The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BONIOR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. PICKERING] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. PICKERING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DAVIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise at this moment to talk about something that is near and dear to the hearts of many Americans, and that is the North American Free Trade Agreement, otherwise known as NAFTA.

When the United States enters into trade agreements, the objective should be to advance the standard of living for working families in our country and abroad.

Just like the average family in Illinois' 7th Congressional District who are impacted by this trade agreement whether they like it or not, my hope is for them. They want what we all want, to provide to the best of their ability for their loved ones.

My hope is for the people in the district, so that they can obtain a living wage, a wage that allows workers to lead a dignified life while working in a safe and healthy environment, an environment that respects their needs as a worker. Their struggles and desires are not so different from mine and my colleagues. They want to put clothes on their children's back, they want to put food on the table, have access to reliable transportation, live in adequate housing, and afford child care for their children. Their issues need to be taken account of and they want to be an active part of the debate.

I hope for a trade agreement that will help to broaden our economy, help eradicate poverty, while bringing jobs and a decent quality of life to all of those involved. However, based upon recent reports, NAFTA, the trade agreement and trade model, has not met its promises. Therefore, I believe that any standard of trade, based on the NAFTA model, will further threaten the standard of living for working families, not only in the United States but in other countries as well.

The growing trade deficit with Canada and Mexico since NAFTA was passed is well-known. As this trade deficit has developed, thousands of United States jobs have been lost.

''Free traders'' often state that those opposed to NAFTA need to get on with the times, often asserting that we are opposed to this treaty out of fear for the future. I pronounce that this is just simply not the truth. As a matter of fact, those individuals and unions who are opposed to NAFTA do so as a result of their great desire to create a different kind of future, a future that says that the standard of living in this country ought to be spread throughout the world, a future that says we do not believe that further reducing the standard of living in Third World developing countries is the way for America to rise.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this country would object, reject, extricate itself from the concept that America can advance by allowing its businesses and industries to flow away seeking a different kind of labor pool, seeking a labor pool that is willing to work because of the difficulties that it has had, that is willing to work by undercutting and undermining the standard of living that the American society has become accustomed to.

We need to make sure that people all over the world can subscribe to the idea that they ought to be paid for the work which they provide; that is, they ought to be paid a livable wage that affords them the opportunity to seek the very best of what the world has to offer.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share these thoughts and ideas with my colleagues and the American people and suggest that NAFTA is not good for America.

TAX RELIEF TO THE MIDDLE CLASS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, what if we were to go on a 6-month diet to lose 30 pounds and we got to the 4th month and we had already lost 28 pounds? Would we quit exercising and quit dieting because we were so far ahead of schedule? We had not reached our goal yet but we were way ahead of the game.

The United States Congress and the American people are in that situation right now with deficit reduction. An article today in The Washington Post shows that the deficit, the projected deficit may go down to $45 billion, which is way lower than the expectation. Now, what this means is that Congress and the American people may not have to wait until the year 2002 to see a balanced budget. We may see it a lot sooner, even potentially as soon as next year.

So how do we react? Well, all over America people will be very pleased to hear this. But how do certain big-government liberal types in Washington react? Hey, we are ahead of schedule; that means we can relax and we do not have to cut so many programs and we can spend more money. We can have more pork back home. It is very good news to some of them.

I would say to my colleagues that, if we change from the path of having fiscal responsibility and lower spending, then we will get back into the hole that we are just now digging out of. A balanced budget to the folks back home is not about numbers, it is about opportunities, it is about lower interest rates. Lower interest rates on a home mortgage of $75,000 over a 30-year period means we would pay $37,000 less. On a $15,000 car loan, lower interest rates means that we would pay about $900 less. It means that college education is more affordable because student loans are lower. Also, Mr. Speaker, it means taxes are lower because we do not have to spend so much on deficit spending.

Now, the Republican plan to lower and give middle class tax relief is very simple. Under that, 76 percent, and I have a chart, Mr. Speaker, but 76 percent of the tax relief goes to people, households, making below $75,000 a year. This is what a middle class tax cut is all about.

Now, a lot of folks say, well, this tax cut only benefits the rich. Well, that is true if the definition of rich is people who make below $75,000. And incidentally, the interesting way the Clinton administration and some of the liberals get there is by playing games with paychecks, by adding to it, for example, the rental value of a house. So if a person makes $45,000 a year, under the Democrat liberal formula that individual is making over $75,000 a year, so they can say this tax cut does not apply to them.

I would say this. If we go try to get a loan or buy a house based on the numbers the President tells us we are making, it will not work.

Ninety percent of this tax relief goes to families and to education. I am from Georgia. We have the HOPE scholarship. The HOPE scholarship is for students who make a B or above in State schools, and they have their tuition paid for. The national HOPE scholarship is not as generous as the Georgia HOPE scholarship, but it is still very good, because if students and children want to compete in the world today, they have to have a college education. The Republican plan makes college education more affordable.

Tax relief at this time is proper. Why is tax relief important? Because the more money Americans have in their pocket, because the Government is taking less out of it, the more shoes they will buy, the more clothes they will buy, the more shirts, the more cars, and so forth. And when Americans do that, small businesses respond by expanding. When businesses expand, more jobs are created. When more jobs are created, more people go to work, less people are on welfare, and more people are paying taxes.

Is tax relief consistent with deficit reduction? Absolutely. It certainly is,