

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

(Mr. HINCHEY 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 New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey 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 Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

RESTORING FISCAL DISCIPLINE TO GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for half the remaining minutes prior to midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that we are going to get the rest of the minutes until midnight; that the other side did not plan to come, just a point of order, I guess, and you can tell us at the appropriate time when our time is up. We just want to thank you for the time that we have here this evening.

It is almost midnight at our Nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C., and yet, as members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, we are 37 members strong, and we are here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives because we believe the time has come to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our Nation's government.

Today, the U.S. national debt is \$8,538,760,336,803.43, and for every man, woman, and child in America, your share of the national debt is \$28,564.23. As you walk the Halls of Congress, you will notice this poster outside the door of some Members of Congress, which signifies that they are members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, and each day this number, unfortunately, changes, and, unfortunately, each day this number goes up.

I am very pleased to be joined this evening by one of the founding members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, someone who has really been outspoken in the area of trying to restore fiscal discipline to our Nation's government and particularly been doing a lot of work in the area of accountability, being accountable for the taxpayers' dollars, and that is my friend Mr. JOHN TANNER from Tennessee. At this time I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. TANNER. I appreciate my colleague being here tonight, and I want to take a couple of minutes to talk about something that is not a political matter, really. It is a matter of our government: theirs, ours, Independents, Americans.

We have seen financial mismanagement of the assets of us all on a scale that really I don't remember in any history book of American history since this country was founded. Look, this is not something that is easy to talk about, because everyone who is in public office wants to give good news to people. We all have to run for elections, and one can't really run for an election talking about doom and gloom or about financial mismanagement. People want to hear uplifting things, people want to have hope, people want to get better. But, unfortunately, things are getting worse, and they are getting worse by the minute. That chart that you have has already changed. We are borrowing almost \$1 million a minute, as we stand here tonight.

You know, under our system of government, we have an executive branch, we have a judicial branch, and we have a legislative branch. The legislative branch is supposed to make the law, the executive branch is supposed to execute the law, or carry it out, and the judicial branch is to interpret the law. Well, we have a breakdown. The legislative branch in the last 5½ years has abdicated completely its responsibility to oversee the money that is taken away from the citizens of this country involuntarily in the form of taxation.

The tax laws are written right here, in this room and on the other side of the Capitol in the Senate, and they are appropriated to the executive branch to be spent, hopefully on behalf of the citizens of this country. What we have seen, according to the September 6 GAO report, that is, the General Accounting Office report, is a complete abdication of any financial responsibility.

As a businessperson, one looks at the government of the United States and one sees a failing business. Not only is it failing because we continue to borrow massive amounts of money in my name and yours and everybody else's around here as a citizen of this country, but Congress, this Congress is not even asking this administration what did you do with the money. And if they asked the administration, the administration couldn't tell them.

The one thing I think that the American people ought to demand out of this Congress, or any other Congress, is what happened to the money. Tell us what you did with the money. We may not agree with it, but we want to know what happened to it. Well, they can't tell us. Sixteen of 23 Federal agencies, according to the GAO, cannot produce an audit. In other words, they can't tell you what they did with the money.

Not only that, you have a trailer picture you have shown before with all these trailers in Hope, Arkansas. The September 6 GAO report reflects that Congress has appropriated \$38 billion to 23 different Federal agencies for Katrina relief, the great hurricane; but no central agency tracks the funding. So, in effect, neither Congress nor the American people have any way of knowing how the money is spent.

But we do know this: more than \$10.6 billion has been awarded to private contractors for gulf coast recovery and reconstruction. Only 30 percent of all of those contracts were bid on a full and open competition. The others were just given as sole source single contracts to people for a myriad of things. FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, spent \$3 million for 4,000 camp beds that were never used and \$10 million to renovate a military barracks that was used as temporary housing for six people. No private company in the country could stand this kind of financial mismanagement.

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Because of this subcontractor system that was put in place because of these sole source contracts, just given to friends I guess of the administration, taxpayers paid an average of \$2,480 per roof for a repair job that should have cost under \$300, according to a report from Knight-Ridder newspaper.

Credit card abuse. Credit card abuse by government employees after the storm led to the purchase of 2,000 sets of dog booties costing more than \$68,000, a 63-inch plasma screen television costing \$8,000, and 20 flat bottom boats, only eight of which FEMA has in its records, at twice the retail price. I wish I was making this stuff up. It comes out of the GAO report.

The Department of Homeland Security Inspector General identified 1,395 cases of reported criminal activity, including officials who accepted bribes to inflate the number of meals provided by one of these sole source government contractors and to falsify the amount of debris a company had removed.

After Katrina, FEMA purchased 24,967 manufactured homes and 1,755 modular homes at a cost of \$915 million for housing and temporary offices. The Inspector General said that as of January of this year, only 4,600 manufactured homes and 100 modular homes had been used at all. You have got pictures of them sinking in the mud in Hope, Arkansas.

