

some impatience. I come in frustration that I am still a second-class citizen in my own House.

Until I can represent the people of the District of Columbia as a full American citizen, this frustration and impatience will continue.

I had hoped to be able to vote on the bills we all ran on that are now before the House. I came to speak today, but once again, when the vote came, I could not vote. I couldn't vote because I was not even allowed the vote in the Committee of the Whole that I won when the Democrats were last in power.

My people in the District have chastised me for even trying to get the Committee of the Whole vote. They perhaps recognize that it is a hubris that I wished at least to vote in this House as we convened, and they are perhaps right. They tell me, we are not in any way interested in another second-class vote, ELEANOR. It is time for first-class rights for the people of the District of Columbia.

So I accept their chastisement and pledge to them that I will not rest, now that Democrats are in power, until Democrats do as they have always said, that they sought power to do, to give votes to the people of the District of Columbia.

I have tried everything, I have tried statehood, I have tried Committee of the Whole. It is time to try the real thing, Mr. Speaker, when there are 650,000 people who pay their taxes and have met every obligation, and are not recognized as citizens in their own House and send somebody to the House that is not even recognized to vote on this House, not even in the Committee of the Whole.

I come to express their frustration, to say I am leaving all that behind. I have introduced the bill they want. I accept their chastisement. We want our votes. We want it in the 110th Congress, and we want it now. I speak for them as a woman who knows what it means to be a second-class citizen, and who, once she left the District went to law school, said, I shall never again be a second-class citizen. Yes, I grew up in segregated schools in this town, in segregated Washington. That is what it meant to be a second-class citizen. Now to be a second-class civics citizen, after 200 years, has become too much to bear.

So I have introduced a bill to make it absolutely clear, as my people have said I must do today, that there is boiling determination among the people of the District of Columbia to get this vote. Not in January. We have respected the right of the Congress to come forward with the bills that are of great importance to the country, but those of us who believe that the vote is basic, is basic to Democrats, is basic to America, I believe we should move on after January and finally keep the promise that at least Democrats have made to the House and that I commend Republicans for getting us very close to in the 109th Congress.

This is the 110th, Mr. Speaker. This is the moment of truth. This is the moment when the Democrats have not only the opportunity, but the obligation to give a vote in the 110th Congress to the people of the District of Columbia.

REMEMBERING QUINCY BEAVER, SR.

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to announce the passing of a great American, Quincy Beaver, Sr. Quincy had been a resident of Carson, California, for 38 years. His contributions to his community, the State of California, and the world are legend. He was a passionate advocate for justice and equality and devoted countless hours working in political, civil rights and labor union movements.

Quincy's community and social activism span nearly 7 decades. Upon receiving an honorable discharge from the military in 1945, Quincy returned to Los Angeles where he immediately began to serve his community. Given his passionate commitment to service, he was presented numerous accolades and awards that are too numerous to list.

But a few of Quincy's leadership positions, honors and awards include Chair of the Employment Labor Committee of the Los Angeles chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, referred to as CORE, board member of the South Central Welfare Planning Council, board member of the Charles R. Drew Community Advisory Council, founding member of the Carson/Torrance NAACP, and Chair of the chapter's First Executive Board, member of the Compton and Long Beach chapters of the NAACP, and board member of the Campaign for a Citizens' Police Review Board.

Quincy was a major player in the creation of the Southern California Free South Africa movement and a founding member of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Democratic Club, and elected its first president in 1972.

He worked in numerous local, State and national political campaigns; and during the 1972 campaign, Quincy formed the Black Workers for McGovern. In 1984, he founded and served as chairperson of the 31st Congressional District Jesse Jackson for President Campaign.

For the last 44 years, Quincy was a member of the California Democratic Council, CDC, a state-wide organization of Democratic clubs where he held numerous positions in the organization, including immediate past president.

Quincy was married to Geneva Phillips, who was his friend, his confidant, his caregiver, and the love of his life. They shared a passion for community

service and grass-roots politics. He was the proud father of four children.

We will sorely miss Quincy's unswerving commitment to community service, quality education, to jobs and to safe working conditions for all people. We will certainly miss his community activism. Dear Quincy, rest in peace.

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BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening on behalf of the 44 member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. We are a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that are committed to restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. During the 109th session of Congress, we had 37 members; in the 110th session of Congress, we have grown to 44 members, 44 fiscally conservative Democrats that share my vision of putting America on a path toward fiscal responsibility, putting America on a path toward accountability, and putting America on a path that will restore common sense to our national government.

As you walk the Halls of Congress, as you walk the Cannon House Office Building, the Longworth House Office Building, as you walk the Rayburn House Office Building, you will see this poster, Mr. Speaker; and as you see this poster, it will be a symbol that you are walking by an office that houses a Blue Dog member. You will find 44 of these posters in the Halls of Congress to remind the American people and to remind the Members of Congress and to remind all of us as we walk these Halls that our Nation is one that is tragically in debt.

