

For what?

Excuses and explanations cannot answer this question. We need, we deserve, we demand justification.

What justified the loss of American lives? What justified taking \$100 billion out of the pockets of our children, our grandchildren and unborn generations?

Three major American news organizations have cited leaks from Federal intelligence officials that the Bush administration manipulated intelligence about weapons of mass destruction, that the President and his advisers told the intelligence community to provide evidence to support the war in Iraq.

In Britain, senior war correspondent Max Hastings, who supported the war against Iraq, wrote that "the Prime Minister committed British troops and sacrificed British lives on the basis of a deceit, and that stinks."

These accusations cannot go unanswered. We are not just talking about the veracity of the Bush administration. We are talking about the credibility of the United States of America. Our Nation's reputation is at stake.

The next time we go to our allies, the next time we go to the United Nations, they will doubt what we say. Our enemies will be safer, and our citizens will be less secure.

The President and members of his administration have an obligation to come clean, to put their cards on the table and level with the American people. What did they really know and when did they know it?

They are the ones who toured the country, beating the drums of war. They are the ones who told the American people that we needed to go to war. They are the ones who traveled the globe campaigning for a war to save us all from weapons of mass destruction.

In the name of our fallen soldiers, in the name of the credibility of the United States of America, in the name of what is right and just and true.

We need an answer, and we need it now.

JOB AND GROWTH, TAX CREDITS AND SMALL BUSINESS

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday President Bush signed the Jobs and Growth Act of 2003, a bill that I was proud to cosponsor. As a former small businessman, I believe I know something about what it takes to help build businesses and create jobs. But although our bill had to be compromised, it still has the ability to create more and better jobs for the American people.

Yet there are some in this body who say that this legislation is not fair. They say there is not sufficient tax relief for low income Americans.

Mr. Speaker, number one, they are wrong; and, number two, this is just

another example of Democrats trying to foment class warfare in America.

Let us get beyond the usual class warfare rhetoric and examine the facts.

First of all, for all practical purposes, low-income people do not pay income taxes. In fact, in this bill we take 3.7 million Americans off the tax rolls. That is right, almost 4 million people who paid income taxes last year will pay no income taxes this year. None. How much more tax relief can you receive than having your tax bill torn up, thrown away, abandoned?

These Americans join millions of other low-income Americans who have already been taken off the tax rolls in recent history.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, by lowering marginal rates, other low-income Americans benefit as well. Millions who were in the 15 percent tax bracket last year are now in the 10 percent tax bracket. More tax relief for low-income families.

The net result now is this: The bottom 50 percent of wage earners in America pay only 3.9 percent of the income taxes. In other words, half of all Americans, low-income Americans, pay almost none of the national income tax burden. In contrast, the top 10 percent of wage earners in America pay almost two-thirds of the income taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the critics of the jobs and growth bill fail to appreciate two other important facts:

Number one, tax relief is for taxpayers. If you do not pay taxes, you should not expect tax relief.

Number two, if you want jobs, give job creators tax relief. Tax relief is about capital. You cannot have capitalism without capital. You cannot claim to love jobs and then vilify job creators.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that some in this body want to turn our Tax Code into a welfare system. Well, guess what? We already have a welfare system. Fortunately, under a Republican Congress we have continued to move millions of Americans from welfare to work. And, to dispel the Democrat's disinformation campaign, we have increased Federal child care funding by 166 percent. We have increased Federal funding for housing by 75 percent. And, just this past year, we committed \$17 billion to the TANF welfare program.

Tax relief is different from welfare. Tax relief is about allowing taxpayers to keep more of what they earn, earn through their hard work, helping to keep them keeping more of their own wages for their own families.

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Mr. Speaker, let us not forget, it is not the government's money, it is the American family's money.

Furthermore, if critics of the Jobs and Growth Act truly care about low-income people, they should join us and help us move them off of welfare checks and onto paychecks, move them up from smaller paychecks to bigger paychecks. In other words, these crit-

ics should help us join together and create more jobs.

