

ballistic missile arsenal. The stolen information also includes classified design information for enhanced radiation weapons, commonly known as the neutron bomb, which neither the United States nor any other Nation has yet deployed. The People's Republic of China has obtained classified information on the following United States thermonuclear warheads, as well as a number of associated reentry vehicles, the hardened shell that protects the thermonuclear warhead during reentry."

Might I add, this Cox Committee was a bipartisan committee, Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives, and clearly demonstrates, for example:

"The People's Republic of China has stolen United States design information and other classified information for neutron bomb warheads. China has stolen classified U.S. information about the neutron bomb from a U.S. national weapons laboratory. The United States learned of the theft of this classified information on the neutron bomb in 1996," and practically nothing was done.

"The Select Committee judges that if the People's Republic of China were successful in stealing nuclear test codes, computer models and data from the United States, it could further accelerate its nuclear development. By using such stolen codes and data in conjunction with the high performance computers already acquired by the People's Republic of China, the PRC could diminish its needs for further nuclear testing to evaluate weapons and proposed design changes."

The small warheads that we talk about, multiple warheads, will make it possible for the People's Republic of China to develop and deploy missiles with multiple reentry vehicles. Multiple reentry vehicles increase the effectiveness of a ballistic missile force by multiplying the number of warheads, and a single missile can carry as many as tenfold.

Multiple reentry vehicles also can help to counter missile defenses. For example, multiple reentry vehicles make it easier for the People's Republic of China to deploy penetration aids with its ICBM warheads in order to defeat antimissile defenses.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the People's Republic of China had only one or two silo-based ICBMs capable of attacking, attacking the United States. Since then, the People's Republic of China has deployed up to two dozen additional silo-based ICBMs capable of attacking the United States. That is 24 additional silo-based ICBMs; has upgraded its silo-based missiles and has continued development of three mobile ICBM systems and associated modern thermonuclear warheads, something they never had.

Even though the United States discovered in 1995, in 1995, that is almost four years ago, that the People's Republic of China had stolen design infor-

mation on the W-88 Trident D-5 warhead and technical information on a number of U.S. thermonuclear warheads, the White House has informed in response to specific interrogatories propounded by the committee that the President was not briefed about the counterintelligence failures until 1998.

Madam Speaker, this is just a disgrace, and unless something happens, we should not be here today discussing anything else until our national security is protected.

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.)

WHY I BECAME A REPUBLICAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. FOWLER. Madam Speaker, I became a Republican because of the party's long-held principles. The Republican Party was founded on two fundamental issues: free land and abolishing slavery. Since that day, the party embraced the role of leader and never shied away from taking the challenge of taking an unpopular and difficult stance. From striving successfully to abolishing slavery to being the vanguard in the struggle for women's right to vote, the Republican Party has constantly forced all Americans to re-evaluate the role of individuals and the role of the government.

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The Republican party has always believed in individuals. We have an abiding faith in the idea that individuals and local communities can accomplish more than a distant Federal Government, a government that tends to become large, bloated, and wasteful, as ours has.

As the great Republican statesman, Abraham Lincoln, said, "The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves in their separate and individual capacities. In all that people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere."

There is an important role for the government. Imagine an individual trying to build a freeway alone. But it is a role that should be limited.

Republicans believe the most effective government is closest to the people. After all, who knows more about educating our children, us and our child's teacher, or a distant bureaucracy across the country in Washington, D.C.?

I chose the Republican party because I believe that each American citizen

can be trusted. I believe that they know best and that they will make the best decision for themselves, and they will make the wisest choices. Whether it is how to spend their hard-earned money or how to spend their time, they should be in charge.

The Republican party's economic policies of lower taxes and less government have reduced interest rates and sent the stock market soaring, yet inflation has remained stable. Thanks to these smart policies, every one of us is enjoying the largest sustained peacetime expansion ever.

Our commonsense agenda and leadership has produced a healthy and strong economy. Job opportunities have increased significantly, unemployment is down, the budget is balanced, and because of our welfare reform, tens of thousands have moved from the welfare rolls to the payrolls.

I have to say, while I firmly believe that all issues are women's issues, and I resist the popular tendency to view women as a monolithic group in politics or anything else, I still must emphasize the Republican party's accomplishments with regard to women in politics.

I want to take Members back to 1896, when it was the Republican party who became the first major party to officially favor Women's Suffrage. That year Senator A.A. Sargent, a Republican from California, introduced a proposal in the Senate to give women the right to vote. It was defeated four times by a Democratic Senate, and it was not until the Republicans would gain control of Congress that it was finally passed in May of 1919.

The first woman to serve in Congress was a Republican, Jeanette Rankin of Montana.

In 1940, the Republican party became the first major political party to endorse an Equal Rights Amendment for women in its platform.

In 1953, Republican President Eisenhower appointed the first woman Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the first woman ambassador to a major power.

In 1964, Republicans were the first major American party to nominate a woman for president, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine.

In 1981, Republican President Reagan appointed the first woman Supreme Court Justice and the first woman U.S. representative to the United Nations.

In 1983, Republican President Reagan had three women serving concurrently in his cabinet, the first time in the history of this country.

Currently, Republican women chair a record seven House subcommittees and three Senate subcommittees. I serve as a deputy majority whip, along with two other women, and as a newly elected Vice Chairman of the Republican conference, I am now the highest ranking woman in the House elected leadership. The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. DEBORAH PRYCE) serves as Conference Secretary.