The current national debt of these United States of America is \$8,690,905,471,722, and actually 43 cents. I just didn't have room to put it on the poster. I ran out of room. And for every man, woman, and child in America, your share of the national debt is \$29,005.60. It is what we have coined in the Blue Dog Coalition as the debt tax, D-E-B-T tax. It is one tax that cannot be cut, that cannot be repealed until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Mr. Speaker, you might be thinking, Now, didn't President Clinton leave us with a balanced budget, the first one in some 40 years? Didn't we have a balanced budget from 1998 through 2001? Yes, Mr. Speaker, we did. But in the past 6 years, this Republican President and this Republican Congress has given us record budget deficit after record budget deficit.

On this chart you will see the four largest deficits ever in our Nation's history. The first rank was 2004 when our Nation wrote \$413 billion worth of hot checks. The second largest deficit

ever in our Nation's history was in 2003 when our Nation wrote \$378 billion in hot checks. In 2005, it was \$318 billion. And in 2006, the President actually had a press conference to brag on the fact that he came in under projection and only wrote \$296 billion worth of hot checks, the largest deficit year after year after year under this Republican-controlled Congress that has given us the largest debt ever in our Nation's history.

As members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, we believe that the American people have given us the majority in this Congress because they want us to do something about it; and, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We have a 12-point plan to restore budget discipline and common sense to our national government.

Why is this important? It is important because if you think with me, 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. That is a doubling, 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, and the debt tax, D-E-B-T tax, is one that cannot be repealed.

Mr. Speaker, the reason this should matter to every man, woman, and child in America is quite simple: deficits do matter. Deficits reduce economic growth; they burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities; they increase our reliance on foreign lenders who now own 40 percent of our debt. Let me repeat that: foreign lenders now own 40 percent of our debt.

Put another way, this administration and this Republican Congress over the past 6 years have borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors than the previous 42 Presidents combined. It is time to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Why? Why does it matter to the working families and seniors to this country? It is quite simple. Our Nation is borrowing some \$1 billion a day. We are spending one-half billion dollars each day paying interest on the debt we have already got before we increase it another \$1 billion today. And as you can see, the red graph is the increase we spend on your tax money paying interest on the national debt. The blue is how much we spend on education. Look at the difference. The red graph illustrates the amount of your tax money that is going not to pay principle but to pay interest on the national debt. The blue represents how much we are investing in our young people, how much we are spending on education. The green represents how much we are spending on homeland security. Tragically, the dark blue illustrates how much we are spending taking care of our veterans.

It is time this country gets its priorities in order, and I believe the American people on November 7 spoke loud

and clear in giving us a chance to lead in this Chamber, and we are ready to lead, and we are ready to lead with the Blue Dog Coalition's 12-point plan for budget reform.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that we have grown to 44 members in the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, and one of those members that has joined our ranks is the gentleman from Ohio, and at this time I would yield to my friend from Ohio, CHARLIE WILSON, for as much time as he would like to take.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as Congressman ROSS said, I am a new Member, Mr. Speaker, and it is a pleasure to be here from Ohio. And one of the major concerns is the amount of debt that we have created in this country.

One of the reasons that I have joined the Blue Dogs is I like the idea of us having a balanced budget. I truly believe, Mr. Speaker, that Congress cannot buy on credit without being responsible for the credit card.

This is not the principle that I have lived by all my life as a successful businessman and these are not the principles that our government can run by. We need to be accountable. We need to be able to step forward and show what our money is being used for, and not to spend more than we have.

Each and every one of us has budgets within our home, we have budgets within our life that we use every day. We know that we have to live within our budget or we have bad consequences. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, there is no difference for us as a government. We have to live within our means. And to see the transformation that has happened in the last 6 years in going from a large surplus of \$400 billion to now a nearly \$9 trillion balance of debt, D-E-B-T as Congressman ROSS says, in our government.

It is time that we start saying to the Congress and to the administration we must live within our means. We have to know that the Blue Dogs are going to be watching and are going to be concerned, and one of the plans that has been set forth by the Blue Dogs is what we call PAYGO. That means that you don't buy anything that you are going to pay for to go forward until you decide what you are going to eliminate. It is just like each and every one of us does in our lives every day. We know that we can't just go out and buy anything, that we have to budget for it, we have to make an opportunity so that we are able to pay for it.

And so one of the new plans that you are going to be hearing coming out of this 110th Congress is going to be the PAYGO, that means that our spending must be paid for before we go forward. This is just one of the plans that the Blue Dogs are taking responsibility for to help us put a lid on the spending that is going on within our country.

I am so proud to join these other 43 people and now 44 of us in the Blue

Dogs in bringing about accountability and helping us to put spending caps on what is going on in our government. I am delighted to be one of the speakers today that is concerned about what is going on in our country and look forward to working to bring fiscal responsibility to this government.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON) for joining us on the floor this evening for the Blue Dog Special Order as we talk about restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. And the gentleman from Ohio, a new member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, he mentioned that one of the things that we have done already in this 110th Congress under the Democratic leadership is reinstitute the PAYGO rules. That means pay-as-you-go. And on the very first day in the first 24 hours of the 110th session of Congress, we are very pleased as members of the Blue Dog Coalition that the leadership of this House under Democratic control chose to include in their rules package reinstituting the PAYGO rule, because that rule was in place from 1998 through 2001 when we saw a balanced budget in this country. It makes sense to me.

