heard cases where peace officers were accused of criminal conduct against other individuals, people they had arrested. And I want to talk about a situation that has occurred down to the Texas-Mexico border involving a Border Patrol agent by the name of David Sipes. David Sipes was a Border Patrol agent patrolling the south Texas area, and he came in contact with a coyote. A coyote is a phrase we use in the vernacular for a person who is a smuggler of human beings into the United States. He makes money off of the plight of people who want to be in the United States for economic reasons.

David Sipes arrested a coyote by the name of Jose Guevara, who resisted arrest. There was a fight that ensued and David Sipes hit Jose Guevara in the back of the head when he resisted arrest and he was charged with smuggling people into the United States.

But what happened was, the U.S. Attorney's Office, rather than prosecute the human smuggler, they decided to prosecute the Border Patrol agent for using too much force in arresting the coyote and charged him with civil rights violations against the illegal in this country smuggling other human beings.

David Sipes was tried for that offense. This all occurred back in April 2000. He was tried for that offense, civil rights violations, and the U.S. Attorney's Office vigorously and relentlessly prosecuted him for this so-called offense. But after the trial it turned out, after he was convicted of the civil rights violation, that the U.S. Attorney's Office hid evidence from David Sipes and his lawyer.

So the district judge ordered a new trial because the U.S. Attorney's Office cannot hide evidence in a criminal case, but they did so against this Border Patrol agent. Why? We don't know, but they did. So the district judge ordered the case to be retried. But before it could be retried, the U.S. Attorney's Office appealed the judge's decision, and the Fifth Circuit agreed with the trial judge that David Sipes was entitled to a new trial and the Federal Government's appeal was thrown out and this year David Sipes was retried.

The jury heard all of the evidence, evidence that the U.S. Attorney's Office hid from the jury when it was first tried, and in less than an hour David Sipes was found not guilty, and properly so.

The evidence that the U.S. Attorney's Office hid from the jury, well, first of all they never told the jury that the U.S. Attorney's Office gave this drug smuggler travel expenses so he could go back and forth to Mexico, that they gave him witness fees, that they gave him free telephone access, that they gave him a border crossing permit, that they gave him a U.S. Social Security card, and they even gave him a Texas driver's license. But the biggest thing that the jury never heard about, besides all these benefits, back room deals he was given, it turns out that this human smuggler brought in another load of humans into the United States and the jury never heard about the second situation.

Why does our U.S. Attorney's Office hide this type of evidence from a jury? We are going to find out why, Madam Speaker. Not only that, but Guevara was given $80,000 by our United States Government when he threatened to sue our government for his so-called illegal arrest, and reports are that he has gone back to Mexico and bought himself a ranch down there with American taxpayer money.

Madam Speaker, just last week David Sipes asked to receive back pay. Of course, our Federal Government fought that, too, but he received back pay for the 6 or 7 years that he was out of service with the Border Patrol. But his life was destroyed. His wife divorced him because of this. He went bankrupt. He is destitute and he lives with his original trial lawyer. All of this because our Federal Government fought every inch of the way to prosecute a Border Patrol agent for arresting a criminal on our border smuggling human beings instead of prosecuting a human smuggler, a coyote.

Our government had the choice, prosecute border agent or prosecute human smuggler, and our government chose poorly, and they prosecuted a Border Patrol agent.

Of course we all know this isn't the end of the story because with agents Ramos and Compean the same situation has occurred. But, Madam Speaker, justice is the one thing we should always find. And finally, after 7 years, a jury heard all of the evidence in this particular case and David Sipes was vindicated and our government chose the wrong side. We are going to follow this case and other cases and see why the government has gone wild about prosecuting Border Patrol agents.

And that's just the way it is.

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO 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 Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS 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 gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

□ 1945

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the leadership for allowing me to come to the floor this evening and spend a few moments and talk about some of the activity that has gone on here in the House over the past couple of weeks. This is an edition of the Truth Squad that I am pleased to be able to host.

The Truth Squad is a group of individuals who endeavor to come to the floor of the House and try to shed a little light, a little truth, a little honesty on the matters that are discussed here on the House floor. It is my privilege to come to the floor of the House tonight and talk about the work that is being done here in the House right now and in Congress.

On the House side, we are in the appropriations process, the time when we determine as a Congress, as a House of Representatives, how to prioritize, how to spend hard earned American taxpayer money. It has been an interesting process, Madam Speaker, as you well know.

