payments which currently consume hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each and every year. Anyone who has a credit card knows, as long as you are only paying for the interest charges, you will never dig yourself out of the hold and can only find yourself at best treading water, and at worst sinking in to a quagmire of red ink. Thanks to decades of Democratically-controlled Congresses, America has been in the red for far too long. By dedicating these funds to paying down the debt, we will not only reach our goal to eliminate the public debt by 2013, we will also be able to continue to cut taxes to further relieve American workers of the heavy tax burden they bear and even increase savings. In addition, lowering the federal debt will also relieve the debt's upward pressure on interest rates, which means cheaper car loans, school loans, mortgage loans, and even home improvement loans for hardworking American families.

To be frank, Congress also needs this debt reduction legislation to remove the temptation to spend any unexpected budget surpluses. Let's face it folks, Washington is not known for keeping their hands out of the cookie jar. It's time to get the chain and padlock and secure these funds out of temptation's way and keep ourselves, and those who follow us here in Congress and in the White House, on this hard-fought road to fiscal responsibility.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this much needed legislation, and encourage an enthusiastic ''yes'' vote on H.R. 4601.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, deficit spending has run rampant for too long. The federal debt has ballooned to nearly $6 trillion. With this legislation for the first time since 1917 we are reversing this trend.

Uncle Sam will actually begin to pay off our $6 trillion credit card bill. Paying off our huge debt should be a top priority, not an afterthought.

Under current law, any money left over at the end of the year is used to reduce the debt. This bill makes debt reduction a priority by setting aside the money up front.

Reducing the public debt is good for the country. It increases national saving and makes it more likely that the economy will continue growing strong. American families benefit through lower interest rates on mortgages and other loans, more jobs, better wages, and ultimately higher living standards.

Reducing the public debt strengthens the government's fiscal position by reducing interest costs and promoting economic growth. This makes it easier for the government to afford its future budget obligations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4601, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1415

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE LOCK-BOX ACT OF 2000

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3859) to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to protect Social Security and Medicare surpluses through strengthened budgetary enforcement mechanisms, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3859

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000''.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to—

(1) ensure that social security trust fund surpluses shall be used to pay down the debt held by the public until social security reform legislation is enacted; and

(2) ensure that the projected surplus of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund shall be used to pay down the debt held by the public until medicare reform legislation is enacted.

SEC. 3. PROTECTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUSES.

(a) POINTS OF ORDER TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUSES.—Section 312 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) POINTS OF ORDER TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUSES.—

''(1) CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS ON THE BUDGET.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any concurrent resolution on the budget, or conference report thereon or amendment thereto, that would set forth an on-budget deficit for any fiscal year.

''(2) SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATION.—Except as provided by paragraph (3), it shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report if—

''(A) the enactment of that bill or resolution as reported;

''(B) the adoption and enactment of that amendment; or

''(C) the enactment of that bill or resolution in the form recommended in that conference report,

would cause or increase an on-budget deficit for any fiscal year.

''(3) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (2) shall not apply to social security reform legislation as defined by section 7(1) of the Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000.

''(4) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term 'on-budget deficit', when applied to a fiscal year, means the deficit in the budget as set forth in the most recently agreed to concurrent resolution on the budget pursuant to section 301(a)(3) for that fiscal year.''.

(b) CONTENT OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET.—Section 301(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by redesignating paragraphs (6) and (7) as paragraphs (7) and (8), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) the receipts, outlays, and surplus or deficit in the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund, combined, established by title II of the Social Security Act;''.

(c) SUPER MAJORITY REQUIREMENT.—(1) Section 904(c)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by inserting ''312(g),'' after ''310(d)(2),''.

(2) Section 904(d)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by inserting ''312(g),'' after ''310(d)(2),''.

SEC. 4. PROTECTION OF MEDICARE SURPLUSES.

(a) POINTS OF ORDER TO PROTECT MEDICARE SURPLUSES.—Section 312 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (as amended by section 3) is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) POINTS OF ORDER TO PROTECT MEDICARE SURPLUSES.—

''(1) CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS ON THE BUDGET.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any concurrent resolution on the budget, or conference report thereon or amendment thereto, that would set forth an on-budget surplus for any fiscal year that is less than the projected surplus of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for that fiscal year (as assumed in that resolution).

''(2) SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATION.—Except as provided by paragraph (3), it shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report if—

''(A) the enactment of that bill or resolution as reported;

''(B) the adoption and enactment of that amendment; or

''(C) the enactment of that bill or resolution in the form recommended in that conference report,

would cause the on-budget surplus for any fiscal year to be less than the projected surplus of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund (as assumed in the most recently agreed to concurrent resolution on the budget) for that fiscal year or increase the amount by which the on-budget surplus for any fiscal year would be less than such trust fund surplus for that fiscal year.

''(3) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (2) shall not apply to medicare reform legislation as defined by section 7(2) of the Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000.