You know, 49 States require a balanced budget. Holly Ross requires a balanced budget at the Ross family in Prescott, Arkansas. We own a small business; we are required to balance the books there. And in our opinion, it is not asking our Nation too much to balance its books. And one of the ways that you begin the process of doing that is instituting the PAYGO rule, which means pay-as-you-go. If you have got a wonderful program, then show us what program you are going to cut to pay for it.

Now, I got a big kick last week during the debate on this very floor when Republicans jumped up and down opposed to reinstituting the PAYGO rule. When I was a small child growing up, I always heard it was the Democrats that tax and spend, and yet it was the Republicans over the last 6 years that has given us record deficit after record deficit, the largest debt ever in our Nation's history. And last week they said they were opposed, many of them said they were opposed to the PAYGO rule because it meant to pay for a new program raising taxes. They don't get it, Mr. Speaker. It is not about raising taxes; it is about cutting spending. It is about reducing the size of our government. It is about paying as you go. If you want to create a new program, show us which program you are going to cut to pay for it.

As members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition we are sick and tired of the games; we are sick and tired of the partisan bickering that goes on at our Nation's Capitol. I don't care if it is a Democrat or Republican idea. All I care about is, is it a commonsense idea? Does it restore accountability and fiscal responsibility

and discipline to our Nation's government?

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At this time I yield to Joe Donnelly, a Member of Indiana, a member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. DONNELLY. Thank you, Congressman ROSS, for yielding.

I want to talk for a minute or 2 about what Congressman Ross had mentioned. The foreign debt that we have now has doubled in the last 5 years to over \$2 trillion at this point. And you think of our country, and our country has been there to help and to finance so many others over the years. You think after World War II we helped put Japan back on its feet. We helped in Europe. And the sad fact is that right now Japan is helping us, that we are having to sell to Japan to help pay for our debt, selling our Treasury notes. And it is a sad fact that China has become one of the largest lenders to our country. And it is simply because we have not covered those costs that we have been running in our government.

I have two children, and I do not want to pass on to them the debts that we have been running up. I am proud to be a member of the Blue Dogs to try to change this direction.

You think of our small businesses in this country, and those small businesses are having to pay part of the fare for this debt that we continue to run up. The interest rates that we are paying on that are funds that could have been used to help small businesses. Back home in South Bend, Indiana, or in Rochester, Indiana, where I come from, those funds could have been used to help with the education of children in Michigan City or down in Logansport, Indiana. But instead those funds are used today to help pay the interest on the debts that we have run up. But with the Blue Dogs' help and with the Democrats' help, that is going to end.

What the people of this country are beginning to understand and what the folks back home in Indiana do understand is that we bring Hoosier common sense to this issue, Mr. ROSS. Congressman, what we are trying to do is make sure that we do the same things here in Washington that we do back home in Mishawaka, Indiana, and in our beloved State. We are going to stop the increase in the debt. We are going to see it lowered, and we are going to see those funds used to take care of our veterans, who need more help than ever. More come home every day with various issues. Our beloved troops that come home from Iraq, Afghanistan and all over the world, our funds need to be used for them, not to continue covering a debt that we continue to run up. We will end that debt. We will lower those interest payments, and they will be used to educate our children, take care of our veterans down in Delphi, Indiana, and throughout our country, and to set our country back on the right

course. That is what Democrat common sense will bring, and that is what the Blue Dogs promise to bring with us.

Congressman ROSS, thank you so much for this opportunity.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana, a new member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, for joining us on the floor this evening as we talk about our plan to restore fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Mr. Speaker, on November 7, the American people spoke, and they said they wanted a new direction for this country both here at home and abroad. And in speaking, they gave us, as Democrats, a chance to lead in this 110th Congress. And Mr. Speaker, we are ready, willing and able and prepared to do so.

And part of the way that we believe we can restore fiscal sanity to our National Government, it took 6 years to create this mess, and we can't fix it overnight, but we have a plan to begin to restore some fiscal discipline to our Nation's Government. And it is what we call the Blue Dog Coalition's 12-point plan for budget reform. And I am pleased to be joined this evening by the gentlewoman from Illinois, Ms. BEAN, who is going to join me in talking about some of these 12 points, and I now yield to Ms. BEAN.

Ms. BEAN. Thank you for yielding, Mr. ROSS from Arkansas. It is such a pleasure to be part of the Blue Dog Coalition. And our 12-point plan for budget reform is so important to get this country back on the right fiscal track. Fiscal responsibility is what our constituents, as taxpayers, expect from us and particularly what our children and our grandchildren expect from us as well. Their future depends on our making better decisions than we have been making.

I know just to the right of Mr. ROSS there is a little chart that he has probably already referred to before I joined him here on the floor.

Have you already put up the actual total of the national debt?

That is an important chart to look at because it is a staggering reality, as we have added trillions of dollars in recent years to our national debt. And when I meet with children in my district, when I go to elementary schools, middle schools and high schools, and I talk to kids a little bit about financial literacy and fiscal responsibility, I am embarrassed to admit that we haven't been demonstrating much of it here at a congressional level. And I share with these kids that their share of the national debt is, as you can see, over \$29,000. We are approaching \$30,000, each individual American's share of the national debt. It is just a gross irresponsibility that we have demonstrated, and we need to rectify that.

