

Tax cuts for millionaires; \$28 billion in cuts for veterans benefits. It is outrageous. Veterans have been asked already to shoulder the burden of costs that the Bush administration has failed to provide. Last year funding provided under the continuing resolution represented a cut of \$659 million from the amount needed simply to keep pace with veterans benefits in the 2002 budget. We all know that 2002 funding was inadequate. Undercutting it is devastating.

Republicans have a new policy when it comes to veterans health care. It is called abandonment. Let me give you some examples.

First, the President and House Republicans are cutting Veterans Administration outreach. The VA already has halted outreach typically done to alert veterans to the services they are eligible for. It is the Republicans' way to save money. If you do not tell veterans about the benefits, then you do not have to provide benefits and services they were promised in gratitude for serving our country.

Second, President Bush proposed raising the prescription drug copay. Last year, veterans paid \$2 per month per drug. Living on \$1,100 or \$1,200 per month for a retired veteran is not an easy thing, so that \$2 copay per drug per month was very important. Come January, the President raised that to \$7 per drug per month for veterans. Now the President proposes raising it to \$15 per drug per prescription per month for every veteran.

Veterans live on fixed incomes and simply cannot afford the 250 percent increase in the cost of their medications, and now the President wants to even more than double it. Ignoring that burden, doubling their copay, is insulting to veterans, especially in a time of war.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that 700,000 more veterans will receive VA care in 2003 than had been projected. They may be eligible for health care services, but \$1.5 billion in cuts will undermine the VA's ability to deliver this care.

The Republicans in this body should be ashamed of those budget cuts to veterans. But it is not just this body. In the other body, the leader of the other body earlier this month pledged to support veterans concerned about President Bush's health care proposal, but he also said veterans and others will have to make sacrifices.

Here is what the leader of the other body said. "It applies to me in terms of domestic priorities and it applies to groups like the veterans today as they lobby."

In other words, we are going to go to war, but we are saying to veterans, so we can pay for the Bush \$726 billion tax cut, half of which goes to people making on the average \$968,000, the leader of the other body, the Republican leader of the other body is saying what the Republican leaders in this body are saying, and that is that we need the tax cut more than we need the veterans benefits.

Tax cuts for people making \$968,000 a year; \$28 billion in cuts in veterans services. What message does that send to our troops fighting in Iraq? Let us hope when it is their time to claim VA services that they have a different Congress, that they have a Congress that keeps its commitments to those who served this country. Let us hope that when it is their time, they are told "thank you" by a future Congress; not that it is your turn to sacrifice so we can pay for a tax cut, which is what the leaders in this Congress are telling them.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind Members to avoid improper references to the Senate or its Members.

STOP THIS WAR NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, stop the war now. As Baghdad will be encircled, this is the time to get the UN back in to inspect Baghdad and the rest of Iraq for biological and chemical weapons. Our troops should not have to be the ones who will find out in combat whether Iraq has such weapons. Why put our troops at greater risk? We can get the United Nations inspectors back in.

Stop the war now, before we send our troops into house-to-house combat in Baghdad, a city of 5 million people; before we ask our troops to take up the burden of shooting innocent civilians in the fog of war.

Stop the war now. This war has been advanced on lie upon lie. Iraq was not responsible for 9/11. Iraq was not responsible for any role al Qaeda may have had in 9/11. Iraq was not responsible for the anthrax attacks on this country. Iraq did not try to acquire nuclear weapon technologies from Niger. This war is built on falsehoods.

Stop the war now. We are not defending America in Iraq. Iraq did not attack this Nation. Iraq has no ability to attack this Nation. Each innocent civilian casualty represents a threat to America for years to come and will end up making our Nation less safe.

The \$75 billion supplemental needs to be challenged, because each dime we spend on this war makes America less safe. Only international cooperation will help us win the war on terror.

After 9/11, all Americans remember that we had the support and the sympathy of the world. Every nation was ready to be of assistance to the United States in meeting the challenge of terrorism, and yet with this war we have squandered the sympathy of the world. We have brought upon this Nation the anger of the world. We need the co-

operation of the world to find the terrorists before they come to our shores.

Stop this war now. \$75 billion more for war, three-quarters of a trillion dollars for tax cuts, but no money for veterans' benefits. Money for war, but no money for health care in America. Money for war, but no money for Social Security. But money for war.

We have money to blow up bridges over the Tigris and the Euphrates, but no money to build bridges in our own cities. We have money to ruin the health of the Iraqi children, but no money to repair the health of our own children and our educational programs.

Stop this war now. It is wrong, it is illegal, it is unjust, and it will come to no good for this country.

Stop this war now. Show our wisdom and our humanity to be able to stop it. Bring back the United Nations into the process. Rescue this moment. Rescue this Nation from a war which is wrong, which is unjust, which is immoral.

Stop this war now.

SUPPORTING OUR NATION'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this morning to pay tribute to our Nation's veterans and to talk about what the budget resolution of this House would mean for their quality of life and their health care over the course of the next 10 years.

I am sad to say that 2 weeks ago this House barely passed a budget resolution that would severely cut veterans' benefits, including cuts to health care, disability compensation, pensions and other important benefits.

I would not be here today, Mr. Speaker, if not for those brave veterans that liberated Guam in 1944. Therefore, I must speak out when I see our government being derelict in its duty to veterans. It is unthinkable that this House would even take such drastic action against our veterans during a time of war. This is the wrong time and the wrong message to be sending to our country.

This budget cuts \$14.6 billion in funding from mandatory veterans programs over 10 years to help pay for the \$1.35 of trillion of tax cuts in the budget. Over a 10-year period, the budget resolution that this House passed would cut almost \$9 billion alone in veterans' health care, an average of more than \$900 million less than the President has proposed per year.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker: Should these cuts prevail in conference, and we should not let that happen, this budget would mean serious problems for veterans' health care. New copayments and enrollment fees would no doubt be on the table and under consideration to keep the entire system afloat in the next fiscal year.

This House has a chance to correct that, to reverse course, to honor our Nation's veterans and to recognize their service, their sacrifice, and their patriotism. We can correct the harmful reconciliation instruction to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and we can restore these cuts by supporting the motion to instruct conferees that will be offered later today by our colleague, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

Quite frankly, we should be increasing, rather than cutting, health and other benefits to our veterans. Let us not turn our back on our veterans. We should instead salute them.

Vote for the Spratt motion to instruct conferees today when it comes to the floor. Vote to honor our veterans, and vote for a better budget.

PRESERVING THE DIGNITY OF OUR NATION'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I know there is a hard and fast rule that we cannot refer to someone in the other body, but since this person is no longer a Member of the United States Senate, let me dedicate my remarks to the Honorable Max Cleland, who became a triple amputee in the Vietnam War and who is no longer in service in the United States Senate.

I rise today to speak about the dignity of our Nation's veterans. Last week, Mr. Speaker, we offered and passed a resolution asking for the country to pray and to fast. I did not realize that at that time, according to what I am told, many of our troops in harm's way were down to one meal a day. I did not realize at the time that it was them that we were asking to fast.

As General Omar Bradley once stated, "We are dealing with veterans, not with procedures. We are dealing with their problems, and not ours."

I have a constituent who served his country in Vietnam, Mr. Bob Creasy. He was exposed to Agent Orange, the defoliant used to fight the war. Mr. Creasy did not realize at the time how deadly and poisonous the chemical was. Actually, none of us did. Many years later he experienced symptoms and illnesses that can now be validated and linked to his exposure to Agent Orange.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs claims that Bob is not eligible for compensation because he did not come forward when the symptoms first occurred. The symptoms, however, were not recognized as being caused by Agent Orange until very recently.

Why can we not validate the disability and compensate accordingly at this time? Is it that the Veterans' Administration is very restricted and limited in resources and will escape obligations any way and however they can?

What of our brave women and men who served in the first Gulf War? What of the Gulf War Syndrome? We are sending hundreds of thousands of young women and men into harm's way at this very moment, and at the same time we are cutting benefits for those who served in previous wars.

My observation, Mr. Speaker, is not extracted from a comic book. My name is JULIA CARSON, married to Sam Carson, a veteran of the Korean conflict, United States Marine Corps, who is now 100 percent service-connected disabled. My son, Sam Carson, United States Marine, served his country well, fortunately during peacetime.

It is not that I do not understand the plight of veterans, Mr. Speaker; I know the plight of veterans. There are over 25 million veterans in this great Nation of ours, and in Indiana alone there are 562,000. Are we supposed to tell them after serving in the military, defending our country, preserving our freedom, that the services that they need are unavailable in order to pay for a tax cut?

I heard another rumor emanating from the administration about "shared sacrifices." I suppose those "shared sacrifices" are relegated to the have-nots and the have-even-less. To pass a budget that cuts mandatory spending from the President's budget by \$15 billion is unconscionable. Even that budget was \$3 billion too low to fully fund the needs of those who have served this country so ably.

As our distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) recently stated, "Our Nation must not require those who serve in uniform to bear the financial costs of their service-connected disabilities."

Give me a break. A tax break for those who need no tax break, who earned their wealth off of the United States of America, and now we are asking them to take more; and we give less to the people who are responsible for our well-being, for the most part, the veterans of this Nation?

There is no excuse to delay the needed medical care for our veterans. We need to show them with deeds and not with words that, regardless of their mission, we support their dedication to their jobs and that we are for them in their time of need.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I recited the words of the first President of the United States, George Washington, whose words are worth repeating at this time:

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country."

Mr. Speaker, we must not fail our veterans.

OPPOSING PROPOSED CUTS IN VETERAN PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise today to add my comments to the chorus of dismay and opposition to the proposed cuts in veteran programs and benefits that we are currently hearing about in this country proposed by the President and approved by the Republican majority of this House.

Many families in my district have sons and daughters, husbands and wives, family members, that are in the military and in this current conflict that this country finds itself in. Presently I have the responsibility to communicate to some of these families about the death, the serious life-threatening injuries and the missing-in-action status of some of their family members. I relate to them my personal respect, gratitude and sorrow at their anguish and at their sacrifice.

Yet, while I am doing that, I find it unconscionable that while our men and women are fighting overseas, following the orders of their Commander-in-Chief, we at home are reducing the health care benefits that our veterans have earned while risking and giving their lives in the service of this country, in the protection of our freedoms and in the extension of the liberties that we all enjoy.

How can we possibly justify the budget as passed by this House that contains almost \$29 billion in cuts in veterans' programs over a 10 year period, primarily in veterans benefits and health care. What are we going to tell the men and women presently in uniform and their families; that their service is honorable, needed, and respected, but not worth the cost of full benefits for them and their future?

Mr. Speaker, today I would urge all of my colleagues to restore and enhance the benefits and programs that have been earned by our veterans and cut by the President and this Congress. To do otherwise would be an appalling betrayal of America's commitments to our veterans.

At a time of war, let us not be hypocritical. Let us respect and enhance the benefits of our veterans, so as they sacrifice for us, as they follow the orders of their Commander-in-Chief, they will earn not only our respect, but entitlement to benefits and protection of programs that will extend and support their quality of life.

VETERANS CUTS DEPLORED BY VETERAN LEADERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.