

anyone doubts the need or wisdom of such a cut, I would refer them to a recent Washington Post commentary by Charles Schwab, who said he "can't think of any other tax policy that would, at one stroke, be more beneficial to ordinary investors." He predicted immediate benefits, with a stock market rise of 10 to 15 percent. Debates about cost are simply missing the point.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear this plan will assist in jump-starting our economy. I encourage all my colleagues to join in passing this important legislation.

OPPOSE HEALTH ACT OF 2003

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my opposition to H.R. 5, the so-called HEALTH Act of 2003.

The acronym in the title of this bill supposedly stands for Help Efficient, Accessible, Low Cost, Timely Healthcare. But close examination of the provisions of the bill leads me to the conclusion that the acronym instead spells Help Eviscerate Accountability by Law for Traumatic Harm.

Supporters of this bill claim that medical malpractice premiums are out of control because of excessively high-damage awards in malpractice suits. But paid losses have tracked consistently with medical inflation rates for the last 3 decades. There simply is no explosion of paid losses.

Furthermore, there is no provision in the bill, no provision, that requires insurers to lower their rates once the caps are in place.

Supporters of this bill make it plain whom they care for: insurance companies. And it is also clear where the losses will be: people injured due to medical negligence.

SUPPORT PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL TO PROMOTE JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Mr. COX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, our economy needs new jobs. That is why I so strongly support President Bush's proposal to promote job creation and economic growth. One provision of that plan will lead to the creation of over 400,000 new jobs by the end of next year, and that is the proposal to eliminate the double tax on savings in stocks and mutual funds.

America's savers should be rewarded, not penalized, for investing, because when they invest their savings, they not only promote job creation, create the wherewithal for the hiring of new workers, but they also help provide for their own retirement. Indeed, those who are already retired stand to ben-

efit from the elimination of the double tax, because over half of dividend payments are received by senior citizens.

To get our economy growing again, to provide tax fairness to the men and women who are saving for their future retirement and those who are already on fixed incomes, it is time to repeal the double tax on savings.

DEBATE REAL ISSUES AND LEAVE JOKES TO COMEDIANS

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the debate over war and peace in this House has crumpled into farce. Yesterday, some of our colleagues held a press conference to announce that the House would now be serving "freedom fries" and "freedom toast" instead of French fries and French toast. So far, German chocolate cake, Russian salad dressing, and the entire Chinese food section have been spared the wrath of these culinary correctors.

Mr. Speaker, this episode would be funny if it were not so sad. Because of this stunt, the image of the House in the eyes of the American people and people around the world will diminish once again. This House should not be a punch line, Mr. Speaker; it should not be the butt of jokes on the "Tonight Show."

I hope that the Members who staged yesterday's circus enjoyed the publicity. I hope it was worth it.

We are about to go to war, Mr. Speaker. Let us have a real debate about real issues that affect the lives of real people and leave the jokes to the comedians.

CHILD MEDICATION SAFETY ACT OF 2003

(Mr. BURNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, last year the House Committee on Government Reform held a hearing exploring an issue that should shock all of us. Witnesses at the hearing testified that some school officials have taken it upon themselves to decide that a child needs to be placed on psychotropic drugs. These school officials are not licensed medical practitioners, and yet some of these officials have told parents that their child must be on a drug such as Ritalin, or their child would not be allowed to attend school any longer.

No child should face denial of educational services because they are not taking a psychotropic drug.

Last night, I introduced the Child Medication Safety Act of 2003. This legislation will address a significant problem facing children and their parents throughout the Nation and provide parents with protections from being forced

into making decisions about their child's health under duress.

This bill has a simple message: States that take Federal education funds must prevent school district personnel, teachers, principals, and other nonlicensed medical professionals from forcing a child to be on psychotropic drugs in order to attend school or receive services.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

THE INADEQUACY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, the House Committee on the Budget is marking up a budget resolution for this coming fiscal year. President Bush has proposed a budget that is \$304 billion in deficit, the biggest deficit ever submitted. And do you know, there is not one dime in that budget for waging war with Iraq, let alone any of the reconstruction costs that are necessary.

If you look out for the next 10 years, President Bush is suggesting that we should accumulate deficits of over \$5 trillion. Halfway through this next decade in 2008, the baby boom generation starts to retire, thereby doubling the number of people dependent upon Social Security and Medicare. Yet all of this \$5 trillion in deficit is going to have to be borrowed from the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, and there is not one dime for Iraq or for any of the other domestic priorities.

Think about the fact that this budget means that Veterans Administration hospitals will be able to treat 168,000 fewer veterans, that we will have to eliminate education for homeless children and after-school care.

Take a look at this budget and cry.

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THE BUDGET

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to enter into this discussion about the budget because I think it certainly is a worthy one in a time when our Nation has been attacked and is working hard against terrorism and to protect our domestic States from threats. We are at war.

The reality is this is what our budget does. From fiscal year 2002 to 2003, there was a 7 percent increase. From 2003 to 2004 it will be about a 3 percent increase, with about a 5.5 percent increase in defense and in homeland security; there will be increases in unemployment insurance because of the

economy; there will be increases in Social Security and, of course, a big increase in Medicare because of the prescription drug benefit that the President is pushing. Yet at the same time, we do need to tighten our belts. That is the way to attack the deficit.