''(4) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term 'on-budget surplus', when applied to a fiscal year, means the surplus in the budget as set forth in the most recently agreed to concurrent resolution on the budget pursuant to section 301(a)(3) for that fiscal year.''.

(b) SUPER MAJORITY REQUIREMENT.—

(1) POINT OF ORDER.—Section 904(c)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (as amended by section 3) is further amended by inserting ''312(h),'' after ''312(g),''.

(2) WAIVER.—Section 904(d)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (as amended by section 3) is further amended by inserting ''312(h),'' after ''312(g),''.

SEC. 5. REMOVING SOCIAL SECURITY FROM BUDGET PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any official statement issued by the Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Budget Office, or any other agency or instrumentality of the Federal Government of surplus or deficit totals of the budget of the United States Government as submitted by the President or of the surplus or deficit totals of the congressional budget, and any description of, or reference to, such totals in any official publication or material issued by either of such Offices or any other such agency or instrumentality, shall exclude the outlays and receipts of the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program under title II of the Social Security Act (including the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund)

and the related provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(b) SEPARATE SOCIAL SECURITY BUDGET DOCUMENTS.—The excluded outlays and receipts of the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program under title II of the Social Security Act shall be submitted in separate Social Security budget documents.

SEC. 6. PROTECTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE SURPLUSES.

(a) SOCIAL SECURITY.—(1) Chapter 11 of subtitle II of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding before section 1101 the following:

"§ 1100. Protection of social security surpluses

''The budget of the United States Government submitted by the President under this chapter shall not recommend an on-budget deficit for any fiscal year covered by that budget unless it includes proposed legislative language for social security reform legislation as defined by section 7(1) of the Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000.''.

(2) The chapter analysis for chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the item relating to section 1101 the following:

''1100. Protection of Social Security Surpluses.''.

(b) MEDICARE.—(1) Chapter 11 of subtitle II of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 1100 the following:

"§ 1100A. Protection of medicare surpluses

''The budget of the United States Government submitted by the President under this chapter shall not recommend an on-budget surplus for any fiscal year that is less than the projected surplus of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for that fiscal year unless it includes proposed legislative language for medicare reform legislation as defined by section 7(2) of the Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000 or social security reform legislation as defined by section 7(1) of that Act.''.

(2) CHAPTER ANALYSIS.—The chapter analysis for chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1100 the following:

''1100A. Protection of Medicare Surpluses.''.

SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act:

(1) SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM LEGISLATION.—The term ''social security reform legislation'' means a bill or a joint resolution to save social security and includes a provision stating the following: ''For purposes of the Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000, this Act constitutes social security reform legislation to save social security.''.

(2) MEDICARE REFORM LEGISLATION.—The term ''medicare reform legislation'' means a bill or a joint resolution to save Medicare and includes a provision stating the following: ''For purposes of the Social Security and Medicare Lock-box Act of 2000, this Act constitutes medicare reform legislation to save medicare.''.

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act shall take effect upon the date of its enactment and the amendments made by this Act shall apply to fiscal year 2001 and subsequent fiscal years.

(b) EXPIRATION.—(1) Sections 301(a)(6) and 312(g) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 shall expire upon the enactment of social security reform legislation.

(2) Section 312(h) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 shall expire upon the enactment of medicare reform legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3859.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years, surplus dollars in the Social Security Trust Fund were raided and spent on unrelated programs. Last year, this Congress took the first step towards stopping the raid on Social Security bypassing legislation I introduced, the Social Security lock box, by an overwhelming 416 to 12 vote. Our efforts paid off, and last year, not one penny of the $124 billion Social Security surplus was spent.

But Social Security is not the only trust fund to be raided over the years. Over the next 5 years, taxpayers will pay an estimated $126 billion more into the Medicare trust fund part A which pays for in-patient hospital care than will be taken out for Medicare expenses. Without a Medicare lock box, those surpluses will be spent.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to raise the bar and protect Medicare. The 40 million seniors and disabled in this Nation that depend on Medicare deserve to know that their Medicare money is not being spent on anything else.

In March, I introduced the Medicare lock Box we are debating today. Through a point of order, this Medicare lock box prohibits the consideration of any legislation that spends any of the Medicare part A surplus. The Medicare lock box also prevents Medicare surpluses from being intermingled with the rest of the budget. Additionally, under this measure the protected Medicare surpluses will go towards paying down public debt, accelerating our efforts to pay off the public debt by 2013.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a win-win. It is a win for fiscal discipline, it is a win for fairness in budgeting and, most importantly, it is a win-win for our seniors.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for our seniors and vote for the Medicare lock box.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, last week, the Vice President introduced the idea of taking the Medicare part A Hospital Insurance Trust Fund off budget, putting it off budget completely. There was no such plan on the other side. Their budget resolution, which they pushed through 2 months ago, used all of the projected surpluses, including the Medicare surplus for tax cuts and a few program increases. To the extent that anyone deserves credit here, I think we should say the Vice President has initiated an idea which the Republican majority is today embracing, but in a different form. They do not go as far as he proposes.

