

a dim-witted "financial plan." I will be happy to tell you why. Because they are determined to give a massive and fiscally irresponsible tax cut to their fat-cat buddies. Do not be fooled, it is not working families who would benefit from this tax cut, it is the top 1 percent.

I would ask you to vote against this outrageous plan.

Mr. KLECZKA. Madam Chairman, I rise today in opposition to the Republican Budget Resolution and to urge my colleagues to support the more sensible Democratic alternative.

The Republican Budget Resolution before us calls for a massive \$1.62 trillion tax cut. I am troubled by this for a number of reasons. First, the House is already on track to exceed this figure.

The Ways and Means Committee has already reported out two bills that cut taxes by almost \$1.4 trillion. The Committee has yet to consider the remaining pieces of the President's tax cut plan, most notably the estate tax repeal—which the Wall Street Journal today reported would cost an astonishing \$662.2 billion if made effective immediately.

This brings the price tag to over \$2 trillion without providing funds for making the Research and Development tax credit permanent or allowing non-itemizers to deduct charitable contributions—both of which are included in the President's plan.

Secondly, I have serious concerns about pinning such a large tax cut on a budget surplus that may never materialize. Predicting so far into the future is fraught with uncertainties, especially in an economic downturn like we are currently experiencing. Would any reasonable person plan a vacation relying on a weather forecast for year 2009 or 2011?

Furthermore, the American people have been told that the tax cuts are necessary to stimulate our economy right now.

Well, Madam Chairman, your budget plan totally fails in this regard. Taxes are cut by \$5.8 billion this year, or 50 cents per day per taxpayer—hardly a drop in the bucket of a \$10 trillion dollar economy. This budget resolution directs that two-thirds of the benefits be withheld for 5 years.

An economic stimulus plan has been developed by our colleagues in the other body which calls for an immediate \$60 billion tax cut for this year. This plan would achieve the goal of pumping up the economy.

Finally, I would like to call attention to a serious flaw contained within the Republican Budget Resolution. This budget diverts \$153 billion away from the Medicare Hospital Insurance fund under the guise of a yet-to-be-determined prescription drug benefit. However, this money is being raised to pay hospital costs for current and future beneficiaries—it can't be spent twice. The resolution also earmarks another \$240 billion in Medicare HI surpluses to a contingent fund. We cannot allow the Medicare Trust Fund to be used for other purposes because it will dramatically shorten the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund. Our Democratic Budget locks away the current surpluses in both the Medicare and Social Security.

Madam Chairman, Congress must be prudent and cautious when developing budgets based on less-than certain surplus estimates. We have the resources to give a responsible tax cut to the American people and the Democratic plan does just that. I urge Members to reject the Republican Budget Resolution and support the Democratic substitute.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chairman, today, Congress is debating the Fiscal Year 2002 Budget Resolution, a document that is sadly, fraudulent.

Common sense dictates that budget forecasting should be realistic and conservative. The document before us today is neither. The projections used in this document are not only widely optimistic, but also prone to extreme error. If the Congressional Budget Office used the same economic assumptions that the Social Security Trustees use when forecasting the future financial solvency of Social Security and Medicare, the two largest government programs, there would be no surplus. Despite this fact, the majority has pressed ahead with a financial plan that leaves no room for error, leading us down a fiscally dangerous path.

The Majority has based spending decisions on unrealistic spending assumptions. Four years ago, I watched this Congress engage in much backslapping and self-congratulating after passing the last Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Almost immediately, Congress began to wink and nod at spending limits imposed in that bill, tortuously bending and breaking the rules in order to claim spending limits had been honored. Two years ago, Congress dropped the charade, shattering spending limits and effectively giving up on the 1997 act. Now we are again holding down spending to unrealistic levels. Even the Republican Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee has already stated that the spending limits in the legislation are not feasible.

The document before us today drastically underfunds critical health, environment, and veterans programs. As our country is facing what the President and GOP claim is an energy crisis, they have proposed cutting funding for the Department of Energy by 7 percent. Energy conservation programs, the only truly feasible solutions for helping us address the short-term energy problems, are cut by nearly 10 percent. President Bush has repeatedly called for improved spending on America's veterans, yet he under funds VA programs by one billion dollars. Finally, this budget resolution cuts funding for environmental programs by 11 percent. While this is consistent with the Administration's anti-environmental actions, it threatens the important progress we've made in environmental policy over the last decade.

The budget resolution before us is not a financial blueprint, but rather a tax cut dressed up as a budget outline. All of the optimistic surplus assumptions and draconian cuts in needed programs are simply a charade to allow the President and my Republican colleagues to claim they can cut taxes and balance the budget. But they can not. This document does not protect the Medicare trust fund and triple counts the Social Security Trust fund in order to fit the President's tax proposal. The tax cuts described in this resolution are heavily tilted to those who need help the least and premised on questionable economic forecasts.

Since coming to Congress in 1999, I have based my fiscal policies on five basic principles:

1. Fair tax relief for working Americans.
2. Honoring our promises to Social Security and Medicare.
3. Paying down our \$6 trillion national debt.
4. Avoiding future funding shortfalls.
5. Funding commitments to our children, seniors, veterans, and the environment.

I believe these are important goals that most of my colleagues share. Unfortunately, the document we are debating today accomplishes none of these principles. Oregonians have repeatedly told me they want to see budget and tax policies that are fiscally prudent and deal with for the challenges our country faces. This resolution doesn't and I oppose it.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. All time for general debate has expired. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, March 22, 2001, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NUSSLE) having assumed the chair, Mrs. BIGGERT, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the subject of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2002, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO SARA ABERNATHY

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

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, at the appropriate time we will, on both sides, recognize our staffs, because although we do the talking, they do the arduous work that goes into this enormous task of putting together a budget.

We have one particular staffer that I want to recognize tonight. Late last week, as we were working another night well past midnight, I looked at Sara Abernathy and I said, "When are you due?" She said, "Next Wednesday." I said, "For goodness sake, get yourself home."

Well, the baby was not born Wednesday, it was born March 26 at 10:30 p.m. It is a Democrat. And I would simply like to say to Sara Abernathy, who has worked arduously in putting this budget together for us and for the good of everybody, "Congratulations on the birth and arrival of Nicholas Colum Butler on March 26."

#### PERIODIC REPORT ON NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO UNITA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations:  
*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the