

huge public policy, policy that affects 20, 30, 40, 50 million people at a swipe, not little issues. Sure, there is the museum that goes up in somebody's district, and people get all excited about the pork involved in that kind of thing. Those are not the issues people should be outraged about.

The outrage ought to be about issues like, take the pharmaceutical bill. It comes to the floor. Medicare affects 40 million people. The issue sits on this floor frozen in time for almost 2 hours while the leadership of the majority tries to get the votes. We are told that the voting closes down after 15 minutes, but that issue could go for 2 hours. Where is the outrage in this body?

Mr. Speaker, one Member even suggested he was given a little extra encouragement.

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

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

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

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

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BUDGET AND FISCAL POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of an issue that has commanded more attention on the floor of this House, and rightly so, probably since its inception, than the issue of the budget, and how much we should be spending, and how much we are going to spend. This year is no different in that regard in that there will be a great deal of attention paid to it and a lot of words expended on it.

I am a member of the Committee on the Budget, and we are beginning that process today to write the budget resolution, that document that we then submit to Congress for its approval and will hopefully become sort of an outline for how we will spend the taxpayers' money in this next fiscal year.

As we embark upon that project, we are given a lot of information to start

our deliberations. I must say the information that we have been given this year, in just the last few days actually, is really quite startling. It prompts certainly me and I think it will prompt many other people to begin perhaps an early discussion of the issue of the budget and what we are in store for when we start looking at some of the implications of our fiscal policy.

There is a friend of mine who is an ex-governor of the State of Colorado, and he is now teaching at the University of Denver in Colorado. He is teaching a class called Hard Choices, Difficult Choices I believe is the name of it. He presents his students with a variety of difficult questions they will have to answer from a public policy standpoint, what would they do if they were in our shoes.

I cannot think of a more difficult task to put before anyone than to come up with the right decision when it comes to how much money we are going to be spending in the next fiscal year, how much money are we going to be taking away from our constituents not just today, but how much debt are we going to be giving our grandchildren and their grandchildren, and millions and millions and millions of Americans yet unborn. It is frightening, it is overwhelming, and I can understand why many Americans, perhaps even some of our colleagues here on the floor, would tend to just let all of this go over their heads saying this is overwhelming stuff, the numbers are so huge, I am just not going to focus on it that much. But I suggest that it is imperative that every single Member and every single citizen focus on these numbers and on the debt we are incurring and on the enormous amount of money we are spending even though we are not taking in the same amount of money in taxes.

Let me preface my remarks by saying I am absolutely convinced that the problem here and that I am going to address in the next few minutes has nothing to do with the possibility that we are not taking enough money away from taxpayers. I believe that the tax rates, especially for folks in the middle- and upper-income tax rates are quite high, significant, and high enough, certainly.

I think a case could be made that we are not taking enough from everyone in the country, every income earner. Some people have suggested that some sort of tax, there ought to be a minimum tax that anybody who makes any money has to pay because then they have a stake in the system. I think there is merit in that discussion, and I would like to have more of it. I think the people who are paying taxes are certainly paying enough taxes. The problem is not on that side of the ledger, as far as I am concerned. The problem is almost entirely on the other side of the ledger, the spending side of the ledger.

The blame can be shared by every single Member, myself included. I do

not stand here as someone who has never voted for a program increase. I certainly have. I have voted almost every time in the 5 years I have been here for the defense appropriations. We recently all had the opportunity to vote for the homeland security appropriations, and I have supported those. I believe, and I still believe, that the primary responsibility of the Federal Government is to protect and defend the people of this country and almost all of the other things that we do are extraneous to that particular purpose.

Surprising as it is to many people, there is, of course, no requirement in the Constitution of the United States that the Federal Government provide funding for the education of children, although it is certainly a laudable goal. There is nothing in the Constitution that requires us to be doing probably 75 percent of what we do. It is not required. We are required to protect and defend, and that is why I have been willing to go along with increases in those budgets. But we have to make some very hard choices, very hard choices for all of us because we are at a point where the case could be made that the budget is out of control.

We are now approaching \$500 billion in deficits for the next fiscal year, and we can no longer think about this as something that we can get under control in the near future, that we can grow our way out of it or tax our way out of it. Those two things I do not believe are legitimate short-term goals.

I certainly believe that the economy can be stimulated by a lot of the actions we have taken, including tax cuts; and I believe we are seeing some of that happen. I think there are a lot of indicators to suggest that the economy is recovering. We are noticing a growth in productivity, we are noticing a growth in manufacturing jobs, a general growth in the economy and economic activity for the third quarter of the last year, which I should say was almost historical, over 8 percent. There are certainly some indicators that would suggest that the economy is getting stimulated and that we are beginning to see a growth even in the jobs category which has been the one that has been the most reluctant and most difficult to actually affect positively by our tax actions.

However, I do not believe that growth will ever be enough to overcome the spending spree this Congress and past Congresses have been on, along with the administration.

Something that was just given to Members not too long ago by the comptroller, and it was put out by the U.S. Accounting Office and the comptroller, is information that I know for a lot of people would be pretty darn boring stuff. When discussed, people think it is billions and trillions, what is relevant about it.

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Again, I think it is really important for us to understand, Mr. Speaker, that