The version of this bill that is before us now was not drafted until last night. It was not introduced or referred to the Committee on Budget, which has jurisdiction. Section 306 of the Budget Act gives us jurisdiction specifically over this kind of legislation. We have not held hearings, we have not taken testimony, and our debate is limited to 40 minutes without any amendments in order.

For that reason, I would like to put some questions to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), who is the sponsor of the bill, if he would answer them for clarification and for legislative history.

Why does the gentleman propose not to take the Medicare part A Trust Fund off budget as the Vice President proposed? Why has the gentleman elected not to take it off budget and have a clean separation between it and the rest of the budget?

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SPRATT. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, my original bill actually did take it off budget. That is what I would like to see done eventually. However, as the gentleman knows, I did pass legislation last year, which I believe the gentleman supported, on taking Social Security off budget which we cannot even get out of the Senate, which the Vice President seems to be opposing his President on over there. So what we are doing is taking it one step at a time.

I might mention that even though it passed here overwhelmingly, and even though the Vice President, who brought this out 2 weeks ago, and I congratulated him, I authored it last March, it is better to come late than not come at all, and I am glad he is joining us.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the gentleman begs the question. If this is what we did with Social Security in order to protect it, why not do the same with Medicare? Has the gentleman made a compromise?

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, why do we not pass this first, and then we will do it next year.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, section 3(b) of the gentleman's bill adds a new requirement to the congressional budget resolution. It requires the resolution to show receipts, outlays, and surpluses of deficits in the Old Age and Survivors, OASDI Social Security Trust Fund. This is a new requirement, for since 1991, budget resolutions have excluded Social Security. Why does the

gentleman now require budget resolutions to show the Social Security surplus when, for a decade, they have been prohibited from showing the Social Security surplus?

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will again yield, I believe we need to do that, because as the gentleman knows, during the years that the Democrats controlled this House for over 40 years that these surpluses were spent, they were counted as part of the ongoing budget. So the intention is to separate them, to actually determine what is being spent and what is not being spent, so that we can hold each of our Members, 435 here in the House and 100 in the Senate, responsible if they vote for spending that goes into that. That is why we want it separate.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the gentleman is not separating them. That is just the point. By putting them back in the budget, the gentleman is undercutting the whole idea of having Social Security off budget. It boggles my mind why the gentleman would want to do that, when the idea is to separate these accounts and treat them differently from the ordinary accounts of the budget.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SPRATT. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I believe it was 1985 that we passed the law to take Social Security off budget; and as everybody is aware, even with that designation, we continued to spend the Social Security surplus. So it would seem to me, I would say to the gentleman, it is not how the gentleman might construct it where we put these numbers, but it is the final decision whether we spend the money or not.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the problem we have is that section 3(b) requires that the congressional budget resolution show receipts, outlays, and surpluses in the OASDI trust fund, while section 5 prohibits it. Am I correct? I had to ask staff to make sure I am correctly interpreting that. Why the contradiction? Is this a result of midnight compromises made on how this bill was to be drafted?

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further to me, again, looking back since 1935, almost all of those years were controlled by the Democrats. These were, number one, being spent and were included as part of the budget.

My ultimate goal is to do as we did last year with Social Security and take it completely off budget. My concern is, because of opposition on the gentleman's side and the fact that the Vice President evidently, and Senator DASCHLE, a Democrat from South Dakota, are not allowing us to vote on it over there, we thought we would take it one step at a time.

The first step would be that at least we were not going to count it, that it would be secluded, that we would see the number and it would have to be reported as a separate number, taking that as a half a loaf, and then come back next year, which I can assure the gentleman I am going to do, and go with the rest of the loaf to make sure it is completely off budget.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, just to say in conclusion that we will take the whole loaf. If the gentleman wants to go with setting it off completely, we will vote for that; and we do not understand why the gentleman has not gone that far.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Members are reminded that they should not criticize positions of Members of the other body during the debate.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What our goal is, since 1935, we have been spending both Social Security and the Medicare part of Social Security on ongoing programs. I am very grateful that we have a bipartisan bill here, we have Members of the other party; and I am very grateful for the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), who has been working with us on our last bill last year and this one this year; and the goal is that we not spend it, and that is what we are attempting to do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH), who has spent many, many hours working on Social Security; and I appreciate the gentleman's efforts.

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is a good start. We need to remind ourselves that simply not spending the money does not fix the solvency problem of Social Security or fix the solvency problem of Medicare. Mostly because of demographics, the actuaries have determined that both of these programs are going broke, the challenge is, where do we get that money to keep the commitment we have made to seniors that those promised benefits are going to be there.

I think all Members can support this kind of legislation that encourages not spending any of the Social Security or Medicare surplus money on other government programs. This commitment is going to help some with the huge problem of keeping Social Security and Medicare solvent.

