

Walter Reed really does provide the care and the service and the best quality of medical services that we can provide, and not what has occurred.

The Congress today is something that gives Americans a chance for accountability, gives us a chance to deal with this administration on a straight-up basis, and the fact we are here, we are going to see improvements, just the fact that we are here, because it isn't just a rubber stamp anymore. There really is oversight.

□ 2045

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, let me say in these final few moments tonight, I want to say there have been over 91 hearings on Iraq alone. But we have also had oversight hearings on Hurricane Katrina. Several of them, in fact. Subcommittee Chair Waters went down to New Orleans to get the real story from people who are living it.

On the Committee on Financial Services, we are going to be talking about predatory lending. Today we talked about executive pay and shining some light on that issue.

On the Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee Chairman NADLER held a hearing on civil rights enforcement, what is the Attorney General's civil rights division doing in the area of civil rights enforcement.

I have participated in hearings on the increase in immigration fees and how those fees are going up in a precipitous manner and questions were asked and officials were made to answer.

So as I said before, this is a time of accountability. We are slowly trying to restore the public's faith in government. They have a right to believe that their government is honest, fair dealing, accountable and transparent. I couldn't have been prouder in the committee hearings I personally have been a part of on issues from the National Security Letters and the FBI executive pay, civil rights enforcement, immigration; there has been a whole range.

I think the story is not necessarily one thing like the Valerie Plame incident or Walter Reed or the U.S. Attorneys; but there is a prevailing, systematic reexamination of how government does business. I am proud to be associated with it.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you, Mr. ELLISON. Mr. HODES.

Mr. HODES. Thank you, Mr. KLEIN. It has been a pleasure to be with you here tonight and have this conversation with the people of this country about what oversight and accountability brings to government.

I started my remarks this evening with a quotation from former President Woodrow Wilson. And I want to go back further in time to end my remarks with a quote from John Stuart Mill who said: "The proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control the government, to throw the light of publicity of its acts, to compel a full exposition and justification of all of them which anyone considers questionable."

And it is that light of publicity, the light that we shine with accountability that helps preserve this government and leads to an open and transparent government. I am privileged to serve on the Information Subcommittee of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee. One of the things that we did which is essential in terms of the accountability of government, we brought to the floor and passed in this Congress in a bipartisan way much-needed reforms to the Freedom of Information Act. It is an act which every citizen can take advantage of to gain information about the government, to hold the government accountable, find documents and information that is the citizens' right to have.

What we did was we restored the Freedom of Information Act to its rightful place where there is now once again a presumption in this government that the government should be open and disclose to its citizens what is going on, what it has for information and documents unless those documents fit into certain narrow exemptions. This has been a critical thing that we have done in this Congress.

I am proud to be a new Member and working hard for accountability. And when the American people see that they truly have an accountability Congress working for them to eliminate waste, fraud, abuse and corruption, to save taxpayer money, they will once again regain trust in their elected officials and in the people's House.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank you, Mr. HODES, for being part of our freshman class and our working group that is going to be here every week. The 110th Congress is strengthening oversight, and the proof is in the pudding.

People can say, I have lost confidence in Congress, but look at what we are doing. We have had dozens of hearings in the Foreign Affairs Committee just on the ability of working with our diplomatic efforts and all of the strategies in dealing with Iraq on the nonmilitary side. In the past, there have not been enough opportunities to do that.

We've had hearings on the veterans health care crisis and Walter Reed, the politicalization of the Justice Department and how wrong that is and that needs to be cleaned up, the Hurricane Katrina response and the things we are doing right now, passing legislation to truly get people back up on their feet. Global warming and energy independence was mentioned, and the fact is that we are getting down to the things we need to do as Americans to deal with our energy needs and the fact that there is an environmental impact. And, of course, upcoming hearings of oversight on everything from Valerie Plame to oil and gas royalties and National Guard and intelligence.