So I am proud of the leadership that the Blue Dogs has brought to our caucus and to this Congress to get back to pay-as-you-go budget rules because

pay-as-you-go budget rules have worked in the past on a bipartisan basis to force fiscal discipline amongst a body that includes 435 Members with different interests. It forces us to make the tough decisions so we can stay within our budget and work back towards a balanced budget.

Our 12-point plan includes, number one, requiring a balanced budget; number two, not allowing Congress to buy on credit; number three, putting a lid on spending; number four, requiring agencies to put their fiscal houses in order. Too many of our agencies, according to the GAO, 16 of the 23 major Federal agencies, can't even issue a simple audit of their books, and that is just unacceptable. You can't run a business that way. We can't run our personal household finances that way. How can we allow agencies to continue to not demonstrate exactly how they are spending our tax dollars?

Number five, make Congress tell taxpayers how much they are spending. Create a greater degree of transparency. Number six, set aside a rainy day fund. Number seven, do not hide your votes to raise the debt limit. There has been too much of that dishonesty in what we say we are doing and what we are really doing as far as how it shakes out in the overall national debt. Number eight, justify spending for pet projects. We have just moved forward on that in what we introduced recently in our rules to require Members to list any projects that they have put into a bill for their districts and to justify that on the merits of those expenditures.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think it is very important that we point out that not only the PAYGO rule, which means pay-as-you-go, no more borrowing money from China to fund some project and let our children and grandchildren worry about it, but pay-as-you-go is one of the rules implemented during the first 24 hours of the 110th Congress under this new Democratic leadership. It is very significant because it is one of the 12 points of the Blue Dogs Coalition's plan for budget reform. But also another one of our 12 points that was included in those first 24 hours in the rules package is adding a level of transparency, justifying, if you will, pet projects or earmarks. I think it is very significant that, of these 12 points that you are reading off, two of them we have tried for years to get the Republican leadership to work with us in a bipartisan manner on this. And two of these 12 were included in the first 24 hours of the Democratic-controlled Congress. I think that is very significant, and I want to thank the leadership for including those.

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, it is very exciting to see us move forward on part of the 12-point plan, and I know we are going to continue to work hard to get even more.

And our next one I know we are also including is ensuring that Congress has

an opportunity to read the bills that they are voting on, and we have also changed in our rules where things are getting rammed through and people didn't have X amount of hours to look at those bills so they knew what they were voting on. That is number nine.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, that reminds me that back when we were voting on the Medicare Part D prescription drug bill, now estimated to cost billions and billions and billions of dollars over the next 10 years, it went to a vote barely a day after the final version of the 500-plus-page bill was made to Members of Congress. We are putting an end to that. We are giving Members of Congress an opportunity to know what they are voting on.

Ms. BEAN. Absolutely. Number 10 is requiring an honest cost estimate for every bill that Congress votes on as well. The Congressional Budget Office can and should be providing that prior to voting on any expenditure so we know exactly what the long-term ramifications of that expenditure are going to be at least from an estimate perspective.

Number 11 is making sure that the new bills do fit within the budget. And number 12 is making Congress do a better job of keeping tabs on government programs and creating a higher degree of accountability and reports back to Congress on whether we are actually accomplishing what we say we are supposed to be accomplishing with those programs.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for sharing with us the Blue Dog Coalition's 12-point plan for budget reform. And if time permits, Mr. Speaker, we will go into more detail on each of these 12 points. And the ones we do not get to tonight, you can expect us back next Tuesday night for this Blue Dog Special Order where we will continue to talk about these 12 points for budget reform because if we are going to clean up the mess in Washington, if we are going to put an end to the deficit spending, if we are going to begin to pay down the debt, we have got to have this 12-point plan in place. You give us this 12-point plan, Mr. Speaker, and we can give you a balanced budget once again in this country.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns for us, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov. Again, Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns for us, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov.

At this time, it gives me great pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Mr. ROSS, for yielding. And to my fellow colleagues, it is such a pleasure to join you once again.

When we were here last, we were in the minority, and we said some things. We said what we wanted to do. We said some of the first things we would do

when we got here, and one of those was to address this serious problem of financial and fiscal responsibility.

I had some time to reflect on our history, and as we looked at the very first move that we made when we came back last week, one of our first measures was to establish pay-as-you-go, PAYGO. It is very interesting that this is not a new phenomenon. Not only did we have it in store when we had the Clinton administration and prior to that, but from the very foundation of our country, it was Thomas Jefferson. First, Thomas Jefferson was so against government debt and its inherent dangers that, back in 1789, in a letter that he wrote to James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, Framers of our Constitution, in that letter, Thomas Jefferson wondered in the letter as he wrote to Madison and Hamilton, he wondered this, whether, quote, "one generation of men has a right to bind another." And he came to his answer with an exclamation point in the letter: "No." He said that "the Earth belongs in usufruct to the living."