I was hoping in this presidential election that we could come debate real specifics in terms of how we are going to save Social Security and Medicare. Sadly, it would be demagogued because it is so easy to scare the seniors that depend on these programs. This President, I think, had a unique opportunity to lead us, in the last three years to keep Social Security solvent forever. That did not happen, and now we are hoping that the next President will do that. I congratulate the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for moving us ahead, at least in the effort to encourage this Congress to have some fiscal responsibility, fiscal discipline, of not using the Social Security surplus or the H I trust fund surplus for either tax cuts or for spending on other government programs. That is good.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, I have introduced legislation that provides a sequester if we were to use either of these trust fund surpluses for either of those purposes. So anybody that would like to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 4694, I welcome their cosponsorship. Let us pass Mr. HERGER's bill. Let us make it unanimous, and let us have the courage and fiscal discipline we need to save these two important programs.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, it is always fun to come out here on press release day and to see what the majority has got in mind for press releases for the weekend.

As I look at this, this is a bill that reminds me of an automobile. I remember there was an automobile called the Pinto, and it was out there and it kept exploding and burning and people got in a terrible mess, so they had a recall.

□ 1430

Now, this is a recalled bill, because the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) passed the bill last year to protect social security. By George, we passed it 414 or whatever it was out of here. Now here we are back fixing it.

What was the matter with the one we did last year? Was it the fact that they left out Medicare, and the Vice President said that we ought to take Medicare off-budget, too, like the President said in his State of the Union message? Was it those issues that finally lead to, well, as soon as the Vice President said it, the next thing we know we have this bill here? It is the history of this bill.

I think, Mr. Speaker, and I am really serious about this, the reason this is a pretend Congress is because nobody on the gentleman's side takes this Congress seriously and its procedures when we have a bill introduced and it never has a hearing, never has a hearing, no testimony whatsoever, and then suddenly the Committee on Rules meets all by itself and they pop a bill out that is not even the one that was introduced into the Congress, so it has had no hearings in the Committee on the Budget, who is going to have to work with us in the future.

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and I have sat there and watched this process, and this is going to make it even worse because we are having bills introduced affecting that committee by members of the Committee on Rules who apparently, I do not know, they must have had some

revelation come down from heaven in the dark of the night that this was the bill.

The Congressional Budget Act prohibits that, specifically prohibits bills being considered on the floor of the House that have not been considered in the committee that handles them, the Committee on the Budget. So they broke the rules of their own Congress. It is like, well, those are just rules, who cares, right?

In doing so, they do things that make no sense at all, because they have section 3(b) that says we have to show the social security surplus, and we have section 5 that says we cannot show it. Now, we cannot have it both ways. We cannot show it and not show it. So they did not even take the time last night to even proofread the bill.

This is a travesty and a joke. The other body will consider it the same.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Just to quickly respond to the gentleman, again, this legislation was authored last March 6. I am pleased that the Vice President came out 2 weeks ago and does not want to spend social security-Medicare trust funds now.

Really, that is what it is all about, are we going to continue, as the last Congresses have for over 30 years, spending social security and Medicare trust funds, or are we going to save it just for that?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), who serves on the Committee on the Budget and has worked on this issue very diligently.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for all his hard work. He and I have worked on this issue quite a bit in the last Congress, and the gentleman has worked on this in prior Congresses. Let us clear this issue up and bring it out of the process and the mechanistic talk. What we are talking about here is stopping the raid on social security, stopping the raid on Medicare, and equipping Congress with the tools to do that.

Does this bill go all the way and save social security and Medicare? No. We are not suggesting it does.

As a member of the Committee on the Budget, as a new Member of Congress, I dedicated my time this year to trying to change the culture in Washington. For the last 30 years there has been a culture in Washington which has basically said this: If we are going to pay our FICA taxes off of our paycheck for social security and Medicare, Washington does not care if we pay it for social security and Medicare, because Washington is going to take it and spend it on other government programs that have nothing to do with social security and Medicare.

We need to stop those days, Mr. Speaker. We need to stop the days of raiding social security, of taking money from Medicare and social security and spending it on programs that have nothing to do with it. What this bill does is fix the rules in Congress so we do not consider that kind of legislation.

We have a point of order saying we are not going to consider legislation if it attempts to raid social security and Medicare. We are going to make sure that when we analyze our budgets, when we total up the numbers of the Federal Government's budget, we are not counting the social security and Medicare trust fund against our deficits or against our debts. We are saying, honest accounting, stop the raid on the program.

I have a bill which has some of these provisions in it which stops the raid on the social security program indefatigably, stops it by law. This bill changes the culture in Congress, a culture that has occurred here for 30 years where people would vote for legislation that would raid social security.

The President gave us a budget 2 years ago that took 38 percent of social security out of social security and spent it on other government programs. We are saying no to that.

This Congress, this Committee on the Budget, last year stopped the raid on social security for the first time in 30 years. We are following up on that promise. We are following up on that policy by saying that we are changing the culture in Washington. We are changing the rules in Congress so when we do legislation here from now on, we are not going back to those old days of raiding social security and raiding Medicare. If we pay our FICA taxes off of our paycheck, that money will go to social security and will go to Medicare, period, end of story.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

(Mr. STENHOLM asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Lockbox Act. I want to commend the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for his work in introducing the legislation.