This is part of the mandate of the last election. I look forward to working with our freshman class. We will be doing this every week. We certainly want input from our constituents back home. Tell us what you think we can

be doing. We look forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to build on this theme of accountability and oversight.

DEMOCRAT BUDGET AND TAX INCREASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SCHWARTZ). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I want to talk about two issues tonight. I am going to start out by talking about the Democrat budget and the tax increases that they are proposing, and I want to talk a little bit about the emergency supplemental. The two are tied together in many ways in terms of the hypocrisy we are seeing come forth from the Democratic leadership.

The House Budget Committee is in the midst of marking up the fiscal year 2008 budget resolution. As it currently stands, the proposed budget assumes the expiration of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, which have given us this vibrant economy that we have. It is going to create, therefore, a \$392.5 billion tax increase, the largest tax increase in American history.

It proposes no changes to slow the exploding growth of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid that would result in deficit reduction.

Those 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, as I have said, have helped create a very vibrant economy. They produced real tax decreases in the tax burden on North Carolina's married couples, single parents and families. Almost every taxpayer in North Carolina, low income, single, married or self-employed would lose valuable tax cuts under the assumption in the Democrat budget proposal.

It is not a real surprise, though. We knew this was going to happen. It is business as usual for the Democrats and proves that their promises to be fiscally responsible are just empty rhetoric. I have said before this is a smoke-and-mirrors Congress, and that is exactly what it is.

It would return us to the Democrats' beloved tax-and-spend model for government. They have willfully abandoned their pledge for fiscal responsibility. They pledged to do PAYGO budget rules and spending restraint to curb the deficit, and they have done none of that.

Last year, Republicans rejected \$14 billion in nonemergency spending that the Senate tried to attach to the emergency troop funding bill, but the Democrats are doing just the opposite.

Now I want to talk about the supplemental. The emergency supplemental, the Democrats said they would never try to coerce people into voting for legislation they didn't want to vote for. Last week they said they weren't whipping this bill, they were just trying to talk people into voting for it. Well, if this is gentle persuasion, I would hate

to see what whipping a bill is. The Members on the Democrats are being threatened and coerced into voting for this. Their votes are being bought with millions and millions of dollars of pork barrel spending that has been put in the supplemental. It is really a slam against our troops.

The proper role of the Federal Government is the defense of this Nation. We may not be completely happy with every way the dollar is being spent on defense, but if that is the case, then what we need to do is have true accountability. Using the word "accountability" doesn't make it so. We heard our colleagues here talking about that. If we wanted true accountability, we would be holding the kinds of hearings that would give us accountability. Instead, we have "gotcha" kinds of hearing. Every hearing here now is a gotcha kind of hearing.

Don't take my word for the fact that this is a terrible bill that they are bringing up, what they are calling the emergency supplemental. The Los Angeles Times called for the bill to be vetoed. It said: "It is absurd for House Speaker NANCY PELOSI to try to micromanage the conflict and the evolution of Iraqi society with arbitrary time-tables and benchmarks."

So in addition to the wasteful spending that is going into the emergency supplemental, we are hearing from even the liberal press that this bill does not deserve to pass.

They are using our troops as bargaining chips. The Politico said: "Democrat leaders see this emerging strategy as a way to encourage their liberal members to vote for the supplemental budget bill."

They have willfully abandoned their pledge of fiscal responsibility, and we should not be allowing our troops to be used as a pawn in the hands of the Democrats to get funded programs they want to fund that they take off the budget because it is in the emergency supplemental. It is not a part of pay-as-you-go.

Even the Democrat leaders concede that their own bill is flawed. Democrat whip JAMES CLYBURN has described his party's proposal as a "bitter pill to swallow," again in the Politico.

We should reject this bill. I believe we will reject this bill. We need to support our troops. We need to give them the reinforcements they deserve. We need to win this war on terror. The Democrats never talk about winning; they only talk about losing. That is not the American way. The American way is to take the challenges presented to us, face them squarely, and win and do the things that are right.