In the 106th Congress, Democrats have no woman in their elected leadership.

We are working hard to ensure that each American has a safe, secure, and positive future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. KELLY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I am a Republican woman Member of the House, and I want to associate myself with the comments made by my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER).

But tonight I want to address this body with regard to something that is nonpartisan that requires bipartisan support, and that is asthma awareness.

This is Asthma Awareness Month, and I want to focus attention on the asthma epidemic in our country today. This is an epidemic that cannot be cured, but through better education and awareness, it can be a manageable part of one's life.

More than 14 million people in the United States have asthma, and of these, almost 5 million are children. One in every three children with asthma had to go to an emergency room because of an asthma attack in the past year.

Asthma is a problem among all races, but the asthma death rate and hospitalization rate for African Americans are three times the rate of white Americans. Asthma is a serious lung disease. Forty-one percent of all asthma patients, an estimated 6 million Americans, were hospitalized, treated in emergency rooms, or required other urgent care for asthma in the last year.

Madam Speaker, this Nation is falling far short of meeting new government guidelines for asthma care. Failure to meet these basic guidelines means that a generally controllable disease quickly spirals out of control. Asthma cannot be cured. Having asthma is a part of one's life. However, with proper medical care, one can control one's asthma and become free of symptoms most of the time.

But asthma does not go away. We must renew our commitment to our national goals for asthma care, goals established by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health.

These goals include:

No missed school or work because of asthma. Forty-nine percent of children with asthma and 25 percent of adults

with asthma missed school or work due to asthma last year;

No missed sleep because of asthma. Almost one in three asthma patients, 30 percent, is awakened with breathing problems at least once a week;

Maintain normal activity levels. Forty-eight percent say that asthma limits their ability to take part in sports and recreation, 36 percent say it limits their normal physical exertion, and 25 percent say it interferes with social activities.

All too often the severity of asthma is ignored or goes undiagnosed. When this happens, adults as well as children find themselves rushing to the hospital and many times having to give up activities they love. They do not understand how treatable asthma is. We must increase awareness, education, and most of all, communication on how to best control the disease and how to control those things that make asthma worse.

Proper asthma care is crucial. America needs better asthma education and treatment, and especially in the hardest hit inner cities. We must all work together as parents, teachers, and public officials to ensure that all Americans, especially our children, have a basic knowledge and understanding of how to diagnose and how to control asthma before it becomes a life-threatening condition. We should do no less.

A CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE, AND THE NEED FOR BUDGET REFORM

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

Mr. THUNE. Madam Speaker, agriculture is in incredible crisis. Earlier today we voted on a number of amendments to the agricultural appropriations bill, and the bill funds programs that are very important to my constituency, programs that provide credit, dollars for conservation, income support for our farmers and ranchers.

For that reason, I have been very frustrated as I have watched this process and the tactics that have been employed here on the floor to try and slow this process down. It is a bill that is important to me, it is important to those I serve, and so I would hope that we can move this bill forward in a timely way.

Even though the spending does not take effect until October 1, the next fiscal year, we need to get these appropriation bills done. It is the work that the American people sent us here to do.

I appreciate what the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is trying to do. I do not believe he is taking issue with the agriculture bill itself, with the spending in the agriculture bill, as much as he is with the process by which we accomplish our work here.

On that point, I believe he happens to be right. We need budget process reform here in Washington. This process is an embarrassment to the people of

this country. It is an embarrassment to me, and it ought to be an embarrassment to every Member who serves here in the House or in the Senate.

There is a bias in the budget process toward higher spending. I want Members to think about what the current budget process has given us. We have \$5.5 trillion in debt, or \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in America today.

In fact, people have a hard time grasping what \$1 trillion is. We are \$5.5 trillion in debt. If you started a business on the day that Christ was born and lost \$1 million every day, every day up until the present, you would not even have lost \$1 trillion. We are \$5.5 trillion in debt. That is what this budget process has gotten us.

The other thing it has gotten us is a \$1.7 trillion annual budget because of a Washington gimmick known as baseline budgeting, where every year we have increases that are built into the budget. Nobody else in America has to get the budget that way, but here in Washington, that is what we do.

The tax burden in this country is at the highest level since any time since 1945, where every American essentially works 2 hours and 51 minutes of every working day just to pay the cost of government.

Last fall we had a debate here as we got to the end of the year, and of course, as usual, we had not done our work. We had not completed the appropriations process, so everything was wrapped into this huge omnibus continuing resolution which was some \$600 billion, a bill most of us had not even seen, let alone read, done in the middle of the night with a handful of people, and we are asked to vote on it.

This is a process which begs and cries out for reform. We are the guardians here of the public trust in Washington. This is a national tragedy. The American people ought to get engaged on this issue, because there is nothing that we could do that would more fundamentally change the way Washington operates and the way the taxpayer dollars are spent than for us to reform the budget process.

The American people need to be engaged, because it is their money we are talking about. We go about it with the process that we have in place today, and frankly could make the argument that if we had the political courage to make the hard decisions we could get it down, and we could.

But the fact of the matter is that the process lends itself to the very worst instincts I think of all of us here in Washington. There is a bias towards higher spending.

There is a proposal on the table this year to reform the budget process. The gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), this is a bipartisan bill, and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) have come up with a proposal to reform the budget process. Last year I was a cosponsor of the bill of the gentleman from California (Mr. CHRIS COX) that would do the same thing.