

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

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

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, tonight I rise as cofounder of a new Republican effort dedicated to bringing the disinfectant of sunshine into the shadowy corners of the wasteful Washington bureaucracy. We call ourselves the Washington Waste Watchers. Do not be confused, the Washington Waste Watchers is not about counting calories. Instead, we are about counting the myriad of ways that the Federal Government routinely squanders the hard-earned money of the American family. We are here to look after the family budget by checking the growth of the Federal budget.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all my colleagues are well aware of the size of our Federal deficit. It is large and getting larger every day, at a time when our homeland security needs are paramount.

Now, Democrats say the only way to cut the deficit is to yet again raise taxes on the American family. Sound familiar? It is the same refrain we have heard from them for many, many years. We do have a large deficit, but it is not because the American people are taxed too little; it is because Washington spends too much.

Since I was born, the Federal budget has grown seven times faster than the family budget. Seven times faster. This is unconscionable. And the Democrats who claim to be concerned about Federal deficits have voted to spend almost \$1 trillion more than our budget allows, \$1 trillion more. There is a spending problem in Washington, not a taxing problem, and much of the spending is absolute pure waste, abuse and fraud.

For the moment, let us talk about fraud. In many instances, our government stands idly by while criminals routinely defraud the American people of billions of dollars each year. Here are just a few examples.

In just five individual cases, the United States Department of Agriculture was defrauded of almost \$6 million in food stamp benefits; \$6 million wasted by the Washington bureaucracy. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

Over a 4-year period, a California law student helped two companies bilk Medicaid out of \$9 million in false claims; \$9 million wasted. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

In Los Angeles, a woman and three conspirators were convicted of wire

fraud after they were caught helping unqualified borrowers obtain \$70 million in fake FHA-insured loans; \$70 million wasted. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

One Veterans Administration employee embezzled over \$11.2 million from the VA. The woman, a 30-year VA employee, was the last of 12 co-conspirators arrested in the scheme which involved the resurrection of claims filed for deceased veterans; \$11 million wasted. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

Twenty-three percent of the people who have had their student loans forgiven due to disability actually hold full-time jobs, costing the Federal Government \$40 million a year; \$40 million, just wasted. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

Mr. Speaker, these are just a handful of examples of the types of fraud that are being perpetrated against the American taxpayer every day, and we have just begun to scratch the surface.

One of the hallmarks of the recent Enron scandal was not just the profound outrage at the criminals who committed the fraud, but the recognition that the system had to be reformed. It was not enough just to catch the crooks, we had to change the system of accountability to make sure that it never happened again. Washington spending is a scandal, and it must be changed.

Once you begin to look at the reports, it is easy to see that many Washington programs routinely waste 10, 20, 30 percent of their budgets due to waste, fraud and abuse, and have for years. Yet Federal agencies routinely spend next to nothing policing these multibillion-dollar budgets. In the real world, when people lose this much money, they either go broke or they go to jail, but in Washington it is simply another excuse to take more money away from the American family.

Mr. Speaker, there are many ways that we can save money in Washington without cutting any needed services and without raising taxes on our hard-working Americans, because when it comes to Federal programs, it is not how much money Washington spends, it is how Washington spends the money.

Mr. Speaker, at a time of huge Federal deficits, unparalleled homeland security needs and a crushing family tax burden, the Washington Waste Watchers are here to let Americans know there is an alternative to even more Democrat tax increases on the American family.

THE UNDERFUNDING OF HEAD START

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

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak this

evening on a very important topic, the Head Start Program.

During the August recess, I had three opportunities to visit with Head Start workers at the Dane County Parent Council, a nonprofit agency that runs 13 Head Start sites. What I learned during those visits shocked and worried me, and I believe it will shock you also.

Thirty percent of these Dane County, Wisconsin, Head Start workers have faced or experienced an eviction from their housing. Fifty-five percent have had phones or other utilities shut off. Forty-five percent have used a food bank. Sixty-two percent make so little money that their own children are Head Start-eligible.

These figures are stunning. Head Start is a program designed to break the cycle of poverty. Instead, it has become a program that guarantees poverty to some of its front-line workers.

Workers and the management at the Dane County Parent Council are currently engaged in tense contract negotiations. Their most recent contract expired last night. At the center of these contentious negotiations are the extremely low salaries paid to these front-line Head Start workers.

So why do these Head Start workers put up with low wages and face the daily challenges that accompany poverty and near poverty? Because they are dedicated to the Head Start Program and the good that it does for so many children and families, oftentimes their own families.

One woman recounted for me how her own son had been a Head Start student. As a child, he had delayed speech development, but today he is a 15-year-old honor roll student. His mother, now a Head Start worker herself, knows firsthand of the good that the Head Start Program does. So despite the low wages and challenges that she faces in making sure her family's basic needs get met, she remains committed to being a part of Head Start.

This level of commitment is admirable, and it is the sort of commitment that we as Members of Congress should show to the Head Start Program as well.

I was sad to report to these struggling Head Start workers that the House-passed Head Start bill is not going to help their situation. In fact, the House-passed bill gives Head Start teachers a meager 0.4 percent raise. This is insulting, not to mention unconscionable. This is not going to help the workers that I met with who are constantly faced with the challenge of making ends meet. For these families the ends do not meet. They do not even come close.

In Congress we pass bills that authorize a lot of spending. Our appropriation bills authorize billions upon billions of dollars. But I urge my colleagues to stop for a moment and remember that it would take just a small amount of money, a drop in the bucket really, to do right by these devoted workers who do so much to bring hope to the next generation of youngsters.