

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, it would have been amusing the last few weeks if it had not been so sad listening to our Republican colleagues swearing to protect social security. This charade continues, despite the fact that the Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that the Republicans have already spent \$17 billion of the social security surplus.

Remember, that \$17 billion loan does not include the Republicans' \$1 trillion tax cut. It does, however, include Senator TRENT LOTT's ship that the Navy does not need, does not want, and does not have the people to man if they had it.

It does include over \$1 million to study the spruce bark beetle. In fact, according to the CBO, if the President had not vetoed the tax bill, we would have already raided the social security trust fund by at least \$70 billion, without counting any of the other billions and billions and billions that my spendthrift Republican colleagues have passed this year.

With all this spending and all this borrowing, how can my Republican colleagues get up here with a straight face and say they are saving social security? The American people know better.

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THE WORLD REMAINS A DANGEROUS PLACE, AND THE PRESIDENT REFUSES TO ABIDE BY THE WILL OF CONGRESS

(Mr. VITTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to be amazed by the lax defense policies of this administration. Today our Navy has more than 200 fewer ships than during Desert Storm. Red China has six times our land forces and North Korea has developed a missile that delivers weapons of mass destruction to U.S. territory, and now the Clinton administration says it will ignore the vote of the Senate, abide by the rejected test ban treaty, just as they ignored H.R. 4 that calls for a missile defense.

Despite the fall of the Soviet Union, the world remains a dangerous place. Yet under President Clinton the will of the Congress is ignored and defense spending has not even kept pace with inflation. We must insist that the President follow the will of the Congress regarding national defense; modernize our weaponry and above all, above all, increase pay and benefits so that no soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines have to rely on food stamps to feed their families.

WE MAY LOSE HMO REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). For what purpose does the gen-

tleman from Arkansas seek recognition?

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am from Texas.

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to follow my colleague, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) because they are the ones that wanted to cut defense spending by 1 percent last week.

What I am here today about concerns what we are seeing that is happening. Despite a strong bipartisan vote in favor of HMO reform, the overwhelming and public support across the country, the leadership has shown it is still looking for a way to cut and eliminate real HMO reform.

The Republican leadership scheduled a bill that automatically linked to it a Patients' Bill of Rights, supposedly their patient access, but the House spoke by a bipartisan vote and passed a bipartisan measure for real HMO reform. Now we see the Republicans have stacked the conference committee with only one Member who voted for the bill, only one Member.

What is so sad is that they are overruling the whole majority in this House. Clearly, our fight for HMO reform is just beginning. We may have won the first battle but we have a big battle to go. By appointing only those Members who oppose it, they want to bury it again. They are neglecting the American people by a large majority, and this House, by a large majority, wants binding external appeals. They want open communication with our doctors and patients. They want accountability to whoever makes those medical decisions.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair wishes to apologize to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) and to the people of Texas.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. ARMY COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR RONALD W. BEDFORD, A REAL AMERICAN HERO

(Mr. EVERETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) that this Republican Congress has added about \$38 billion more than the President of the United States has requested for defense, but I would like to speak on something else.

Mr. Speaker, our society has cheapened the name of heroes today by elevating millionaire movie, music and sports stars while ignoring those Americans who perform unselfish acts of courage and sacrifice.

I wish to pay tribute to an American whose character and actions are truly unselfish acts of courage and sacrifice. On September 2, the 54th anniversary of VJ-Day, U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Ronald W. Bedford began a 1,500-mile journey from Mobile, Alabama, to Washington, D.C.

His walk, which takes him through six States and the District of Columbia, is remarkable because it is entirely on foot. But CSM Bedford is not walking this enormous distance to set any record. Instead, he is striding the 71-day route to bring attention to and raise funding for the construction of a national memorial to honor America's greatest generation of heroes, those who fought in World War II.

Bedford, an ex-airborne infantryman now stationed at Fort Rucker, Alabama in my congressional district, came up with the idea of the walk after learning that there was no national memorial for the 16 million Americans who served and sacrificed to liberate the world from Nazi and Japanese occupation in World War II. His efforts to help raise money for the on-going World War II Memorial fund have gained the support of the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, and the praise of former Senator Bob Dole, who chairs the World War II Memorial Committee.

CSM Bedford's journey of 2,792,000 steps will take him through 144 cities and 15 military installations before he arrives at Arlington National Cemetery on November 11. From there, he will cross Memorial Bridge, pass by the Lincoln Memorial, and then proceed to the spot on the national mall where the World War II Memorial will be built next year.

I salute the Sargent Major for his personal sacrifice and welcome him to Washington, D.C.

NO MORE DEADBEAT LEADERSHIP

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership was irresponsible in trying to spend the surplus on \$800 billion worth of tax breaks for the wealthiest in this country. Now it is trying to skip town without addressing the needs of American families.

The failures of this Republican leadership are many. Their budget does not extend the life of Social Security by a single day. It fails to strengthen Medicare with not even a penny to provide for a prescription drug benefit for seniors who are desperately looking for that kind of a benefit. The Republican leadership has ignored American families. Families overwhelmingly support common sense gun safety, laws that keep firearms out of the hands of kids and of criminals.

The Republican leadership has allowed the special interests to write our gun laws. Common sense should be applied when it comes to the safety of our schools, of our neighborhoods, of office buildings and places of worship. This Congress should not adjourn without closing the loopholes that let guns fall