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Jefferson concluded in this letter with these words. He said no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence. In other words, financial responsibility. Fiscal responsibility was at the cornerstone of this great Republic, of this great Nation, the cornerstone of a lasting and free Nation.

One generation of consumers borrowing and spending then hands that bill to the next generation, that get the benefits of spending the money in the present while passing on the debt to future generations, that is not what the Founding Fathers had in mind. And each generation as we move through our history paid down its debt before it moved on, oftentimes marked by war. In 1812, the debt was paid down. The Civil War, borrowed money, the debt was paid down. And into World War I and World War II when the debt really amassed up to \$62 billion, and yet over time and those generations those debts were paid down. All of the way up through the Cold War, even into the Reagan years, and up to Clinton, up to the year 2001.

But then after 2001 when this Republican administration took hold, in the 5 years that ensued, this President and the preceding Congress, controlled by Republicans, borrowed more money from foreign governments and foreign nations than the entire preceding 218 years of this country. From 1789, the year Thomas Jefferson wrote these words to caution us and set the pattern to pay as we go, here we are now with that big situation hanging over us of the borrowing from our debt.

And I mention that because we are now faced with that situation where we are borrowing this money, over \$1.5 trillion over the last 5 years, from countries in the most unstable regions

of the world: \$310 billion from Communist China; nearly \$700 billion from Japan; and nearly \$300 billion from the unstable OPEC countries in the Middle East which we are dealing with now. This is the background which we are having to deal with today.

Mr. ROSS. The gentleman makes an excellent point. You want to talk about something that is critical to our national security, it is this business that over the past 6 years we continue to cut taxes on folks earning over \$400,000 a year with money that we borrowed from foreign central banks and foreign investors, and left our children and grandchildren with the bill to pay.

The gentleman was ticking some of these off, but if I may, it is kind of like David Letterman and his top 10 list, the top 10 current lenders: Japan, \$640.1 billion; China, \$321.4 billion; the United Kingdom, \$179.5 billion. This is the amount of money the United States of America has borrowed from foreign countries to fund tax cuts in this country for folks earning over \$400,000 a year.

The voters on November 7 said it is time for a new direction and new priorities in this country, and we are going to give them to the American people. But to continue the list: OPEC, \$98 billion, and we wonder why gasoline was approaching \$3 a gallon in August; Korea, \$72.4 billion; Taiwan, \$68.9 billion; the Caribbean banking centers, \$61.7 billion; Hong Kong, \$46.6 billion; and Germany, \$46.5 billion; and to round out the top 10 current lenders to the United States of America, and you are not going to believe this, Mexico, \$40.1 billion.

This administration over the past 6 years has borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors than the previous 42 Presidents combined, and that is why we rise tonight as members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition to talk about leading America in a new direction, a direction that will restore fiscal discipline to our government; and the way we achieve that is through our Blue Dog Coalition 12-point plan for budget reform.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is important that we remind people that not only are we talking about the billions of dollars that we just articulated we are borrowing from these foreign governments, more than we borrowed over the last 218 years, but the interest, the money that these folks are making off of us now constitutes the fastest growing part of our budget. We are spending more just paying for the money on the interest that is being charged than we are spending on education, the environment, and veterans at a time when our veterans are making such fantastic contributions and at a time when there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on those who have been on the battlefield and are coming home, and we are spending more on the interest there.

Let me just finalize this for a moment, and I just want to mention because we are here and we talked about what we wanted to do. Pay-as-you-go was one of the deals we made. We passed earlier today the 9/11 Commission recommendations. We have worked on so many other things, but I do want to just mention the earmark reform legislation that we passed, and just to share with the American people what we have already passed in our earmark reform.

It will require committees to disclose the sponsors of any earmarks included in appropriations authorizing measures such as the highway bill and the tax or trade legislation that benefits 10 or fewer. We will have new rules that will prohibit trading earmarks for votes and require Members to disclose their earmark request and certify that they and their spouses have no personal financial interest in the requests. These provisions comprehensively require committees of jurisdiction and conference committees to publish lists of the earmarks, limit tax benefits, and limit tariff benefits, along with their sponsors contained in the reported bills and the managers' amendments and conference reports brought to the House floor for consideration.

A Member may make a point of order against consideration of any rule that waives this requirement. The rule defines an earmark as any Member-requested project that is targeted to a specific place and falls outside of a formally driven competitive process. Transparency, clearness: this is what the American people want. And I am proud to see us in our first week of action be able to pass these important measures that bring about good strong stewardship of the taxpayer money.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Georgia, a real leader within the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition for joining us this evening on the House floor as we talk about this new direction for America.

The American people have spoken, and they have told us that it is time for a change. They have given us Democrats an opportunity to lead them in a new direction. I am proud of what we have accomplished in the first few hours of the 110th Congress. We have instituted the PAYGO rules, the rules that say if you are going to spend money, you have to show us how you are going to pay for it, the rules we had in place when we had a balanced budget in this country from 1998 until 2001.

You are seeing us put in place earmark reform, a greater level of transparency and knowing clearly who is asking for the money and where it is going and who is benefiting from it.