Mr. ROSS. FEMA at one time had 10,777. At this time, they are down, to

their credit, they are now down, a year after Hurricane Katrina, to 9,778 brand new, fully furnished 16-foot wide, 60-foot long mobile homes, built-in whirlpools, built-in microwaves, fully furnished, 9,778 brand new, fully furnished manufactured homes that never got to storm victims from Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita. They are simply sitting in a hay meadow in Hope, Arkansas, more than a year after Hurricane Katrina and 450 miles from the eye of the storm.

This is a symbol of what is wrong with this administration and this Republican Congress, and this is a symbol of why we need to pass the Blue Dog accountability plan, a plan that you helped write, that we wrote together to restore accountability to our government.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. TANNER. Again, this is not a political statement. I can't imagine the most partisan person in the world saying that this is good government, when we have money leaving here through a fire hose and nobody asking them where it is going or what happened to it, and if they did ask them, they couldn't tell them. They can't produce an audit. They can't tell you what they did with the money. This is the grossest kind much financial mismanagement on a scale that I can ever recall in the history of this country.

We don't even get to Iraq and all the sole source contracts that have been given there and the billions of dollars that cannot be tracked or traced or even accounted for. I don't like to pay taxes any more than anybody else, but the one thing I do expect is the Congress to at least exercise its oversight authority to the extent that they hold people accountable who are spending this money.

I know in business, you ask somebody, well, what is this expenditure for? "I don't know, man. I can't tell you." Nobody would put up with that. No taxpayer would put up with it. And yet in our public life, in our public business, in the government of the United States it is happening every day, and people are tolerating it because you have a compliant Congress, a friendly administration. Nobody wants to embarrass anybody else.

So what we see here is the grossest kind of financial mismanagement on a scale that is literally breathtaking.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no Republican here to occupy the rest of the time before midnight, the time will continue to be occupied by the two gentlemen who hold the floor now.

Mr. TANNER. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will finish up, because what we have done is introduced a bill, it is not going anywhere, unfortunately, because we don't have the power to pass it or the votes to pass it, that basically says when the Inspector General of any agency identifies either, one, a situation where the agency can't

tell you what they did with the money that was appropriated with them, or, two, they identify a high risk program, that is government talk for a program that doesn't work, then in that event Congress must hold a hearing, a public hearing, about this matter, whatever it may be, within 60 days, so that at least the citizens of this country will know that their money is being wasted or stolen or somehow mismanaged.

I think that is imminently reasonable. I can't imagine anyone saying we don't want to know what happened to the money we have taken away from people involuntary in the form of taxation and given to any administration. We simply don't want to know what happened to it. That to me is incredible and is not true.

So I hope people will demand that Congress engage in what its constitutional responsibility is, and that is to oversee what happens to the money they remove from people's pockets involuntarily. That is all we are asking in this House bill that you referred to, that they hold a hearing and find out what is going on. If they can't tell you what they did with it, as far as I am concerned, they don't get it next year.

This is a situation where we are literally mortgaging our country to people who do not have the same interest that the Americans have in world affairs, and we are not even paying attention to what we are doing.

I appreciate you doing this every Tuesday night, but I hope that we can do something about this situation, because it gets worse not by the minute now, it gets worse by the second as we continue to borrow.

We borrowed probably in the neighborhood of \$20 million in the last 20 minutes. No country can survive that. We can't survive it. We used to say it is up to our children and grandchildren. But people say no, no, no, we are going to have all of these things. And who is going to pay for it? Just borrow the money, borrow the money, borrow the money.

Well, sooner or later, unless one can figure out how to repeal the laws of arithmetic, the financial mismanagement of this administration and the lack of oversight and accountability by this Congress is going to put this country literally in a deep black hole. Before it is too late, I hope that the people who care about this will rise up and say we want our government back, because that is what we are talking about.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. TANNER, a founding Member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, for joining us this evening to talk about his bill, our Blue Dog bill accountability, to demand that this Republican Congress become accountable for how they spend our tax money.

Mr. Speaker, the total national debt from 1789 to 2000 was \$5.67 trillion. But by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to \$10.88 trillion. This is

a doubling of the 211-year debt in just 10 years.

Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget. What we call the debt tax, D-E-B-T. You can see it here.

Today the national debt is \$8,538,760,336,803 and some change. For every man woman and child, their share of the national debt, \$28,564. Again, the debt tax. That is one tax that cannot be repealed, that cannot go away until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order and restore common sense in this Chamber. The current national debt, as you can see, is \$8.5 trillion.

Why do deficits matter? They matter because deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and our grandchildren with liabilities. They are the ones that are going to have to fix this mess.

