

also was a veto of an inflation adjustment to the level, the threshold at which the earned income tax credit would be eligible for. That veto cost a low-income family with two children \$421 per year in terms of the earned income tax credit. That is real money.

Mr. ARMEY. I thank the gentleman from California. That benefit denied by the Clinton veto was a benefit that would have accrued to the most low-income earners in America, not only all of my rich friends as they were discussing earlier.

The gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) is a man of great insight on the budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ARMEY. Madam Speaker, let me say I am going to invite the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) to come back next week for another such session and let him lead off with his good insight.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS

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

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), our majority leader, very much for leading this very informative hour on programs that are so very important to our Nation, to our seniors, to our American taxpayers.

Madam Speaker, I would like just to comment some on that. I have had the great privilege this last 8 years of serving on the Committee on the Budget, and I have seen over the last 6 years during the time that we have had the Republican Congress accomplishing some tasks that many thought we could never do, i.e., the first balanced budget in 60 years. Something which, by the way, President Clinton and the Vice President, AL GORE, vetoed not once or twice, but three times.

Also, something we thought we would never see was welfare reform. And, again, even though Ronald Reagan once said that, "There is no limit to what you can accomplish as long as you don't care who takes the credit"; well, our Republican Congress, we were able to reform welfare. It has been reduced by more than 50 percent on the average in the 50 States.

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Those are individuals who are now out working being productive. Again, the President vetoed this twice, not once, but twice, and then I know he and the Vice President were out taking credit for it. Again, it does not matter who gets the credit, but it happened, and it happened under the watch of this Republican Congress.

What have we done balancing the budget? Welfare reform? We have seen that we have been able to again for

the first time in some 40 years to begin paying down the national public debt. As a matter of fact, up to this point, we paid it down by \$350 billion. And in this next year, we are down, that is over the last 3 years, for another \$240 billion paying down the public debt; that debt which rests on the shoulders of our children and our grandchildren, money that past Congresses have spent more than what we had.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the majority leader, and those who are watching look on this chart that I have here, what it does, it compares Vice President AL GORE'S budget and proposal, spending proposals, that he has and compares it with Governor George W. Bush's.

Now, this chart was prepared and the statistics were put out by the National Taxpayer Union Foundation, and it shows that right now the on-budget surplus for the next 10 years is projected to be \$2.1 trillion. It is interesting to look at Vice President GORE, who is running for President, his spending, his expenditures add up to \$2.8 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, I might mention Governor Bush's spending adds up to \$766 billion, his spending proposals. Well, the difference from what is projected as surplus over the next 10 years and what Vice President GORE would spend would put us in some \$638 billion deficit again. In other words, under his administration, we would again return to deficit spending. And where does that come from?

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the majority leader, knows of the legislation which I authored and which passed this last year. We, as Republicans, put a lock box on not spending the Social Security money that had not been spent yet. And we passed that overwhelmingly out of this House, 416-12 this year, and that had been spent since 1935, all that money, and it amounts to several hundred billion dollars a year, but we had been spending that which was a surplus spending on ongoing programs.

This year we passed an additional lockbox on the Medicare. Now, where would this \$638 billion come from what GORE would spend? Well, it would come, Mr. Speaker, come from the Social Security money that should be going to pay our seniors. Is that right? No, it is not. Can we afford, this country, to turn around and go back into the direction that we were going for years here where we spend on promises to everyone that may be well meaning, but spending money that we do not have? I think the answer is clearly no.

Mr. Speaker, of course, here in about another month and a half we are going to have an election that will determine whether the American public is going to go back to the failed policies of tax and spend that we have had in the past, or whether or not we are going to continue the direction that this Republican Congress has led us in in the last

6 years moving towards again fiscal responsibility.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Texas, the majority leader for this time.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, let me just say what the gentleman's charts shows is that the pundits are right, if Governor Bush is President during the worst of time, we might lose the surplus, but it also shows that if Vice President GORE is President during the best of times, he will spend the surplus.

Mr. HERGER. That is right; he only spends one-third of the surplus, the rest is for paying down the debt further and for perhaps some tax relief and some other good things.

#### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, we are about to approach the end game negotiations, probably behind the scenes, the end game negotiations on the budget, and the appropriations process has started already.

We have gone through a process of preparing a budget which sets forth the general contours, the outlines of where we want to go with respect to our expenditures for each particular function of government. We did that some time ago, and then we have gone through the passage of 13 appropriations bills in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I understand they have not passed all of those bills in the other body, but we have passed them in the House of Representatives. In a situation where there is disagreement between the majority party in the House, they have the votes to pass whatever they want to pass, if there is disagreement between the majority party in the House and the White House or the majority party in the House plus the other body, they agree but then the White House disagrees, then the only way we resolve those disagreements is through a negotiation process, which takes place at the very end of the progress of the other steps that we have taken.

Mr. Speaker, we are about to approach that point in the year when we have a special situation. For the first time in many decades, this Nation has a surplus, and it is not a small surplus at all. The Federal surplus keeps changing every day, but positively changing. It was \$200 billion a few weeks ago, and now I understand we are talking about \$230 billion as the most conservative estimate of what the budget will be available for some kind of processing by the House and the executive branch.

There is another surplus for Social Security, which is a lockbox; that means we are not talking about money that would be taken away from Social