask yourself, who won the war on poverty? No, I think Washington had it wrong.

Washington overtaxed those who worked hard and, as some say, played by the rules. They squandered much of it on top-heavy programs that did little but breed more dependency.

When I was a child growing up and my parents raised three boys, I was the oldest of the three, my father was the sole breadwinner in our family. He worked in a factory. I am a blue collar kid. When I was growing up in the 1950's, the largest payment that the average family made was the house payment. In fact, families back then could afford to raise their kids on one paycheck, because the largest payment they made was the house payment. In fact, taxes back then averaged something like, Federal taxes, less than 4 percent of the family's income.

But today, according to the National Taxpayers Union, the average family in America today spends more for taxes than they do for food, clothing, and shelter combined.

No, I think Washington had it wrong. They thought if we took more money from families who were doing the right things and gave it to people who perhaps were doing the wrong things, we could solve those problems. And Washington was just wrong. We encouraged more irresponsibility, and we discouraged personal responsibility.

I want to show a chart here, because I had my staff do a little research. And it is something that I had suspected for a long time and I think this chart confirms it. What it shows is that since 1975, for every dollar that the Congress took in, and these red lines are really how much more the Congress was spending than it took in, for every dollar that they took in, for example, I think in the year 1976, for every dollar that Washington took in it spent \$1.23.

The following year they got a little more frugal and dropped to \$1.15. But if you take the averages from 1975 until 1994, for every dollar that Washington took in, it spent \$1.21.

The good news is that since the Republicans took control of Congress, and these are the blue lines over here, that number has dropped to \$1.08. And when we enact the budget that we voted on today here in the House and when that budget is finalized, we, in fact, will be spending 99 cents for every dollar that we take in. And we are laying the foundations for actually paying off the national debt. So things are changing here in Washington.

As my colleague, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN], who put this chart together with the help of the House Committee on the Budget and the Congressional Budget Office, what it shows is that we have come a long

way. Since the days when we consistently spent \$1.20 for every dollar that we took in, right now we are actually ahead of budget, ahead of our goal and under budget.

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And what we see in the red lines, this was our 1995 budget plan, the 7-year plan that we put in effect 2 years ago when those of us came here in the 104th Congress and decided to change the way Washington does business. What we said was, in fiscal year 1997 we would have a deficit of \$174 billion. Now that is a lot of money. But when I first came to Washington, some people were saying that we could actually be seeing deficits of something like \$274 billion.

Well, there is a lot of good news. Because what has really happened, because we have had a stronger economy and because we eliminated about \$50 billion worth of wasteful Washington spending, because we have begun to limit the growth in entitlements, because we are actually doing what the American people had wanted Congress to do for 40 years, we are ahead of schedule and under goal.

As a matter of fact, in our budget resolution of 1995 we said that the Congress would spend no more than \$1,624 billion. That is still a lot of money. But we said that is the most we would spend in fiscal year 1997. Well, the good news is that we are actually going to spend only \$1,622 billion. In other words, this Congress is actually going to spend less money than we said we would spend in this fiscal year 2 years ago.

Now that is the good news. And that news gets even better. Because the economy has been stronger than we expected, we have actually taken in over \$100 billion more than we expected to take in; and, as a result, rather than having a \$174 billion deficit this year, it is actually going to be less than \$70 billion.

If we stay on that path and we have that kind of fiscal discipline, I believe that this Congress will balance the budget not by the year 2002 but actually by the year 2000. I think there are good economic reasons to believe that that is going to happen.

The best news is that we are balancing the budget while saving Medicare and providing significant tax relief for working families here in the United States. As I mentioned earlier, we are also laying the foundations for actually paying off that debt, making Social Security truly secure, and leaving our kids a debt-free future.

Now I would like to talk a little bit about some of the things, and there is going to be a real heated debate, and already there is a heated debate about what actually is in the tax relief package. I think the more the American people begin to understand what we are really talking about in terms of tax relief for working families and what it