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a privilege and an honor to be recognized to speak on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. I bit my tongue over the last hour and listened attentively to some of the dialogue that was taking place. It is important, I believe, to correct the record at least on the portion I was paying attention.

The issue that was being discussed by the six or seven on the other side of the aisle was about the eight U.S. Attorneys who were fired by the President. There are great, huge, yawning gaps in the description that came out. For the benefit of the people listening to that portion of it, I will attempt to fill in the gaps.

One is the President dismissed eight U.S. Attorneys. That runs about 85 short that were fired summarily by President Clinton. Talk about a chilling effect on your ability to prosecute if you happened to have been looking into Whitewater or if you happened to have been the prosecutor of Dan Rostenkowski and you found yourself immediately fired, and then subsequent to that, your successor achieving a conviction in the case of Rostenkowski, and then watching President Clinton pardon the very subject of your investigation, I would think that would be a chilling effect on a prosecutor.

But the allegation was made that "the independence of our U.S. Attorneys is the hallmark of justice." Well, yes, I think that is true, but they serve at the pleasure of the President, and the President has the authority and he has the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that those U.S. Attorneys are conducting their job, that they are actually prosecuting cases, locking people up in prison and not only taking them out of the crime job market, but also providing an example that keeps other people from committing crimes. When those prosecutions are not taking place at the pace they need to, if they are failing to distinguish themselves, then it is the responsibility and the duty of the President and subsequently the Attorney General to direct that they be removed.

The allegation that the firing of U.S. Attorneys for political purposes was a statement made by the gentleman from New Hampshire. Political purposes. There is no evidence that has been submitted on either side of the aisle that says they were fired for political purposes. There has been speculation, but that is an allegation that I think is a heavy allegation and it is an unjust allegation, and the people who make those kinds of allegations have a responsibility to come forward with some shred of evidence that they base their opinion on rather than wishful thinking.

□ 2100

This is no scandal, Mr. Speaker. It is not a scandal because it is eight U.S. attorneys. Eight U.S. attorneys, and there is not a partisan divide here that

can be seen. It is not like there were eight Democrat U.S. attorneys that were investigating Republicans in office. There is no evidence of that. It is more like there were Republicans and Democrats who have been admonished in the past and challenged by Members of this Congress, at least in one particular case, for not being aggressive enough, for not providing the kind of prosecutions necessary to enforce our borders.

Now, that is something that is essential to our national security, and if the allegations that are made here on the floor of this Congress and the statements that are made in committee and the witch hunt that is going on by submitting and requesting, subpoenaing the White House's closest advisers whom the President relies upon to be able to give him unfettered counsel, and they cannot be intimidated. Talk about intimidation, a subpoena to come before Congress and be questioned on the record about your most private advice to the Commander in Chief of the United States of America is what is going on here.

This is an unjust, unbalanced overreach, and it is my advice to the new majority to start acting like the majority because you are going to have to take responsibility for governing. You have not shifted gears from demagoguery of the past into the responsibility to provide policy that is going to direct this country into the future. It is high time that that happened. Break the mold. Let us go forward with good policy, and remember, if you have the gavels, you have the responsibility to make statements that are precisely correct, accurate all the way, truthful in every way possible, and move this country forward in the right direction and provide solutions, not just criticism.

I expect that subject will come up a little bit more, Mr. Speaker, within the next 53 minutes or so. Hopefully that will dispatch that subject for tonight.

But I would raise also there are two more issues before us tonight, Mr. Speaker, and one of them is hanging in the balance here in an unprecedented move, and that is the effort to provide a voting Delegate for the District of Columbia here in the United States Congress. It is an astonishing thing for me. It is an astonishing thing for me to be one of 435 Members of this House of Representatives who comes down to this floor every 2 years, and I bring my own Bible down here to make sure I am not short a Bible because I want my oath to go before God and country, for God and country, and take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, so help me God. I add those words to my oath, and I have done so every time that I have been here to take that oath.

I believe that if there is a bill before this Congress, and as we analyze it constitutionally, if any of us come to the