Now we have to ask ourselves, why is that? Why did the President's budget only get two votes in the House and two votes in the Senate? I think that once the smoke had cleared and the dust had settled, it became clear that the charade was over.

Maybe it is because the President spends the Social Security surplus in his budget, maybe it is because the President's budget raises taxes by $172 billion. Maybe it is because in the President's budget there was no funding for priorities that he mentioned in his State of the Union address, priorities that rolled out like they were never going to end, like agriculture, and he did not put any money in his budget for important priorities like reforming the crop insurance program.

Maybe there were only two votes in the House today on the President's budget because the President cuts Medicare. In spite of all the rhetoric about saving Medicare and putting aside 15 percent, the President's budget cut Medicare by about $10 million.

Maybe it was because the President's budget busted the budget caps. I mean it could be any of those reasons, but the fact of the matter is that when all the posturing was done in this Chamber and all the lofty rhetoric was put aside, it came time to vote, nobody was there to vote in favor of the President's budget.

So we rolled out an alternative, the Republican budget plan, today, and already for weeks our friends on the other side, the Democrats, have been assailing that budget. But then, as my colleagues know, the rhetoric started to tone down a little bit because they looked at it, and they said: ''Well, you know we want to attack the Republican budget for Social Security,'' and then they realized that we were locking up, walling off the Social Security Trust Fund, making sure that all the payroll tax was actually going into the trust fund where it should. And then they thought, well maybe we can attack the Republicans again on Medicare because they did not fall for the President's percentages game and say, well, we are going to do 15 percent here and 62 percent here, and 20 percent here, 10 percent here. But then they realized that by locking up the payroll tax the Republican budget puts aside more money for Social Security and Medicare than the President's budget.

So, that issue is off the table, and the fact of the matter is they could not attack, they want to attack for the veterans budget, but the Republican budget actually funded veterans at $1 billion more than the President's budget. It funded agriculture at $6 billion more than the President's budget.

So then it was the old traditional line about it is tax cuts for the rich. Well, as my colleagues know, if we look at the budget, there are not any tax cuts specified in there. Yes, we believe that we ought to have a debate. Once we have walled off Social Security and taken care of that program and Medicare, and there is $800 billion projected over the next 10 years that comes in over and above that, then we believe we ought to engage in debate in this city about whether or not to give that back to the American people or whether to spend it here in Washington. But we will have that debate when and if the time comes. But in the meantime we need to do the responsible thing and the honest thing, and that is to wall off Social Security and make sure that it is there for the next generation of Americans.

In fact, I want to read something here that AARP, Mr. Horace Deets, the Executive Director of AARP, said about the Republican budget plan. It says: ''AARP believes it is important to protect Social Security's growing reserves and is pleased that the House budget resolution provides that protection. Over the next 10 years, Social Security is projected to contribute $1.8 trillion of the unified surplus. Preserving Social Security's reserves not only allows our country to better prepare for the impending retirement of the baby boom generation, but also gives us greater financial flexibility to enact long-term reform in both Social Security and Medicare once the options have been carefully considered and their impact understood.''

That is from the AARP, and what I would simply say to the American people here this evening is:

''When you listen to all this rhetoric over the course of the next few months, who are you going to trust to solve these problems, Social Security and Medicare? Are you going to trust the people who are going to be honest with you and say that we are going to put the payroll tax, Social Security and Medicare, aside where it should be walled off to be used for those purposes, or are you going to trust the people who want to keep raiding it like we have in the past?''

I think the American people are wise, I think the Americans in this country who are currently benefiting from Social Security and Medicare have figured this out, and I have one simple message for them this evening, and that is:

Do not buy the lie. We have heard it before, we are going to hear it again. Work with us in a constructive way to build a better future for the 21st century.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to the opportunity, when we get past all the posturing and all the rhetoric, to work with my colleagues on the other side to come up with a budget that takes care of these important priorities.

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

(Mr. BILIRAKIS 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 Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTIERREZ 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 California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM 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 California (Mr. BECERRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BECERRA 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 Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan 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 California (Mr. BERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BERMAN 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 Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NETHERCUTT 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. PELOSI addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks).

TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE FAIR TAXATION ACT OF 1999

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

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce important legislation to provide tax fairness for thousands of hard-working Americans throughout this Nation who are employed by interstate water carriers. I am talking about river boat pilots, I am talking about men and women who work on barges, and I am talking about