

society despite our laws, ways which may not be as obvious as segregation, but are discrimination nonetheless.

We must acknowledge that America cannot rest on laurels of prosperity, but must continue to seek a prosperous equality. We can be non-violent in ways that are filled with respect and dignity for all.

Mr. Speaker, as this nation solemnly marks 30 years since the tragic and violent and untimely death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I urge my colleagues in the Congress to recommit ourselves to the struggle which Dr. King so personified and defined. I urge my colleagues in the Congress to share with me my appreciation of this great man and to work together to achieve his vision. The road to Dr. King's vision of peace is long and difficult. Let us not be daunted. Let us march together for freedom.

---

RETURN OF THE DEADLINE

**HON. BOB SCHAFFER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 1, 1998*

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, this month millions of Coloradans will begin the time-consuming and stressful task of preparing tax returns for the April 15th deadline. Considering the time, irritation, and inconvenience required to comply with our increasingly complicated federal tax code each year,

it's not surprising that some common synonyms for the word "tax" include: *demand, oppress, accuse, exhaust, and burden.*

Americans spend a combined 5½ billion hours each year working to comply with our current tax system. Meanwhile, the 114,000 employees of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are toiling too. They must in order to churn out the 8 billion pages of forms and instructions mailed to lucky recipients like you and me each January. And don't forget the trees. Over 300,000 trees are chopped down each year just to produce the paper for these riveting publications. Even the easiest form, the 1040EZ, has 33 pages of instructions—all in fine print.

Meanwhile, what do we have to show for our personal contributions of time, stress and inconvenience? A federal budget that amounts to more than \$1.7 trillion per year, and a federal debt surpassing \$5.5 trillion and gaining. If all that cash was going only to the essential functions of government—defending our borders, and providing those services that cannot be effectively left to individuals, States, groups, charities, or markets—we'd be in good shape. But in reality, much of this spending goes toward programs our government has no business providing, or all too often, is just plain squandered. Remember the "essential" expenditure of \$800,000 to study methane production in European cows, or the \$13,000 we spent to fly top Clinton officials an enduring 55 miles for a round of golf?

No, this is just plain wrong, and this is the very reason I came to Congress. Just weeks

ago I presented the taxpayers with a check for more than \$354,000 in unspent funds from my 1997 office budget—nearly 40 percent of my allotment. This is but a small example of how our government, can be doing much more work, for much less cash.

This is why I cosponsored and voted for three of the most important pieces of legislation in decades. The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, providing the first net tax cut in 16 years; the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, bringing our federal books in balance for the first time since 1969; and the IRS Restructuring Act, getting us one step closer to reining in one of the most abusive agencies in America, and setting us up to scrap the entire tax code in favor of one that is fairer, flatter, and simpler.

But we all have a role in making our government better and more responsive. Each and every one of us has the moral obligation to ensure our government is the leanest and most efficient service provider on Earth.

All Americans should keep in close touch with their elected officials—call them, write them, and e-mail them. Remind your public servants that you are watching their every move, and that the measure of their achievement depends upon the betterment of your life, and that of your family.

There is an old saying that government is a necessary evil. Let's just ensure that when we write those checks on April 15th, we are not buying more evil than we can handle.