Last week we had a fascinating time that really brought light to one of our favorite quotes and that is this quote here from Senator Patrick Moynihan.

Senator Moynihan said that everyone's entitled to their own opinion but no one's entitled to their own facts.

And so last week we had one of the appropriations bills come to the floor of the House and the majority party had determined that they were intent upon making certain that earmarks, or special projects, were never seen by not just the American people during the process of the debate but by Members of Congress. The appropriations process was such that the majority party had determined that these special programs or special projects in individuals' districts, what have come to be known as earmarks, some people know them as pork, that these special projects would not be seen by Members of Congress until the very end of the process, until the conference committee occurred, and then they would be put into the bill. The reason that that is important is that there would be no way from a procedural standpoint or parliamentary standpoint, no way to be able to have a Member of this House of Representatives stand up and say, I think that we ought to have a separate vote on spending X amount of dollars for this project. And that's just wrong, Madam Speaker.

And so what we did on our side was to say, that's not what the American people want. That's not democracy. That's not what we're here for. That's not a process that gives honor to the House of Representatives. That's not a process that says that, yes, we are interested in being responsible with hard-earned American taxpayer money. So we spent a lot of time last week trying to make certain that that point was brought to the floor, that that point was brought to the American people. In so doing, we got some attention. We got some attention, because I think for a small moment that many people across this Nation appreciated that there were people fighting as hard as they could here in this Congress to make certain that there was some fiscal responsibility, that there were individuals who were doing their dead level best to make certain that if this Congress was going to spend as much money as the majority appears to desire to spend, if we were going to do that, that we were going to make certain that every dollar was held accountable.

We got a lot of individuals, a lot of newspapers, a lot of press across this Nation who agreed with us, who said, that's absolutely right. How on earth can you have a process that hides money, that hides money until the very last moment? That's not the way it ought to be done. I have here a number of pages, a number of editorials that were written all across this Nation agreeing with our perspective: Roll call, the Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, the Hill, the Washington Times, on and on and on, around the Nation far and wide, really remarkable, Chicago Tribune, papers all across this Nation agreed.

What they said was that they were proud of Republicans, proud of conservative Members finally standing up and saying, no, we're not going to have that kind of process here.

And so the majority party relented. They said, okay, we agree. We ought not do what we said we were going to do, we're going to work to make certain that those projects are transparent, that there is accountability, that individuals when they present and desire to have special projects in their district that they have their name attached to it, something we've been fighting for for a long time. It was proof that democracy works. It was proof that hard work and diligence and that when you fight in that way for the American people, for the American taxpayer, that yes, there are times when you can be victorious. I was proud to work with my colleagues in the Republican Conference and on the Republican side of the aisle and some of our friends on the other side who joined us and said that you've just got to change that.

It has been a curious situation here these past couple of weeks as the majority party has brought appropriations bills to the floor. I am reminded in this process as we bring up some of the remarkable irresponsible spending that continues to go on here in Washington, Madam Speaker, of some experience that I had back at the State level. I represent a district in Georgia on the northern side of Atlanta, the northern suburban Atlanta area. I served four terms in the State senate before coming to the House of Representatives. In that process, there were also individuals there who were interested in spending what many of us believed was too much of hardworking American taxpayer money, and so we came up with an award that we entitled the ''stuck pig award.'' I was reminded of it this week, because when we have pointed out the amount of spending, increased spending, irresponsible in many instances spending, on the part of the majority party, you hear them squawk and squeal. And so we came up with, at the State level, what we called the stuck pig award and we would award it to somebody who defended the most ridiculous kind of spending. It may be, Madam Speaker, that we need to come up with the same kind of award here in Washington, because there would certainly be a number of candidates for the stuck pig award. But maybe we'll leave that for another day.

I want to highlight a number of things that happened on the floor just today. Today we had, Madam Speaker, as you remember, the Energy and Water appropriations bill, a bill that is very important for our Nation, an area that sets priorities in terms of spending for our Nation and the amount of money that ought to be spent on projects all across this Nation that in many areas are needed desperately. Last year, Madam Speaker, in that area of appropriations, we spent, this Nation spent, $30.2 billion. The administration's request in the areas where they felt appropriate to fund for this year, for fiscal year 2008, was $30.4 billion, an increase of about 0.6 percent, under 1 percent and certainly under the rate of inflation, which is what we attempted to do when we were in the majority, was to keep these levels increasing at a rate less than inflation. Many of us believe that we ought to have actual decreases, but keeping it less than inflation is certainly a step in the right direction.