Second in our Blue Dog Coalition's 12-point plan for budget reform, in the first 24 hours of this new Congress, we are making progress. We have heard the American people. They have given us an opportunity to lead, and we are demonstrating we can do that. In the first 100 legislative hours, we are pass-

ing the 9/11 Commission recommendations that were not implemented in the 109th Congress under the Republican leadership. We are raising the minimum wage, which is something I am very excited about.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about moving people from welfare to work, we have to pay them more than \$10,712 a year. That is what the Federal minimum wage in this country represents if you work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, never get sick and don't take a single day off for vacation. We can do better than that by America's working families, and we will. We will this week, the first full week of the 110th session of Congress.

We will pass legislation on the floor this week that tells our government that, yes, it can negotiate on behalf of 40 million seniors with the big drug manufacturers to bring down the high cost of medicine. The American people on November 7 gave us an opportunity to lead. And in these early hours of the 110th Congress, and as members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, we are demonstrating that we are ready to lead and that we are leading America in a new direction.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the national debt, \$8,690,905,471,722. Let's think about this, \$8,690,905,471,722.43. The 43 cents wouldn't fit on the poster. For every man, woman and child in America, to get us out of this mess, everybody in America would have to write a check for \$29,005.60. That is why we must restore common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Mr. Speaker, as you walk the Halls of Congress, you will know when you are walking past the door of a Blue Dog Coalition member because you will see this poster; and, unfortunately, you will see this number change each day. We are going to do our part to hopefully see this number go down as we push for a balanced budget in this country, as we push for the day when we can see a balanced budget in this country, as we push to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our national government and its budgeting process.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce another new member of the 44 member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, the Congressman from Florida, Mr. MAHONEY.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. I thank my good friend from Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Florida's 16th Congressional District and am a proud voice in support of restoring fiscal discipline to Congress. I am very proud to be a Blue Dog.

When I was thinking about what I wanted to talk to the American people about tonight, I decided that the best way to share my feelings, my views in terms of fiscal discipline and why I am a Blue Dog, gets back to something that is near and dear to me.

Just a week and a half ago, I was a businessman. I had never held an elect-

ed office. And the reason I decided to leave private life and come to Congress is because I was worried about government's out-of-control spending that was hurting our economy. More importantly, that was hurting our innovative economy, and to make it very simple for all, was hurting the future of my daughter and all of the children of this country if we don't get our fiscal house in order.

When I take a look at the Blue Dog plan, the 12-point plan for budget reform, I look at the points and I think back to my experience as a businessman. There are several things that I would like to highlight tonight that I can relate to, and every American involved in a business can relate to.

The first point is point number one on the plan which requires a balanced budget. In business it is requiring a profit. A balanced budget is something that makes sense for government, it makes sense for business, and the Blue Dogs are proposing that we make a balanced budget a constitutional amendment requiring that this House, that this Congress, balance the books.

The second thing I would like to talk about is point number four which requires agencies to put their fiscal house in order. That is really getting into financial control. As my colleague from Illinois, Congressperson BEAN, pointed out, 16 of 23 major Federal agencies can't issue a simple audit of the books. That is unacceptable in business, and that should be unacceptable here in Congress.

What the Blue Dogs propose is that we would propose legislation that would freeze any Federal agency that can't properly balance their books. We would not allow it in business, and we shouldn't allow it here in Congress.

Point five, we want to make Congress tell taxpayers how much they are spending. This gets to a concept in business called management accountability. What the Blue Dogs are proposing is that any bill that calls for more than \$50 million in new spending must be put to a roll call vote. By putting it to a roll call vote, what that does is it forces every Member of Congress to stand up and go on record for their constituents to see how fiscally responsible they are.

The next point I would like to highlight is point number ten which requires honest cost estimates for every bill that Congress votes on.

In business, we call this a business plan. Prior to undertaking any new endeavor, what a competent manager would ask for is a plan that sets out the goals and objectives of the proposed venture, in this case a proposed piece of legislation.

And then as part of that plan, he would ask to have a cost estimate of what the investment would be. That is a very important issue.

What the Blue Dogs propose is that every conference report and bill that comes to the floor of the House be accompanied by a cost estimate prepared

by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

□ 2115

These are just a few of the points, a few of the agenda points that the Blue Dog coalition is working on.

Let me reiterate what many of my colleagues have said. Fiscal responsibility is a critical issue. It is an issue of competitiveness. It is an issue of making sure that our children are not being taxed with runaway budget deficits. People that say it doesn't matter or it is not as important as a percentage of GDP are wrong, and I am proud to be part of a group, the Blue Dog Coalition, that is committed, Mr. Speaker, to addressing these issues in the 110th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my good friend from Arkansas.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Florida, Mr. MAHONEY, for his leadership on these issues and his experience as a business person that he brings to this Congress. I appreciate his perspective and I appreciate his membership in the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. Speaker, in the time we have remaining, I want to spend some time talking more about the 12 point plan for budget reform, about our vision to restore fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions or concerns for us, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov. That is bluedog@mail.house.gov.

I am delighted to be joined tonight by a number of our 44 member strong, fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition Members. At this time I believe we are going to open it up for a colloquy, and I yield to the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. DONNELLY.