I was proud to join him in sending out Dear Colleagues twice to our colleagues encouraging them to support this legislation. But I must say, I am rather disappointed that the gentleman's leadership chose to change the legislation significantly last night between the time we wrote the letter encouraging them to support it and what we have before us today.

Why they did that only the gentleman and they know. That is not a reason for us not to vote for the legislation today. It is still a step in the right direction. By creating a firewall around Medicare trust fund surpluses to protect these revenues for exclusive use in the Medicare program, this bill will take another step forward in maintaining fiscal discipline and improving our ability to meet the fiscal challenges of the future.

For the last several years I have joined with my Blue Dog colleagues to offer budgets that would truly balance the budget without counting either Medicare or social security surpluses. As has already been discussed, recently the Vice President put the issue on the national agenda by proposing that the newly calculated surpluses be used to take Medicare off-budget.

I want to congratulate those, now the House leadership, for endorsing the wisdom of the Blue Dog position and following the Vice President's lead on the issue, and following the lead of the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), although I must say, I wish the gentleman on this side of the aisle would have seen the wisdom, and more on our side of the aisle would have seen the wisdom, in voting for our Blue Dog budget earlier this year in which we would have already had this done.

While congratulating my Republican colleagues for bringing this legislation to the floor today, I also remind them that this legislation applies to both spending increases and tax cuts that would dip into the Medicare surplus. Every Member who votes for this legislation today and brags about protecting Medicare should keep that in mind when talking about either large tax cuts or new spending proposals later this year.

At the moment, the Medicare trust fund is running a surplus. That story will change drastically in the next decade when the baby boom generation begins retiring and depends on Medicare for their health coverage. Rather than consuming current surpluses through large tax cuts and new government spending, we should use them to prepare for the challenges Medicare faces. That is what we do with this legislation today.

I again repeat, I am disappointed the bill before us was changed last night so it no longer excludes the Medicare trust fund from calculations of the on-budget surplus, and would allow us to continue the practice of using the Medicare surplus to inflate surplus totals. It is not as good a bill as the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) introduced or that I cosponsored, but it is still a good bill.

Whether we technically take Medicare off-budget or not, I hope all Members will honor the spirit of this legislation and not count the Medicare surplus when talking about the amount of surpluses available to be divided between tax cuts, increased spending, and debt reduction.

We are headed in the right direction. We are headed in the right direction by agreeing to save the Medicare trust fund surpluses to pay down the national debt and protect the long-term solvency of both social security and Medicare. However, we should go further by walling off some of the on-budget surpluses beyond social security and Medicare for debt reduction. Doing so would represent a much stronger commitment to paying down our $5.7 trillion national debt.

Saving a portion of the non-social security and Medicare surpluses for debt reduction would start to make up for the years in which we borrowed from those surpluses instead of saving them, as we should have done. In addition, walling off a portion of the on-budget surplus for debt reduction provides a cushion if budget projections change for the worse.

We should not kid ourselves that this legislation alone solves the long-term challenges facing Medicare, but until we can reach agreement on comprehensive Medicare reforms to put the program on a stronger financial footing, the next best thing we can do is pay down the debt by saving the entire Medicare surplus.

I encourage all Members to support this legislation, which is a good step forward, and continue to move toward further fiscal responsibility. Again, I congratulate the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for his leadership in this endeavor.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), for his longtime support and work on walling off both social security and Medicare.

Let me just point out again that this does take Medicare off the table. It would require a special vote in order to spend anything above that. It does not go quite as far as the gentleman from Texas and I want to go. Hopefully next year in further Congresses we will do that, but I do thank the gentleman for his help.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), and I want to again thank him for his tireless support in working in this area.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I thank him for his great leadership on this issue.

In fact, the gentleman is such a great leader that the Vice President has adopted the Herger position for his campaign, which I think speaks to the power and potency of this issue.

Last year, the Republican Congress did the right thing. We said that we are going to rope off social security and make sure it does not get spent for other purposes, because for far too long in this Congress social security and Medicare surpluses and trust funds have been Washington's cookie jar to fund all these other programs in government.

We said last year, categorically, this has to stop. The American people deserve better, our seniors deserve better. We made that commitment with social security. Unfortunately, the legislation has been stalled in the Senate, yet we need to move forward to ensure that we have the same level of protection for Medicare, and that is what this legislation would do today. Hopefully we can get action on the social security lockbox as well as the Medicare lockbox.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, the Federal government dipped into Medicare by about $21 billion to fund unrelated government spending in other areas. We do not need bigger government and we do not need to finance bigger government with social security and Medicare payroll taxes, taxes that people pay with the expectation that those programs are going to be there some day for them.

What we need is fiscal responsibility, and to provide more security for all of Americans' retirement. This bill does just that, and it provides the basis and foundation upon which we can build the Medicare reform that the gentleman from Texas was talking about.