They increase our reliance on foreign lenders. Yes, I said foreign lenders, who now own about 40 percent of our Nation's debt. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of a little over \$2 trillion of our public debt. Compare that to only \$623 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993. Put it another way: This President, this President and this Republican Congress in the last 5½ years have borrowed more money from foreign lenders than the previous 42 presidents combined. Our Nation is borrowing money from places like Communist China to fund tax cuts for people in this country earning over \$400,000 a year.

It simply does not make sense. Those are not the kind of values I learned growing up at the Midway Methodist Church outside of Prescott, Arkansas. I learned about being a good steward. And here as Members of Congress we have a duty and a responsibility to be a good steward of the taxpayers' money, and we believe this Republican Congress is failing us in that regard.

So who do we owe all this money to? Here is the top ten list, Japan, \$640.1 billion; China, \$321.4 billion; United Kingdom, \$179.5 billion; OPEC. Imagine that, we wonder why we had \$3 a gallon gasoline in August. I know it is coming down now, but I would ask you to think about this: I believe we all should be a lot more concerned about what gasoline and diesel fuel is going to cost a month after the election instead of a month before. OPEC, we owe OPEC \$98 billion; Korea, \$72.4 billion; Taiwan, \$68.9 billion; Caribbean banking centers, \$61.7 billion; Hong Kong, \$46.6 billion; Germany, \$46.5 billion. And all this debate about immigration reform, get a load of this. Rounding out the top 10 countries that the United States of America have borrowed money from to give tax cuts to those earning over \$400,000 a year, Mexico. Our Nation has borrowed \$40.1 billion from Mexico.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. TANNER. You are talking about OPEC and the price of gasoline. Gasoline in July was \$3-plus a gallon. Can

you name one thing that has changed between July and now as it relates to the world situation that would make gasoline come down? The uncertainty actually with regard to Iran and other oil producing countries is more now than it was then.

The only thing that has changed is we are closer to November 7th. No other factor has changed. And yet we see a dramatic reduction in the last couple weeks in gasoline prices. But the underlying factors are still there. All the uncertainty about the oil producing countries, whether it be Iraq or the situation in the Middle East, is the same as it was in July. It is interesting, isn't it?

Mr. ROSS. It is very interesting. Let me say as a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have a plan to put America on a path toward energy independence. If we had time we would go into it in all the details tonight.

I was out visiting with constituents in 34 towns in my district in August talking about my plan to put America on a path toward energy independence. We have a plan to do that as members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. TANNER. We need to start on it tonight.

Mr. ROSS. We have a plan. We have a plan to restore accountability to our government, to be sure that our government is accountable for your tax money, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan, in fact it is a 12 point plan, for budget reform.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are standing here willing, ready and able and asking that the Republican Members of this Congress work with us, work with us to restore common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government so we can pay down this debt.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FATTAH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today until 4 p.m.

Mr. CASTLE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for the week of September 25 on account of medical reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BURGESS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and September 27, 28, and 29.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today and September 27.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia and to include extraneous material, notwithstanding the fact that it exceeds two pages of the RECORD and is estimated by the Public Printer to cost \$1,584.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1442. An act to complete the codification of title 46, United States Code, "shipping", as positive law.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 1275. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7172 North Tongass Highway, Ward Cove, Alaska, as the "Alice R. Brusich Post Office Building".

S. 1323. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located on Lindbald Avenue, Girdwood, Alaska, as the "Dorothy and Connie Hibbs Post Office Building".

S. 2690. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8801 Sudley Road in Manassas, Virginia, as the "Harry J. Parrish Post Office".

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, September 27, 2006, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

9594. A letter from the Acting Deputy Maritime Administrator and Chief Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the annual report of the Maritime Administration (MARAD) for Fiscal Year 2005, pursuant to 46 U.S.C. app. 1118; to the Committee on Armed Services.

9595. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of De-

fense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Joseph L. Yakovac, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

9596. A letter from the Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting notification of advance billing for the Defense-Wide Working Capital Fund, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2208; to the Committee on Armed Services.

9597. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the grade of real admiral (lower half) accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

9598. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 06-69, concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Iraq for defense articles and services; to the Committee on International Relations.

9599. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 06-55, concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to United Arab Emirates for defense articles and services; to the Committee on International Relations.

9600. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 06-59, concerning the Department of the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Netherlands for defense articles and services; to the Committee on International Relations.

9601. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act, Transmittal No. 06-00A, relating to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 92-18 of 03 March 1992; to the Committee on International Relations.

9602. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 06-68, concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Iraq for defense articles and services; to the Committee on International Relations.

9603. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Iraq (Transmittal No. DDTC 049-06); to the Committee on International Relations.

9604. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) and (d) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed transfer of major defense articles or defense services to the Government of Canada (Transmittal No. DDTC 011-06); to the Committee on International Relations.

9605. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed license for the export of