I am glad to see that the Democrats are interested in the deficit after all of these years. What I would hope is that we can come together on a bipartisan, wartime budget and put the interests of the troops first, of the economy, of homeland security, of our seniors, and yet, at the same time, tighten our belts here in Washington within the government bureaucracy. I look forward to that process.

THE BUDGET

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

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, my goodness, what a difference 2 years make.

Two years ago, Republicans argued that the projected \$5.6 trillion surplus was so huge and so certain that they could accommodate large tax cuts and increases in domestic spending, while still having enough to provide for unseen events. In fact, they even worried that the U.S. may pay off the public debt too quickly.

Today that \$5.6 trillion surplus is gone and has been replaced with deficits as far as the eyes can see. Our national public debt has risen to \$6.4 trillion, the highest amount in U.S. history.

In fiscal year 2002, American taxpayers spent \$333 billion paying interest charges on our national debt, which translates to nearly \$1 billion per day, every day.

That total is more than the government spends on education, transportation, child nutrition, homeland security, and the environment combined.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

(Mr. BALLANCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, the medical community is rightfully concerned about the rising cost of medical insurance, and I strongly agree that Congress needs to address this urgent issue. There are three key points to be made in responding to this important issue: First, reform the insurance industry; second, reduce frivolous lawsuits wherever they are to be found; and, third, reduce the number of medical errors made, I am advised by my research, by a small minority of 5 percent of the physicians.

The Republican bill's attempt to cap damage awards and blame the trial lawyers would achieve none of these goals.

The insurance companies victimize patients through denial of medical cov-

erage while doctors are severely gouged by staggering premiums. Caps only serve to further victimize patients without providing any relief to the medical profession. More importantly, in my opinion, caps take away our constitutional and time-honored right to trial by jury.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that we vote against this bill and let us pass a real medical malpractice reform bill.

SUPPORT CONYERS-DINGELL ALTERNATIVE

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5. This bill claims to protect patients' rights but, in fact, it strips away the rights of patients, especially women, seniors, children, and lower income families.

It does protect someone, however. It protects HMOs, the insurance industry, and the pharmaceutical companies.

Medical malpractice is a serious issue, but so is medical error. Thousands of Americans die every year due to medical mistakes and thousands more are injured and placed at risk. The wrong limbs have been amputated. Improper transplants have been performed. These are real people, real examples, and real injuries and deaths, not frivolous lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5 would restrict the rights of such legitimately and seriously injured patients.

The Conyers-Dingell alternative offers meaningful reform without putting Americans at risk. Conyers-Dingell would eliminate frivolous lawsuits, increase competition, and reduce costs. It would address the crisis situation faced in some geographic areas, but not by sacrificing crucial protections.

I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 5 and to protect patients' rights by supporting Conyers-Dingell.

HEALTH CARE FOR THE UNINSURED AND THE HISPANIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ACT

(Mr. RODRIGUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the uninsured in America.

The number of uninsured in this Nation is alarming. Too many people continue to go without insurance coverage. The numbers right now range close to 41 million Americans who are uninsured. The majority of these individuals are hard-working Americans that make \$20,000 to \$30,000 and find themselves unable to pay for their prescriptions.

Tomorrow we will be filing a piece of legislation, the Hispanic Health Improvement Act. Hispanics are among the largest disproportionate number of uninsured, close to 31 percent. One out

of three Hispanics are uninsured, yet 80 percent of those that are uninsured are working Americans, working hard but unable to provide it.

The bill will provide an expansion not only to Medicaid, but also to SCHIP. It also will provide an increase in resources for those areas that disproportionately hit Hispanics such as diabetes, cancer, asthma, HIV/AIDS, and others. It also will provide an opportunity to provide access and affordability in the areas that are confronted. In addition to that, it also will strengthen the Nation's health care by allowing more opportunities for doctors and nurses to be included.

AMERICA NEEDS TAX RELIEF

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, America needs tax relief. The economy lost 308,000 jobs in February, one of the sharpest drops in recent memory. The unemployment rate now stands at 5.8 percent. While this is relatively low by historical standards, the unemployment rate was only 4 percent as recently as 2000.

Now, the President's economic growth package, I believe, is urgently needed to increase the number of jobs created in the United States. Private sector economists have drawn the same conclusion. The jobs growth package could create millions of new jobs. For example, the Macroeconomic Advisers estimate that the package would lead to the creation of nearly 2 million jobs by the end of 2004. The Business Roundtable puts the figure at more than 3 million.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should pass the Bush tax relief plan now.

THE BUDGET

(Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, as we are poised to go to war and as States like Oregon are drowning in deficits caused by the souring economy, we would think it would be more vital than ever to adopt a responsible budget, one at least that addresses reality.

Unfortunately, the budget produced by the majority this year has huge tax cuts that do not stimulate the economy and would enact across-the-board spending cuts, regardless of the value of the services: Schools, nursing homes, veterans health care, law enforcement, bridges, highways, ports, and that is just to name a few.

While here in Washington these may be just functions in a budget, at home they represent our local economy, national defense, and public good. We should have the courage to face these tough decisions on a case-by-case basis