Mr. Speaker, my State of South Dakota is a very rural State. It is not uncommon in South Dakota to have in a hospital 70 percent of the patient load being Medicare-dependent. When Medicare funding is used to fund other programs of government, it deprives that important program of those funds that are necessary to fund the investment in technology to make sure that grandfathers and grandmothers and parents in rural areas have access to critical hospitals and to the other health care requirements that they have to deal with. So it is important that this funding in the Medicare trust fund be protected for just that purpose.

I signed onto this legislation, Mr. Speaker, because it is the right thing to do for America's seniors and it is the right thing to do for America's taxpayers. We need to continue to be guardians of these trust funds. Before last year, they were raided for some 40 years. It is time that we stop the raid on these trust funds and ensure that we are doing everything that we can to end the waste, fraud, and abuse in government, and to put the additional safeguards in place to ensure that social security and Medicare dollars are not stolen to pay the other government bills that are wrapped up by this Washington government, but that they are locked away and put to the use for which they were intended. That is to provide health care for our parents, our grandparents, and hopefully some day for our children.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill walls off the surplus in the Medicare Part A trust fund. It says in effect that the surplus in the President's budget and in the congressional budget resolution should be at least as large every year as the Medicare Part A surplus. In addition, of course, tax cuts and spending increases could not reach that target.

The idea of taking the Part A trust fund off the table, not off the budget, is a small step forward, because it means that a slightly higher share of the projected surpluses over the next 10 years are going to be devoted to paying down publicly-held debt. That is good for social security, that is good for Medicare, that is good for the economy. That is why I voted yes.

But this is just a small step, a token step, since preserving the Medicare surplus does not really extend Medicare solvency for one day. Our long-term fiscal situation implies that over the course of the next 10 years, while we are generating these on-budget surpluses, we should be devoting a significant share of them to Medicare solvency, to debt reduction, and to social security solvency for the long run.

□ 1445

That is why I said earlier on the previous bill that we ought to have a piece of legislation here which simply says we resolve that now, and into the future; we will set aside some fixed percentage of our own budget surplus every year for debt reduction or for contribution to these trust funds.

The Clinton administration and our congressional Democratic budget resolution devoted more than 40 percent of the projected on-budget surplus to debt reduction; and we took $300 billion out of the general fund, that is out of the on-budget surplus, and put it in the Medicare trust fund in order to extend the solvency of the Medicare program into and past 2020. The Blue Dog budget, which was offered as an alternative, committed 50 percent of the projected on-budget surplus to debt reduction.

But the Republican plan devoted essentially none of the surplus to debt reduction and took none of it, none of it, and put it into Medicare where it would ensure, at least extend the solvency of the program.

Unlike the proposal made the other day by Vice-President GORE, as I have noted, this bill fails to take the Medicare trust fund off budget. It simply takes it off the table or out of the calculation. In addition, it has something in it that I would call a trap door. In fact, it was in the Social Security legislation, too. Specifically, any legislation that identifies itself as Social Security reform or Medicare reform, it only has to recite those magic words, ''is automatically exempt without further proof from the provisions of this lockbox.''

This is very much like the emergency spending exemption that we have got in current law. Any legislation that is designated an emergency by somebody, no matter how routine, is exempt from the spending caps. The same can happen with Medicare reform and Social Security reform.

The bill itself says in black letters, all one has got to do is recite ''this bill is for Medicare reform, this bill is for Social Security reform,'' and, bang, these provisions no longer apply to one.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, if the majority were really serious about using projected surpluses to reduce debt and save and protect Medicare and Social Security, then I think they would take this bill, this occasion, to repeal section 213 of the budget resolution which they passed weeks ago. In just a few weeks, the Congressional Budget Office

is going to increase its estimate of the projected on-budget surpluses by $800 billion, a trillion dollars, maybe $1.2 trillion, maybe more.

Section 213 of their budget resolution will allow the chairman of the Committee on the Budget to commit, give, devote as much as 100 percent of that increase in the projected surplus to the Committee on Ways and Means for additional tax cuts instead of debt reduction, instead of saving Social Security, instead of protecting Medicare, use 100 percent of it for tax reduction.

If my colleagues were serious about debt reduction, serious about protecting Medicare and Social Security, surely, surely we would say some of these additional surpluses will be retained, set aside, and protected for these essential programs and this essential purpose, and that is debt reduction.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, just briefly responding to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), who mentioned this is at least a small step, I really believe this is a major step. It is the first step, because it is saying that, for the first time in more than 40 years, we are not going to do as previous Congresses have done, the party of the gentleman from South Carolina did, for all the years it controlled this House, in that they spent it all. They counted it, included it as part of the ongoing budget and spent it.

What we are saying is that this money is being removed from the table. We are not going to spend it. We are dedicating it as the first step to be used to saving and preserving and improving Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP).

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, as a relative newcomer on the block in Washington, people ask me all the time in my district if it seems different to be in Congress, if Washington is different, if it is different than our State legislatures, if it is different than our local councils. I always tell them it is astoundingly different; that, in fact, there is a culture of spending in Washington that is really unmatched anyplace else around this country.