But what happened this year is that the majority party brought this bill to the floor, the appropriations bill for Energy and Water, at a rate of spending of $31.6 billion. That's a 4.3 percent increase, which is about three times the rate of increase that we had when we brought the bill to the floor last year.

Now, many of us believe that that's simply too much money, that that doesn't prioritize the Federal budget in the way that Americans across this Nation have to prioritize their family budget. And so we offered a number of amendments, which is really the only way that you can kind of get to who is interested in being fiscally responsible and who isn't. Because, Madam Speaker, as you know, people can stand up and give speeches about anything they want and they can say anything they want, but as Senator Moynihan said, everyone's entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts.

We learned some facts today on the floor of the House, Madam Speaker, about who is interested truly in fiscal responsibility. A number of us offered amendments that would have resulted in some decrease in the amount of spending. These amendments covered various levels. One of the amendments offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) said that we ought to keep the spending in this area of the appropriations, in this area of our budgetary process, to exactly what it was last year, to have no actual percentage increase, which results in a functional decrease because of the rate of inflation, something that many people believe to be responsible at a time when the Federal Government spends more than it takes in, which the Federal Government currently does. So Mr. CAMPBELL offered an amendment that said you ought to keep it at last year's level, which is about a $1.3 billion savings.

Mr. JORDAN, the gentleman from Ohio, said that may be appropriate, but if our friends on the other side of the aisle or in this Chamber don't think that that's a little too much to save, then I'll offer an amendment that says we ought to keep it at the President's level, the 0.6 percent increase. What that would do would save about $1.1 billion.

I offered an amendment that said, well, there may be some people who believe that keeping it at last year's level is not an appropriate level, that keeping it at the level that the President and the administration requested is not an appropriate level, that, well, then maybe we just ought to decrease it or reduce it by 1 percent. Now, Madam Speaker, this isn't a 1 percent cut. This would be a 1 percent reduction in the increase. The increase is about 4.3 percent. This would be a 1 percent reduction, increasing it about 3.3 percent. So if you didn't believe that we ought to keep it at last year's number, if you didn't believe that we ought to put it at the number that the President requested, then you might believe that we ought to just reduce spending by 1 percent, decrease it by 1 percent in the reduction of the increase. And so we offered that amendment.

And then a final amendment, overall amendment, was offered by Mrs. MUSGRAVE, the gentlelady from Colorado. She said, in essence, well, you may not believe that we ought to keep it at last year's amount, you may not believe that we ought to go to the President's amount, you may not believe that you ought to cut 1 percent, that may seem to be too much, but you ought to believe that you could cut a

half a percent. You ought to believe that you could cut a half a percent, so 50 cents out of every $100, that you ought to be able to cut that amount.

Those four amendments were offered on the floor of the House today. The fact is, Madam Speaker, that each and every one of those amendments failed, that the vast majority of the Members of the majority party, the Democrat Party, voted against those to carry the day. So that they believe that, no, you ought not keep the spending level, as a matter of fact, you ought not keep the spending level in this area of the budget to last year. You ought not save $1.3 billion.

And they voted that you ought not have the amount of spending be at the level that the administration, that the President requested. This is the executive branch, the branch that is responsible for carrying out the laws and the bills and the priorities that we pass here in Congress, you ought not keep it at that level. You aren't interested in saving $1.1 billion. Again, a fact.

They also said, as a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, that you don't want to cut it 1 percent. You don't want to have a reduction of 1 percent. Remember, a reduction in the increase. Not a reduction in real numbers but a reduction in the increase. None of these amendments would have reduced in real dollars. All of them were a percentage reduction in the increase.

The majority party, in fact as a majority said, no, we don't as a matter of fact want to reduce the increase by 1 percent. Also, as a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, they said that they didn't want to reduce it by one-half of 1 percent. They didn't want to realize savings that would result in a 50 cent savings out of every $100 spent by the Federal Government in the area of Energy and Water appropriations.

Now, Madam Speaker, I don't know about you, but when times are tight in our household, when times are tight in the household of my constituents, when times are tight in households all across this Nation, when American families have times when they are spending more or budgeting more than is coming in, what they do is they look at their budget, they look at their family budget and say, Where can we save some money? Sometimes they say, Well, we'll just cut everything a little bit. We'll spend a little less on everything. That's the similar story. That's the analogy to the family budget.

