

economists have said time and time again, is investments in the infrastructure. For every billion dollars we invest in infrastructure, we create 42,000 jobs. That is a real economic stimulus, and I hope the President will talk a little bit about the Democrats' stimulus package that we have offered.

Finally, I would like to speak about homeland security and how it fits into a stimulus package. If we really want a secure homeland, we need to talk about providing police, providing fire protection, and hazardous material funding to those in the inner cities. Those people have a right as much as everyone else in this country to have a safe, secure homeland, and that is what some funding should be spent on.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the President understands that our Nation really and truly can only be strong if the poorest and the most vulnerable and the workers of this country are strong. That is what we hope to hear tomorrow night.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman joining us and the gentleman's focus on the plight of prescription drug coverage for our senior citizens. It continues to be, I think, an outrage and a shame that poor American senior citizens pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world. It is in this context that we are moving forward dealing with the economy, with the weakest economic growth in 50 years, over 2 million private sector jobs eliminated since this administration started, 2 million more employees out of work, the median household income being down, and the inequality gaps growing, and States facing huge deficits and having to cut programs. Then we are given an economic program on the Federal level which will actually reduce State revenues for the majority of States and not meaningfully deal with the problems that our States are facing.

I am hopeful that this Congress at least will respond to the efforts of the Democratic minority here in the House to make sure that we fully fund our commitments to State and local governments, local governments being the first line of defense against terrorist acts here at home.

□ 2045

Promises to local governments have been left unfulfilled.

I am pleased to turn to the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA), my colleague who has finished a distinguished career in the California State Assembly and who is now adding his voice here in our Nation's Capital dealing with the needs of the people of California and around the country.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding, and I appreciate the introduction and the work that he is doing today and this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the state of our Union, and let us talk plainly on what is going on today.

Today 8.6 million Americans are looking for work, but unable to find it. In my district of Santa Clara County alone, over 80,000 Americans are unemployed. Since President Bush took office, 1.7 million jobs have been lost.

Today too many of our Nation's schools are crumbling and are crowded. The average public school in America is 42 years old. In California alone, 87 percent of schools report a need to upgrade their buildings and other repairs that they need.

Today 40 million Americans do not have health insurance; 7.2 million of them are children. While these numbers dropped in 1999 and the year 2000, they rose by 1.4 million in 2001.

Today serious crime is up 2.1 percent, the first increase in 10 years.

Today 1.3 million more Americans are below the poverty line, the first increase since 1993. Requests for emergency shelter have increased by 19 percent, the largest annual increase in the demand for homeless shelter since 1990.

Mr. Speaker, it is thus no surprise that 67 percent of Americans are worried about the economy. While the war against terrorism remains a major priority, it cannot replace our commitment to meeting our Nation's other domestic priorities.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration's economic stimulus plan does little to stimulate the economy now. Instead, it does too much to weaken our economic future, producing deficits of over \$1 trillion. The centerpiece of the President's plan, the elimination of taxes on dividend income, will do little to help working families and small business, which are the backbone of the American economy. In contrast, Democrats have put forward an effective, fast-acting stimulus plan that would create 1 million jobs this year.

Mr. Speaker, while the President continues to pitch his flawed economic plan and continues to downplay the state of our economy, Democrats will continue to focus on a swift economic recovery and fight to put education and health care ahead of unfair large, huge tax cuts.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I appreciate his focusing on the program that has been advanced by the Democrats in the House of Representatives. It is an immediate economic stimulus plan that will create 1 million jobs this year. It would put money and purchasing power in the hands of consumers, provide relief to 3 million laid-off workers. The House Democratic plan proposes a \$300 tax rebate now for every working taxpayer, tax breaks to help small businesses and encourage business investment, and a 26-week extension of unemployment insurance. It would provide money to the States to deal with their fiscal crises, dealing with homeland security, transportation, and health care costs. All told, this Democratic plan which would put more on the table this year would cost far less than that of the President. We look

forward to being able to carry this debate forward in the aftermath of this important week here in Washington, D.C.

I appreciate the courtesy, Mr. Speaker, of being able to be here on the floor this evening.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. BOSWELL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and the balance of the week on account of family reasons.

Mr. SHAW (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. JOHN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STRICKLAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FOLEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WHITFIELD, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 121. An act to enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts and information on such children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

S. 141. An act to improve the calculation of the Federal subsidy rate with respect to certain small business loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget in addition to the Committee on Small Business for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.