As a member of the Committee on Appropriations, it is an everyday take-your-breath-away experience as I see one amendment after another to spend millions, hundreds of millions, billions more dollars.

In fact, last week, there was an all-day markup that, that day alone, Members made proposals to raise spending $10 billion. The culture that there is no limit to the dollars, that there is no pain, that there is no working family at the other end of those tax dollars that paid that money in, in tax dollars and took it out of what they could spend for their children has been just an amazing culture for me to behold.

I am proud to be part of a Congress that is trying to change that culture that has been with us for 40 years, that one could spend every dollar one could take, and that one could spend it when it is meant for future obligations in what feels good today or programs that we have today or new ideas that people have, that there is no limit.

So we are maybe making beginning steps, but they are powerfully important. One of them is to take the Medicare dollars off the table from what we consider as surplus. For years, we have used Medicare dollars to fund new programs and programs that exist that we want to put more dollars into.

What we have done, in essence, is to put an IOU in the cookie jar and said, someday, when Medicare needs this money, they can take it out. But of course when Medicare opens the cookie jar, there are no assets there to pay the bills. We are not going to be able to sell off our assets, our airports, our schools, our roads in order to recoup this money for Medicare.

So this bill today, it is for our fathers and our grandparents. It is for those who put the money in for so many years when it was not respected for the purpose it was expected to be spent for. But it is also for our children, our children who want the best for their grandparents and for their parents who want to know that they can live up to their responsibilities and who we owe them the possibility of a program that is solvent enough that they can assume their responsibilities.

I am lucky; I have both of my parents who are 78 who, for years, contributed to this country and made their contribution. Let us recognize that as we pass this bill today.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) has 2 minutes remaining. The gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the colleagues that have come to the floor today to support this incredibly important first step toward protecting Medicare surpluses. Over the next 5 years, an estimated $126 billion more will be paid into the Medicare trust fund by taxpayers than is currently being taken out for Medicare expenses.

Our seniors deserve to know that these Medicare surplus dollars are not being spent on unrelated programs. The Medicare lock box prohibits legislation that spends the Medicare surplus from being considered and separates Medicare funds from future budget projections.

Last year, we locked away the Social Security surplus. Today we have the opportunity to take it one step further and protect our seniors' Medicare surpluses.

I urge my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote for this bill because I think basically we should segregate the part A trust fund. But I am going to plead the abuse of process before acceding to the bill, because this is not the way to make important law.

As I said earlier, this bill was not drafted, to the best of my knowledge, until last night. We did not see it this morning until 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock. It was not introduced or referred to the Committee on the Budget. It did not come through the Committee on Rules. The Committee on the Budget has jurisdiction, but we have held no hearings on it. We have taken no testimony.

Now the debate is limited to 40 minutes, and there are no amendments in order. That is too bad. The House ought to be able to come out here and work its will on a piece of legislation this important. If we were allowed to, we could have corrected some of the flaws in the bill. I think if we put it to the House as a whole, do we want Medicare taken cleanly off budget, it would be an overwhelming yes. We still do not know why that compromise was made.

Secondly, there are glitches in this bill that honest, open debate, an amendment, could, number one, ferret out and, number two, correct. For example, as I pointed out, section 3(b) adds a new requirement to congressional budget resolutions. It requires the resolution to show the receipts and outlays and surplus of the Social Security Trust Fund.

Then section 5 of the same bill flat prohibits any agent or instrumentality of the Federal Government from including the Social Security surplus in any document that shows the Federal surplus or deficit. Any instrumentality. What if we were to do that in a newsletter? Are we an instrumentality of the Government? This is a kind of drafting error that we could wash out of the bill if we had an opportunity to do; but we do not, not on the House floor today.

This bill requires that Medicare part A be set aside, but it does not require the congressional budget resolution specify exactly how much is being set aside. That seems to me elementary. Why would it not provide that this is the part A trust fund, this is the amount we expect, and we are setting it aside, taking it off the table, out of calculation.

So the House has not had an opportunity to do its will, and we are passing a bill that is a lot weaker than it could be if we had an opportunity to make it better.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a complicated bill. It is very simple. It is basically saying that, for the first time in more than 40 years, that we are not going to spend the surplus, whatever that surplus is. That is, in Medicare and Social Security, we are not going to spend it. Very simply, whatever it is, we are not going to spend. It brings about a point of order to ensure that we do not.

Look how far we have come. It was only a few years ago that we were looking at deficits of $200 billion and $300 billion, and that did not even include the surplus of Social Security or Medicare. Then a few years ago, we were reporting $80 billion, $90 billion, $100 billion surpluses; but that did include, I am afraid, Medicare and Social Security.

But guess what, those surpluses were only half true. Every penny of those surplus dollars were really Social Security dollars. So what did we do? We passed a Social Security lock box last year that said that we would not spend any of the surplus of Social Security, and that passed. Now Congress and the President speak of budget surpluses without Social Security being included in it. This amount is estimated to be $40 billion this year.