But Mr. Speaker, jobs are not created here in Washington, D.C. They are not created by the Federal Government. Jobs are created by hardworking risk-taking visionary men and women who, when granted access to capital, will roll up their sleeves and work hard to create that next generation of software or that new automobile repair shop or that innovative sign painting company, or any other enterprise. That is where jobs come from.

But Mr. Speaker, the number one impediment to launching new job-creating enterprises in America is access to capital. That is why we cut capital gains and dividend taxes in this bill. Additionally, we have lowered marginal tax rates. That is important because 80 percent of the tax relief at the top marginal rate goes to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

If we truly care about low-income families in America, let us quit trying to turn the Tax Code into a welfare system. If we want jobs, tax relief should go to job creators. If we want job fairness, then tax relief should go to taxpayers.

CHILD TAX CREDIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, our working families need a break. They need a break more than anyone in this country, especially since they bear the brunt of this weak economy. But, for some reason, the Bush administration continues to cast them aside in favor of the privileged few.

Working men and women are the backbone of this Nation. They are the ones who struggle day in and day out to provide the bare necessities for stable, happy homes. They know how hard it is to balance work and family, and they need our support.

The Bush administration, however, and the Republican leadership, in their faux "compassionate conservatism," continue to slap working families in the face. They said that the recent tax cut bill would provide relief for all Americans. But here is the truth: increases to the child tax credits were given to the families who need it the least, while low-income families were left with nothing. Worse hit were working families earning between \$10,500 and \$26,600 a year. Working families in this tax bracket were completely ignored. The Republican leadership denied them their fair share.

Mr. Speaker, I want Members to hear about a mother from my district, the Sixth District of California north of San Francisco across the Golden Gate Bridge. Cori and her family were cast aside by the Republicans.

Let me tell the Members about Cori. Cori came to a local Head Start program at a low point in her life. She was

a single parent without a support system and with very little money and very little self-esteem. She had just completed a recovery program and was seeking to put her life back together. It was the first time in years that she felt needed, comfortable, and good about herself and her life.

Cori went on to volunteer for Head Start. She then completed an AA degree in early childhood development because she wanted to give back to the program that got her on her feet. Now Cori has been a Head Start employee for the past 3 years, with the goal of getting a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Mr. Speaker, why should Cori be denied the child tax credit, while those making more than \$1 million a year received overall tax cuts totalling \$93,500 each? What definition of compassionate are we using here?

This attack on our working families must end. But sadly, the attack on working families does not stop with denying the child tax credit to Cori. Sometime soon we will debate a Republican bill to deny workers the benefits of overtime pay, the heart of the very Fair Labor Standards Act.

If the poorly named "Family Time Flexibility Act" passes, the Republican leadership will take a step to undermine protection of the 40-hour work week, so employers can avoid paying their workers like Cori overtime. This is not only poor economics for struggling families who count on overtime, it is just plain bad public policy.

It is time that we restore the balance for families so they can earn a living and meet family demands at the same time. We must pass H.R. 2286, which will expand the child tax credit and marriage penalty relief for lower-income families like Cori and her two children. Passing the legislation can be the first step in reversing the wrong done to these hard workers.

In the coming year, I plan to introduce legislation called the Balancing Act, which will improve the lives of working families and their children. That would mean providing paid family leave after the birth of a child, increasing the funding for child care, granting school breakfasts for all students, and helping with the care of aging parents. I urge my colleagues to join me in that effort.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to restore compassion for our Nation's working families, rather than our Nation's millionaires. Our families need to know that we have not forgotten them.

THE HAND OF HOPE

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, it is often repeated that a picture is worth a thousand words. A very powerful picture exemplifying that statement began circulating across America this last November. I would cite the commentary that accompanied it.

It should be the picture of the year, or perhaps the picture of the decade, but it will not be. In fact, unless Members obtain a copy of the U.S. paper in which it was published, they probably never saw it.