Mr. DONNELLY. Thank you, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. Speaker, the question that came to mind while I was sitting here with my colleagues is this: What do you think our moms and dads would think if they were here today and we said to them, we owe money to Mexico, we owe money to China, we owe money to Japan, we owe money to all these countries. Your grandchildren will owe \$29,005 each to help cover the national debt.

My wife's folks, her dad fought in World War II, Bougainville and Guadalcanal, to help preserve freedom in this world. Her mom was in the WAVES. My dad was in the Navy. When they came home, they thought America's role was to help build others. They wouldn't believe what they see today here in our country.

I was wondering what some of my colleagues think, and you, Congressman ROSS, your comments on that.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana for his commitment to putting an end to these record deficits in our Federal Government.

The gentleman is absolutely right. I grew up in a small Methodist Church outside of Prescott and Hope, Arkansas, Midway United Methodist Church, and I can remember Sunday after Sunday after Sunday growing up where the preacher would talk about being a good steward, that was always before he passed the plate, and the preacher would talk about being a good steward.

Well, the American people have sent us here and had us raise our right hand and put our left hand on the Bible and take the oath of office and pledge, swear to uphold the Constitution, and, yes, be good stewards of the American people's tax money. That is really what this is all about.

I think it is very important, the work that we are doing as members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, and trying to be good stewards of the tax money of the people back home and to make sure it is spent wisely and to make sure it is accounted for.

I yielded to the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. WILSON.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Thank you, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just speak for a moment, if I could, in regard to putting the lid on the spending. One of the things that we all know we came here to do is to stop the runaway inflation and debt that is just climbing up in our country on a regular basis.

The thought that spending from the year 2001 to 2003, total government spending, Mr. Speaker, increased by 16 percent, these types of raises and just continual going into debt is what has put our country where every man, woman and child now is at the level of \$29,005.

We need to have the right kind of controls, and I believe in Ohio, Indiana, Florida, certainly please speak out as to what you feel the issues are in your State and what we can do about it.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield for a moment, I would like to respond to your point, because we owe it to those generations. That is one of the reasons why I spoke out and set the stage for my remarks, to go back to the beginning of this country, when the foundation of this country was laid out. That is what has made us great. We honor our debts. That is what Hamilton and that is what Jefferson and that is what Madison were all about.

You talk about your parents and your grandparents. What would they say? What would my grandparents say? They would say, by George, we love this country. This is our country. We are hoping and we are praying that the Congress will stand and get it right.

As I looked at the polls in Georgia, we had a rainy day in the election down in Georgia, but when I looked over the precincts, I could see that it wasn't 25 or 30 percent turnout, in that rain there was 50 and 60 and 70 percent turnout. The people in this country love this country, and they know that

we need a new direction, and the first order of this new direction is to get our finances in order.

Your parents brought you up, my parents brought me up saying watch your money, son. Work hard. Save it. Invest it. Make sure you honor your debt. That is what they would want us to do.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY).

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to address the question, but from a slightly different perspective, and that has to do with again one of the reasons I think the Democrats are now in control of the House and the Blue Dogs have such a great opportunity, and it gets back to a fundamental issue of ethics, it gets back to a fundamental issue of values.

It is very clear that this House for the last 6 years has been operating under a different set of standards and ethics than the American people. It is very clear that this House does not take responsibility for its work in terms of the bills and the cost of the bills and the budget. These are not our values.

What I would say to my parents tonight is this, and that is this Congress is committed to fiscal responsibility and this coalition is committed to fiscal responsibility. It is very important that the American people understand that their elected officials have to operate under the same rules that they have to operate under when they balance their checkbook every month around the kitchen table. That is important, that we achieve that kind of fiscal discipline. It is important that the American people understand that this Congress is committed to it.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida for that perspective as we discuss something that is very important to our Nation, and that is how we get our fiscal house back in order after 6 years of reckless spending. We believe we have a plan to do it. That plan is now being implemented.

In the first 24 hours of the 110th Session of Congress we saw the PAYGO rule implemented, which can give us a balanced budget again. It worked before. It can work again. And we saw transparency, a new level of transparency added to earmark reform.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN).

Ms. BEAN. Thank you so much, Mr. ROSS. It is a pleasure to be here with my colleagues. Colloquy is always a fun way to communicate on things that we have common concerns about.

I thought Mr. SCOTT led this conversation so well when he talked about Jefferson's quote about our responsibility to future generations. He knew that as a founder of this great Nation, and we still have that responsibility to future generations.

We teach our children that if they make a mess, they ought to clean it up.

Yet we have made a mess of this Nation's finances, and we need to start now, and we have started in this first 100 hours in the Democratic majority to address that mess and clean it up. The expression is "pass the buck," but what we have instead been doing is passing the debt. We should not be passing trillions of dollars to future generations with "borrow and spend." Instead, we should pay as we go.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for that perspective.

It is wonderful to be joined this evening during the Blue Dog special order by a number of new members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. I believe we have had three, and this will be make four new members join us for this discussion and this debate here on the House floor this evening.

I am pleased at this time to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, PATRICK MURPHY.

Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Thank you, sir. I appreciate the opportunity to speak here tonight amongst my colleagues here in the Blue Dogs.

When you come down to Washington, you align yourself with people that are just like you, people that represent not just you personally, but your district back at home and your interests in your district back at home.

When Congresswoman BEAN talked about Thomas Jefferson and the future generations, I couldn't help but think that I kissed this morning when I came to work my baby daughter goodbye for the day, Maggie Murphy. I mentioned earlier she was born 6 weeks ago.

When you look at that bottom number there that the Blue Dogs fight for, that \$29,000, every newborn in America is born into that debt, that \$29,000 apiece, they are born into that debt, and this Congress previously just let it keep rolling and rolling and growing and growing.

Finally the Blue Dogs have arrived now, and the Blue Dogs are saying, listen, we are not going to take it anymore. We are putting our foot down. We are going to be disciplined.

That discipline is something I learned personally in the military, that families in my district in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, know about, because in my district we have Washington's Crossing, where those soldiers that started the Revolution, that really earned our independence, showed the discipline when they didn't have the best uniforms. They didn't have the best equipment, but they had a belief, and they stood by their beliefs.

That is exactly what the Blue Dogs do, and they keep it simple. They say we stand for two things: Fiscal discipline, fiscal responsibility; and, number two, a strong national defense.

That is why it is an honor that the families in the Eighth Congressional District, they know that their congressman, in myself, in PATRICK MUR-

PHY, and our colleagues of the Blue Dogs, that we stand for something, and that we will fight every single day to bring down that number, so that when people like Maggie Murphy and other newborns in Lower Bucks Hospital and all over America, when they are born into our great country, and it is a great country, they are not born \$29,000 in debt.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. Speaker, if I could say one other thing to the American people, and that is the gentleman you just heard from from Pennsylvania is also an Iraqi war veteran, a member of the 82nd Airborne, and the folks of Pennsylvania and this country can be very, very proud that PATRICK MURPHY is here in Congress with us today.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana, and I yield to the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Mr. ROSS. It is indeed a pleasure to be here with everyone, as I said earlier.

I think in conclusion tonight it is very important that we let the American people know that we very soberly understand this charge that has been handed to us as Democrats to lead in this Congress, and we also understand why and we handle that responsibility with great care.

One of the things that it is important for us to point out, when they ask what can we do and what is expected of us, is to stand up for the American people finally at last and lift up our way of life.

We have two duties to do under the Constitution as Members of Congress and they are expecting us to use these tools and do them well, and these tools are, one, oversight. Through our ability to oversee this government we can make these changes happen. The other is appropriations, to handle their money as good stewards. These are the things that we are committed to do, and this is how we will get to the new direction that the American people expect us to get to.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the many members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition for coming to the floor of the House of Representatives this evening and joining me for a discussion on how we can restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our national government, how we can bring this number down, Mr. Speaker. As we conclude, I will remind you in that this number actually went up by some \$40 million during the hour that we have been here on the floor this evening.

□ 2130

TAX INCREASES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honor to be here on the House floor, and it is a great opportunity to

follow the Blue Dogs tonight, that coalition on the Democratic side that are talking about fiscal responsibility, because that is what I want to also talk about tonight. It is an extremely important issue. It is a pocketbook issue. And one I didn't hear mentioned too frequently by my friends in the Blue Dog Coalition has to deal with taxes and what we are responsible for here in Washington, which is spending, and also making sure we are not reaching too deep in the pockets of the American people and spending their money.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that the American people are unaware of what is going to happen here in Congress in the next 4 years. There is a countdown. The countdown begins. It is 1,452 days, and we will see over that period of time the tax cuts that we put in place as a Republican majority, they will expire. So the American people, over the next 4 years, will see a \$200 billion tax increase, money that will be taken out of their pockets.

The Democratic majority doesn't even have to act. They can just run out the clock. I am not sure the American people realize that, that if the Democrats don't act to extend these tax breaks, that they will see this \$200 billion tax increase occur, as I said between today and January 1, 2011. As I said, I appreciate the Blue Dogs coming here and talking about fiscal responsibility, but unless they act and they join with the Republicans to see these extended, that is what the American people face.

What do these tax cuts mean? They mean that over the last 4 years we have seen 7.2 million jobs created in this country because of those tax cuts. Just in the month of December, 167,000 jobs were created in this country. The unemployment rate in this country is down to 4.5 percent. That is the lowest average it has been in four decades, and that is directly attributable to the tax cuts that we passed over the last 4, 5, or 6 years in this Congress. Again, if we don't extend them, if we don't do the responsible thing and let the American people keep more of their money, there will be dollars taken out of their pockets.

Now, what has happened with those tax cuts is that the American people have gotten to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. The American people, from Pennsylvania, to Arkansas, to California, to Arizona get to keep their money in their pockets and get to decide how that money is going to be spent. It is not going to be spent in Washington by bureaucrats. When you get \$2,000 or \$4,000 more in your pocket a year because of these tax cuts, you decide whether you will use it as a downpayment on a car, save the money for your children's college education, or buy a new washer and dryer or refrigerator for your home. These are the things the American people want to be able to purchase, and they can do it with these tax cuts.