Now we are raising the bar one notch higher. We are saying that we are now going to stop raiding Medicare, just as we stopped raiding Social Security last year. What we are doing is ensuring that Social Security recipients deserve to know that their Medicare dollars are not being spent on anything else except Medicare.

This bill is a win-win. It is a win for fiscal discipline. It is a win for Medicare. Most importantly, it is a win for our seniors.

I urge all my colleagues to support this Medicare and Social Security lock box.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it is common knowledge that most of today's American families can no longer live comfortably on one sole income, in fact, most households depend on at least two incomes, and as if that wasn't enough, today's American employees average more hours at work than employees from other nations.

It is crystal clear that Americans work hard for their paychecks, which is why it is disheartening to know that when a significant percentage of their hard earned money is involuntarily removed for a Medicare fund, our government will use it as a slush fund to operate completely unrelated programs from which our seniors will never benefit.

Our nation's population is rapidly aging and in response to this, Congress must make the protection of Medicare dollars a high priority in order to deliver healthcare for seniors.

Our seniors deserve the health care benefits they were promised.

Our seniors need to know that they will receive adequate healthcare when they need it most.

They need not be terrified, as many are, about whether their doctor visits, treatments and even prescriptions will be covered.

Today, the House of Representatives hopes to put seniors' worries at ease as we will vote on H.R. 3859, the Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act.

I thank my colleague, Congressman WALLY HERGER for creating this legislation which will reserve Medicare surplus dollars only for responsible debt reduction or spending on the Medicare program.

Soon after today's vote, seniors will no longer need to fear that the money set aside for their Medicare and well being will be used as a big government slush fund.

Similarly to the Social Security lock box which passed by a vote of 417–2 last year, this Medicare lock box is the right thing to do; the responsible thing to do.

Today's vote is the first step in ensuring our nation's seniors that they will no longer need to fear about whether they will be taken care of in their old age.

Today, Congress will make history because today we begin the guarantee of security in healthcare for our senior citizens.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3859, the Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act of 2000, and urge my colleagues to join in support of this bill.

H.R. 3859 amends the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to protect the net surplus of the Medicare Part A or Social Security trust funds by moving them ''off budget.'' Specifically, they may not be counted as part of the overall federal surplus by either the President or the Congress. The bill further amends the Budget Act of 1974 to allow a point of order to protect Social Security surpluses in both the House and Senate from legislation whose enactment would either cause or increase an on-budget deficit for a fiscal year, with the exception of Social Security reform legislation.

Moreover, H.R. 3859 also makes it out of order for either chamber to consider any measure whose enactment would cause the on-budget surplus for a fiscal year to be less than the projected surplus of the federal hospital insurance trust fund for that fiscal year. This provision makes an exception for Medicare reform legislation.

Finally, H.R. 3859 requires that any statement or official estimate issued by the Congressional Budget Office or the Office of Management and Budget must exclude any surplus in the Social Security trust fund when issuing totals of the surplus or deficit of the United States Government. The legislation applies to fiscal year 2001 and future years.

Mr. Speaker, the Congress has made significant strides in the past three years with regards to ending the practice of raiding the Social Security Trust Fund to mask the true size of the Federal outlays. This legislation will ensure that our practice of fiscal restraint will continue.

By approving this bill, the House will demonstrate to the American people its commitment to protecting the long term solvency of both the Social Security and Medicare systems. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to lend it their strong support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3859, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1500

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO ASTRONAUTS NEIL A. ARMSTRONG, BUZZ ALDRIN, AND MICHAEL COLLINS.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2815) to present a congressional gold medal to astronauts Neil A. Armstrong. Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins, the crew of Apollo 11.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2815

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Astronaut Neil A. Armstrong, as commander of Apollo 11, achieved the historic accomplishment of piloting the Lunar Module ''Eagle'' to the surface of the Moon, and became the first person to walk upon the Moon on July 20, 1969.

(2) Astronaut Buzz Aldrin joined Neil A. Armstrong in piloting the Lunar Module ''Eagle'' to the surface of the Moon, and became the second person to walk upon the Moon on July 20, 1969.

(3) Astronaut Michael Collins provided critical assistance to his fellow astronauts that landed on the Moon by piloting the Command Module ''Columbia'' in the Moon's orbit and communicating with Earth, thereby allowing his fellow Apollo 11 astronauts to successfully complete their mission on the surface of the Moon.

(4) By conquering the Moon at great personal risk to their safety, the three Apollo 11 astronauts advanced America scientifically and technologically, paving the way for future missions to other regions in space.

(5) The Apollo 11 astronauts, by and through their historic feat, united the country in favor of continued space exploration and research.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is authorized to present, on behalf of the Congress, gold medals of appropriate design to astronauts Neil A. Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins, in recognition of their monumental and unprecedented feat of space exploration, as well as their achievements in the advancement of science and promotion of the space program.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2 at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

The medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.