

credit, has stopped this practice of going to a doctor's office and buying the whole staff lunch for the day, and then leaving them with trays and trays of free prescriptions for samples. I think Eli Lilly should be commended for leading the way into a different way of marketing, and I think other drug companies should take a look at that.

I want to talk just real briefly on patents. Prozac went off patent last August, and the price of Prozac fell 70 percent. The question is, when we pay for so much of the research and development on a new drug as American taxpayers, should drug companies still be given a 17-year patent? I think that should be something that we should discuss. Maybe it should be longer. Maybe it should only be 5 years, though.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I think if we are paying for most of the research, and something else most Americans do not know, and that is 44 percent of all of the money spent on basic research in the world is spent by Americans and American companies.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it is something we should look at.

Finally, this approval process, sometimes it takes as long as 8 years to get FDA to approve a new drug. We should reduce that, particularly for drugs that are often being used in European countries that are already on the market, there is a track record for them, and the FDA is still holding them up. We have to ask ourselves how many people are dying or suffering or are in pain during this approval process that had they been living in another country, then they could get access to their medicine.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, coming back to the cost of research, I think we in the United States ought to be willing to pay our fair share for research. When we look at these charts, clearly we should not be required to subsidize the starving Swiss.

Mr. KINGSTON. Again, Mr. Speaker, these drugs are things that seniors are paying too much for right now. We have a woman in our office who has a relative in El Paso. To get a prescription filled in El Paso it is \$90. To go over the border to Juarez is \$29 for Lipitor. It is such a tremendous savings. But we see some of these drug companies, their ads are slick, they are expensive, they are enticing. I have no problem with them spending that money that way; but I do have a problem with saying we can import our tomatoes, we can import all of our other groceries from Mexico or Canada or any other country; but when it comes to drugs, even FDA-approved drugs, we have special roadblocks for that, and it hurts American consumers. We have the North American Free Trade Agreement; and by golly, we ought to be able to leave Detroit and go over to Windsor, Ontario, and buy drugs.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, in the era of the Internet, NAFTA and

world trade, the FDA should not be allowed to stand between American consumers and lower drug prices.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's hard work on this, and I look forward to working with him on this legislation.

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

(Mr. PAYNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MCKINNEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Ms. WATSON of California addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### BLUE DOGS HAVE THE RIGHT PLAN FOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleagues, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), for their presentation a few moments ago regarding the high cost of prescription drugs and their support for legislation that would allow the reimportation of drugs to allow our seniors to get the prices that are now offered in Mexico, Canada, and the citizens of every other country in the world, except the United States.

I want to make it very clear that all of us on the Democratic side of the aisle have supported that legislation, and we really think we should go further and that we should provide fairness in drug pricing to all American seniors by requiring our drug manufacturers to end that practice of price discrimination that results in the very problem that they were talking about. That is to say drug manufacturers are selling the same medicine in the same bottle with the same label, on average, about half the price in every country in the world except the United States where we pay the premium.

Our senior citizens are hurting today because they cannot afford the \$400 and the \$500 and the \$600 and the \$700 prescription drug cost. That is why Demo-

crats have proposed not only fairness in drug pricing by our drug manufacturers, but we have supported a universal prescription drug benefit as a part of the Medicare program to be sure that all seniors can have their prescription medications as a part of the regular Medicare program that has worked so well in this country for our seniors for so many years.

I come to the floor today during this Special Order hour on behalf of the Blue Dog Democrat Coalition. That coalition consists of 33 fiscally conservative Democrats in this House who believe very strongly that this country is going in the wrong direction with regard to its fiscal affairs. We believe in balanced budgets and paying down our almost \$6 trillion national debt. We believe that it is time to face up to the reality that we are now robbing the Social Security trust fund to run the rest of the government, something that this Congress a year ago pledged not to do on at least four or five occasions by record votes on the floor of this House.

It seems that the Congress and the administration have not been candid with the American people about our fiscal affairs. But what most Americans remember is that a year ago we were talking about record surpluses in our Federal budget. We were talking about surpluses, as I remember President Clinton saying, as far as the eye can see. And when President Bush came into office with those projections of surplus, he called on this Congress to pass the largest tax cut in the history of America. I voted for that tax cut because I believe people need tax relief. But when I voted for it, we were projecting over \$5 trillion in excess funds that would flow into the Treasury of the United States over the next 10 years. The tax cut took about half of that estimated surplus.

The problem is that we stand here today 1 year after the enactment of that tax cut and the entire remaining balance of that estimated surplus is also gone. In fact, we are back at the point where we are not projecting surpluses over the next decade; we are projecting deficits. So once again, the Congress of the United States and the administration is putting the operations of our Federal Government on a credit card, a credit card that will be passed on to our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I have a chart that will depict what has happened. What this chart shows us is the history of the Federal budget since the last years of the administration of President Lyndon Johnson.

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It traces the history through the Nixon years and the Ford years, the Carter years, the Reagan and Bush I years, the Clinton years, to the present administration. And what this chart shows is the history of the Federal budget deficit, and we are talking about the deficit outside of the Social