

what has killed this issue time and time again in Congress. Avoid the extremes.

Let us concentrate on what we can agree on, the consensus, the common ground. And that resulted in this bill that was produced by this task force, but now has over 70 cosponsors, both Republicans and Democrats, both Liberals and Conservatives. It crosses the political spectrum. Not only is it fair, but it is an improvement in our system.

Now, it is not just a freshman bill. We have representatives all across the spectrum, every class that has sponsored this, that has joined in support of this. We need more support for this bill as it moves to the floor.

What does the bill do? First of all, I think it is very important to say that this is not a Republican leadership bill; it is not a Democrat bill. It is a bipartisan bill in process, in form and result, and I hope that we can continue that process as we move through the House.

This bill, first of all, bans the corporate money from the multinational corporations that comes in huge sums to our national political parties. It bans the contributions in the same form from the labor unions that go to the national political parties. So it is balanced in banning soft money to the national parties.

The second thing it does, besides reducing the influence of special interests, it increases the role of individuals in our campaign process. It increases their contribution limits. It says they should have a greater role in it. It reduces special interests, increases the role of individuals, and then it increases the role of the American public by giving them more information, more information on who is affecting the campaigns, how much money is being spent, what groups are spending that money. And that is the information that they need to make the correct decisions on campaigns, and who are trying to influence them.

It is a basic bill that is good campaign reform, that is true reform, and I am delighted to have an opportunity for it to come to the floor, subject to amendment, as we debate this issue.

So I think that we have come a long way. I look forward to the next 3 or 4 weeks as we debate ideas and we have disagreements; both on the Republican and Democrat side. But what would be more fair to the American public than to debate ideas on the floor of this House and let the majority rule govern? I think that is what democracy is about. That is what this institution is about.

I addressed some eighth graders over the break at Alma High School. They asked me some questions. One was, why did you want to go to Congress? The answer was to reduce cynicism and distrust of our institutions of government.

What we can do by having this full and fair debate is to increase confidence, to increase respect by the

American public, and we have done a great service. In addition, we have a good chance of passing meaningful reform, send it to the Senate, and let us see what they do.

PUTTING SECURITY BACK INTO SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on what my colleague from Mississippi was talking about, and that is the surplus.

As we all may know, theologians have a thing, a word, a concept, if you will, called original sin, and the idea is from original sin all other sins flow. And when Washington these days begins talking about the idea of surplus, it seems to me that that is the original sin in Washington, because I just have real questions about the idea of us really running a surplus.

I have got a question from the standpoint of accounting. I mean, in the President's budget that was sent up to the Congress, it listed in it a \$9.5 billion surplus, and yet the national debt would go up by \$176 billion. That is the equivalent of saying I am going to pay off \$95 on my credit card balance, but my credit card balance is going to go up by \$1,700.

Mathematically that is impossible, with the exception of anyplace but Washington, D.C. Because in Washington, D.C., if you were to break out the budget, what you would see is \$103.5 billion borrowed from Social Security, and as you add up the other trust fund borrowings, it comes to this \$176 billion number.

That number actually may be a little less than that because the surplus is supposed to be greater, but the point is that is not the way you do accounting back home in South Carolina, or Nevada, or Illinois, or anywhere else. That is not conventional accounting.

Too, I think the surplus is somewhat fictitious simply from the standpoint of economy. The \$225 billion that plugs the gap from where the Congress was and where the White House was built on the economy continuing to roll ahead, and I have serious reservations on it being able to continue to roll ahead.

The third way, I guess, I have questions on the sustainability of the surplus would be simply on the basis of what we send to Washington every year. We are at a post-World War II high in terms of the amount of money that people send in taxes to Washington, D.C.

This last year we hit 20.1 percent of GDP sent by hard-working Americans to Washington. Now, that was only met or exceeded basically at the height of World War II. In 1944, we hit 20.9 percent, and in 1945 we hit 20.4 percent of GDP. Other than that, it has been

below 20 percent consistently, which means it only takes people modifying their behavior just a little in terms of a spouse working a little bit less or in terms of a worker spending a little bit more time with the family to all of a sudden have us drop below the 20 percent figure.

If we did, the surpluses would go out the window.

What this means to me as we begin to talk about the issue of Social Security is how do we have security with Social Security? Because what is interesting to me about the Social Security debate, is the President in this very Chamber said at the State of the Union that we ought to reserve every dollar of surplus for Social Security, and yet, given the way the trains have been running in this town recently, it seems to me if \$50 or 60 billion comes to Washington, there is a good likelihood that that money will be spent. And if it is spent, it is not saved for Social Security.

So I think that one of the things we really ought to begin looking at is the idea of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH) of Social Security Plus. Quite simply, that would be taking the surplus money, rebating it back to everybody that pays Social Security taxes, and then letting them put that money in their own Social Security Plus account.

The advantage for me of that idea is that by having it in your own account, and we are not talking about a lot of money, about \$500, based on the size of the surplus in your account each year, and over the next 6 years, that would be \$3,000. But by having that money in your account, Washington cannot reach in and borrow that money.

I think we really need to begin looking at that kind of security when we talk about the word "Social Security" if we are serious about, A, having every dollar of surplus go toward Social Security, and, B, on the whole concept of protecting Social Security.

STATE OF MILITARY PREPAREDNESS IN AMERICA

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, we are getting closer and closer to the anniversary of the invasion of South Korea, and I reflected back the other day when I was at my aunt and uncle's house in Fort Worth, Texas, because on one of their dressers they have a photograph of a young marine; his name was Son Stilwell, a Marine Lieutenant killed in Korea, one of the 50,000-some casualties KIA that we suffered in that conflict.

I reflected on that this pending anniversary. We are on the eve of when I listened to our Secretary of Defense and President Clinton's defense leaders as they presented a declining defense budget to the U.S. Congress.