The picture was that of a 21-week-old unborn baby boy named Samuel Alexander Armas. He was being operated on by a surgeon by the name of Dr. Joseph Bruner. The baby was diagnosed with spina bifida, and would not have survived if removed from his mother's womb. But little Samuel's mother, Julie Armas, was an obstetrics nurse in Atlanta and she knew of Dr. Bruner's remarkable surgical procedure. Practicing at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, he performs these special operations while the baby is still in the womb.

During the procedure, the doctor removes the uterus via the C-section, and makes a small incision to operate on the baby. As Dr. Bruner completed the surgery on Samuel, this amazing little baby reached out his tiny but fully developed hand through the incision and firmly grasped the surgeon's finger. Dr. Bruner was reported as saying that when his finger was grasped, it was the most emotional moment of his life, and that for an instant during the procedure he was completely frozen and completely immobile.

The photograph captures this amazing event with perfect clarity. The editors title the picture "hand of hope." They said that this tiny little hand seemed to emerge to grasp the finger of Dr. Joseph Bruner, as if thanking him for the gift of life. Little Samuel's mother said they wept for days when they saw the picture. She said the photo reminds us that pregnancy is not about disability or an illness, it is about a little person. The operation was 100 percent successful, and little Samuel was born in perfect health.

Mr. Speaker, abortion on demand has taken the lives of 43 million little Americans. That is 10,000 times as many innocent lives as were taken in the tragedy of 9-11. Before the sun sets in America today, 4,000 more will have died, nameless and alone.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for those of us on both sides of this aisle to begin to ask ourselves the real question, and the real question simply is this: does abortion take the life of a child? If it does not, then it is a nonissue. But if abortion really does kill a baby, then those of us in the seat of freedom standing here, given the charge to protect the innocent, are living in the midst of the greatest human holocaust in the history of humanity.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, if we lose the courage to protect the innocent in this place we will never find the will or the courage to protect any kind of liberty for anyone.

Mr. Speaker, today we were asked to protect a very small number of those children who were already partially born and only moments away from taking their very first breath. It beggars

human imagination that voting to support such basic compassionate humanity is even debatable, and that it got 100 votes to the contrary is a disgrace beyond expression.

Mr. Speaker, the tiny hand of hope reaches out to all of us today and asks only for mercy. God help us all to hear that little voice in our own hearts.

CHILD TAX CREDIT

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the way that the Republicans have devastated the child tax credit for low-income families.

When the child tax credit was created in 1975, it was for the purpose of helping families, not hurting them; and it was not meant to create divisions within parents and families, it was intended to include and benefit all families.

Initially, it seemed that the Republicans and President Bush's \$400 per child increase in the child tax credit was meant for all families. At least, that is what we were told. According to the Bush plan, families would receive the checks for this credit in either July or August as a way to jumpstart the economy that, of course, this administration has crippled, losing more than \$2.7 million jobs since the beginning of the Bush presidency.

Somehow, though, the attempt to help families did not extend to low-income families. The same people who were already left out of the President's tax cut on dividends, which President Bush, of course, offered the wealthiest of Americans, are the same individuals, the same families that the budget cuts are hitting the hardest.

When Republican negotiators went behind closed doors without any Democratic conferees, suddenly the families of approximately 12 million children were excluded from the child tax credit. Nationwide, this means that one out of every six American children were excluded.

What the Republicans did here is really revealing on two different levels. First, it says that their credibility really is an issue. Second, even worse, it says that they think that the priorities of the country should focus on fattening the wallets of the wealthy, not helping those who need help the most.

The Republicans' actions clearly represent a credibility gap, also. When the tax plan first came through the House and Senate it included the child tax credit, but apparently that credit did not fit with the numbers that they needed. It did not fit with their effort to provide tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. They needed \$3.5 billion more for the cuts for the wealthiest Americans, so they eliminated credit for all families making between \$10,500 and \$26,625. What a terrible thing to do.

The Republicans, with the blessing of the White House, clearly recognized