

not you behave in a certain way. That is the philosophy embodied in this tax relief bill.

The second bill is similar in that it raises the personal exemption for each filer in this country. To the extent you have additional dependents, it raises that exemption from \$2,700 to \$3,400, thereby reducing the taxable income to families in this country.

Again, it does it in an across-the-board way and moves us closer to the goal of simplification, so the ultimate goal of a new Tax Code for a new century can be met. I believe that, again, is ultimately where we ought to be heading.

So to the extent we do anything in the next couple of years as we have this debate about tax reform, to lower the tax burden on American people in this country, it ought to be with an eye toward the actual ultimate goal of a new Tax Code for a new century. I support the legislation of the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT), who is on the floor, to sunset the existing tax code, and I look forward to working with him to see that that becomes the law of the land, irrespective of the footdragging that is happening on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

#### TAX CODE TERMINATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to address some of the comments and concerns that the President made yesterday at a speech when he was talking about the Tax Code Termination Act.

This is a bill that myself and the gentleman from New York (Mr. PAXON) have introduced in the House, H.R. 3097, that simply does this: It sunsets the current Tax Code in the year 2001, December 31. It establishes a date certain that we sunset the entire Tax Code with the exception of the payroll deduction taxes on Social Security and Medicare.

The President in his comment said that it would be irresponsible to sunset the Tax Code, that it would create an environment that would be uncertain and not predictable, and that it would have grave consequences on our economy.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that what is irresponsible is to continue to leave intact the Tax Code as we know it today, a Tax Code that literally is punitive, confusing, confounding. Even the experts do not understand; even the people that are paid to administer the current Tax Code do not understand it.

Recent statistics show that the IRS, you call and ask a question about your individual tax return, 47 percent of the time the Internal Revenue Service gives you the wrong answer. The problem is when you go to court, they take you to Tax Court because you have submitted the wrong answer, you are

guilty, even though you got the wrong answer from the Internal Revenue Service.

The current code drains \$200 billion a year from the U.S. economy. That is how much it costs to file all individual and business tax returns in the United States, over \$200 billion.

5.3 billion hours it takes from American businesses and individual taxpayers to file their tax return, 5.3 billion hours consumed by trying to meet the Tax Code.

Let me just say I believe it is un-American and even immoral to have a Tax Code that punishes taxpayers, punishes businesses, and basically shouts at them, guilty, guilty, guilty. Not innocent. That is what our current Tax Code does.

Let me just throw up a couple of charts for illustration purposes to highlight the problem. This first chart shows the number of words first in the Declaration of Independence, 1,300 words in the Declaration of Independence, the words that define the moral vision of our national government, 1,300 words in the Declaration of Independence.

□ 1800

In the Bible, the holy Bible, the word of God, 773,000 words in the Bible. But take the IRS tax code and all of the case law that supports the tax code, 2.8 million words in the IRS tax code, and the case law to support the IRS tax code. That is wrong. We can do better.

The next chart, I think, highlights why we need to sunset the current tax code. Right here, what you see is two lines rising precipitously since 1964. The orange line you see is the words in the U.S. tax code. The actual code itself contains 800,000 words. From 1964 it quadrupled to 1993 from 200,000 to 800,000.

Members will notice that the number of lobbyists in Washington, D.C. also went from just over 10,000 to 70,000 in that same period of time. The beauty of the tax code Termination Act is this: that we have a national election for the next President in the year 2000. The tax code will be sunset 1 year after that election. So what we will end up having is, if the tax code Termination Act is passed, essentially a national referendum on replacing the tax code.

You have three candidates, A, B, C, from parties A, B, and C. You are a taxpayer and you go to hear them speak, or they are debating. The first question you are going to ask if this bill is passed, the tax code Termination Act, is, "Sir, if I vote for you for President, what will the tax code look like once you become President, 1 year after you take office?"

So we will have a national referendum on flat tax, national sales tax, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT's) modified flat tax, and every other variety therein. We will engage 265 million Americans in a debate at a national level on how we should replace the tax code, not the 70,000 lobbyists in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I will finish by saying that we need to encourage all Members of the House and the Senate to cosponsor the tax code Termination Act and see the death to this tax code. It is not too soon and hopefully it is not too late.

#### PAYING HONOR TO THE PEACE CORPS AND ITS VOLUNTEERS ON ITS 37TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the first 5 minutes I have done in a very long time. I do so because I want to pay honor to the Peace Corps and to the volunteers who have served.

Today is the 37th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps by President Kennedy in 1961, as well as the first annual Peace Corps Day.

In my judgment, the Peace Corps is not a Democrat program, not a Republican program, it is a program that is bipartisan. It is a program that has served not only our country with distinction, but also the many countries that we serve. And speaking as a former Peace Corps volunteer, I know we also get so much out of this enriching, cross-cultural experience.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, the Peace Corps has done an extraordinary job, through its volunteers, in bettering the lives of people throughout this world, from providing safe drinking water to helping new businesses start up, from dealing with health care issues to establishing agricultural programs and fishery programs. I also want to commend the tremendous number of volunteers who were teachers and taught in schools throughout the world.

I would like to, as well, pay my respects to the Peace Corps volunteers who happened to serve in Fiji, where I served from 1968 to 1970, who now have completed their task. We have been in Fiji for 30 years, and this past August we bid farewell to our years of service in that beautiful country. The Peace Corps has finished its responsibilities in Fiji.

On August 22, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education and Technology, Taufa Vakatale, addressed the Peace Corps volunteers who were there and thanked them for their service. Mark Gearan, the director of the Peace Corps, was there as well. I would like to just read a portion of her comments to the volunteers in the closing ceremonies in Fiji.

She said:

The Peace Corps volunteers gave the local people in a new insight into the English language, with the variety of accents, pronunciation and spelling; they gave a new perception of what the white people or Europeans are really like. We learned they are down-to-earth ordinary people—not a class above locals.

She goes on to say: