

Many of my colleagues have asked to review those tapes of the phone calls between the Department of Public Safety in Texas and the Department of Homeland Security, but we are told by Secretary Ridge's office that the tapes are currently unavailable. That makes me and many of my colleagues wonder why.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LAMPSON. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman was expressing concern about using the Federal Bureau of Investigation with reference to political purposes. The gentleman is aware that it was the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) who himself talked about calling out the G-men, the government men, and mentioned using the FBI. We have seen that movie "U.S. Marshal", pulling in the U.S. Marshal on this. This is all in addition to Homeland Security. He said that he had a former Justice Department official on his staff investigating this and that they pulled in some United States attorney, those are the people in charge of prosecuting crimes in the State of Texas, but some United States attorney down there who was also diverted to this political task.

Mr. LAMPSON. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I understand that that exactly happened. Supposedly, it was in San Antonio. Those are not things that should be happening in our government.

If we learned anything from the Watergate era, it is that the government needs to be accountable for its actions. It cannot be held accountable if important documents are not available to journalists and Members of the United States Congress so they can review them. So we need to review these tapes to ensure that nothing improper happened and the Department of Homeland Security is working to protect us against terrorists and not members of the Texas House of Representatives.

CONGRESS SHOULD OVERHAUL U.S. DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES WITH POOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today I had the opportunity to do something that millions of Americans would love to do: I asked the Internal Revenue Service to account for the use of its taxpayer dollars.

Representing the Committee on Government Reform at the Joint Committee on Taxation's annual review of the Internal Revenue Service, I took part in what is an absolutely essential function of Congress: oversight and reform.

Too often, both Members of Congress and voters forget that this body is not

here just to pass new laws and spend more money. We are here to review and to reform the programs that we have already created and the money that we have already spent on those programs.

In 2001, the Federal Government could not account for \$17.3 billion, according to the Treasury Department. That is 17.3 billion taxpayer dollars.

The U.S. General Accounting Office, the GAO, has refused to certify the Federal Government's own accounting books because the bookkeeping is so poor, and 21 of the 26 departments and major agencies received the lowest rating possible for their financial management, meaning that auditors cannot even express an opinion on their financial statements.

Clearly, we are talking about significant sums of money. I think many of my colleagues would agree that when it comes to hard-earned taxpayer dollars, there is no such thing as insignificant waste. Congress must live up to its obligation to provide stronger financial management oversight for Federal programs that are costing us billions of dollars, and that is billions with a B, every single year.

I know that the Committee on Government Reform and Congress are committed to reducing waste, fraud and abuse of current programs. More importantly, we should take the time and effort not just to chase after losses, but to overhaul a system that allows so much waste, fraud and abuse to exist.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this evening to talk again about the Republican raid on Social Security a year ago to cover their growing deficits because of the Bush administration tax breaks to the upper crust that created no new jobs. Where did they get the money to do it?

This first chart goes back about a year to June 18 of last year. At that point, they had taken from Social Security's trust funds over \$218,095,890,410, or about \$775 per American. We just asked the Department of the Treasury to give us the update. Now, this year already, clocking the Republican raid on Social Security to cover their tax breaks mainly to the top earners in this country, they have now taken \$498,863,013,099, or about \$1,714.24 per American. That is nearly a half a trillion dollars just as of May 20, just as of this week.

Now, Social Security is a financial lifeline for 46 million Americans, but the Republicans continue to play a game of fiscal "chicken" with the Federal deficit. They are borrowing from Social Security's trust funds to give tax breaks aimed at next year's elections.

Let us make one thing clear: Americans might have elected some Repub-

licans into this House and the other body, but they did not give them a mandate to rob Social Security.

Now, this past March, the Republican leadership of this House voted on a budget that will give us deficits as far as the eye can see. I thought that this particular editorial cartoon from the Rocky Mountain News was particularly illustrative, with this giant deficit that is being created for the future as a result of the type of tax program that they have put in place, with absolutely no jobs being yielded, but in fact giving us a debt that will kill jobs and weaken Social Security and Medicare, just when 77 million baby boomers start to retire.

Earlier this month, the same House Republicans voted a \$550 billion, more than half-a-trillion, in tax breaks, mostly to the wealthiest 1 percent of earners in this country, and there is no requirement that money be invested in this country. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the Federal Government has run a deficit of approximately \$202 billion in the first 7 months of this fiscal year. And where do we think they are getting the money from? Where does the money exist? In our Social Security trust funds.

Now that amount of debt that has been added this year is \$138 billion more than the same period last year, so it is getting worse. The Congressional Budget Office now expects that the government will end up this year with a deficit of over \$300 billion.

What is the biggest reason for this most radical fiscal reversal in American history and the raid that is going on on Social Security? The Bush tax program aimed at the next election, not the next generation.

What is the effect of this burgeoning public debt? They are mortgaging Social Security's future payouts. They are forcing our country to cover the rest of their borrowing with more dependence on foreign investors who buy our debt bonds, starting with China and Japan and then Saudi Arabia, and they are taking away independence for this Republic and for the American people and a lot less independence for future generations.

I am no longer surprised, but I am amazed at how President Bush and his fellow Republicans are so eager to chip away at Social Security, weaken Social Security, and ultimately play roulette with our people's Social Security trust funds, which we voted seven times to put in the Social Security lockbox. They are raiding the lockbox.

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The American people deserve better. Working families deserve better. Your grandmothers and grandfathers deserve better. They have earned a secure retirement.

We have to get back to the fiscal basics and put Social Security first. Would you rather have \$300 today, or Social Security for all of your retirement tomorrows? Congress is the protector of Social Security, the primary