But what this Congress said, what this majority party said is that, no, we don't believe that we're not spending enough. In fact, we believe that we ought to spend more. We ought to spend more than the increase last year, we ought to spend more than was requested by the administration, we just ought to spend more. And so it rings on deaf ears, Madam Speaker, when the majority party says, and had said before the election in November, we will rein in Federal spending.

Well, this is a clear example, once again, of what I have dubbed Orwellian democracy, after George Orwell, the famous author, who famously in his books demonstrated that policies of governments oftentimes say one thing and do exactly the opposite.

□ 2000

That's what we find now in, I believe, this majority party, is that they say one thing and do exactly the opposite. So they say, with a straight face, that we are reining in government spending, that we are reining in Federal spending.

But, in fact, what's happening is a significant increase in Federal spending and an increase of greater than the amount that they railed against last year, which strikes me as being somewhat disingenuous and also misleading to the American people. The American people go to the polls every 2 years, and they vote based upon what people are going to tell them what they are going to do. I believe before that our side of the aisle had gotten a little wayward in terms of spending. So the message of reining in Federal spending fell on receptive ears.

The problem is that it hasn't been followed up by action. So it's a leadership that continues to say one thing and to do another, truly, truly remarkable.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about the issue of taxes and the tax increases that will be required to cover the amount of spending that the new majority has begun to march down a path to spend. The appropriations bill last week was an example of that, the appropriations bill today was an example of that, and most of them, as they come up through the 12 bills of the appropriations process will, indeed, demonstrate the lack of fiscal responsibility.

So what the other side is going to have to do is to find revenue. Instead of doing what our party did, and this President did, and President Reagan did, and, in fact, President Kennedy did in order to gain increased economic activity and in order to increase revenue to the Federal Government, those three individuals, President Bush, President Reagan and President Kennedy, all decreased taxes in a somewhat nonintuitive kind of activity, increased revenue to the Federal Government.

Because when you decrease taxes, what you do is you allow people to keep more of their money, you allow them to keep more of their money in their back pocket and in their pocketbook. Hence, they are able to decide for themselves when to save or when to spend or when to invest. When they spend, because they have more money, what results is increased economic activity.

Well, the current majority party demonstrates clear differences between a conservative Republican philosophy and a liberal Democrat philosophy. The difference is that we believe taxes ought to be reduced in order to increase economic activity. The other side clearly believes that the taxes ought to be increased, with the peculiar notion that if you just increase taxes enough, you will gain enough revenue to the Federal Government to equal the appetite for spending.

So they passed a budget, and their budget would increase taxes for every single American that pays taxes, every single American that pays taxes. The largest tax increase in the history of our Nation was passed by this majority just a few short months ago.

When you ask, well, what would that cover, what happens is that all of the tax, the appropriate tax reductions of earlier in this decade, 2001 and 2003, if the budget that was adopted by this majority is allowed to proceed over the next number of years, all of those tax reductions go away. All of the tax increases come back.

What happens on December 31, 2010, which isn't too far away, what happens is that the tax rates on ordinary income go from 35 percent overnight to 39.6 percent. The capital gains tax goes from 15 percent to 20 percent overnight. Dividends tax goes from 15 percent to 39.6, overnight. Estate tax, this is the death tax, this is what individuals, individuals' families, their estate has to pay when they die. It would be 0 percent on December 31, 2010, under the majority party's budget, and under the budget that they adopted. Again, this is the largest tax increase in the history of our Nation. It will jump to 55 percent overnight in 1 second.

Child tax credit, which would rest at $1,000 in 2010, would decrease in half. It would be cut in half, decrease child tax credits by 50 percent down to $500. The lowest tax bracket, those at the lower end of the economic spectrum who currently pay 10 percent would pay 15 percent, a significant increase in their taxes, nearly about half of what they would currently pay.

Now, it just doesn't make any sense to have that kind of tax policy in place when, in fact, what they have said before is that they would responsibly spend American hard-earned taxpayer money and be fiscally responsible. Instead, what they have done is gone back to a tried and true method of tax and spend. So everybody's taxes, nearly $400 billion, will shoot up virtually overnight.

Now, in their budgetary process, and that might be all right for some people, that whole tax increase and gaining, supposedly gaining new revenue for the Federal Government. Some people will say that's fine, if you are really solving problems, if you are truly solving problems, then it may be appropriate for us to do that.

As you well know, the largest problem that we have in our Nation from a fiscal standpoint is the issue of entitlement spending, automatic spending that occurs in our Federal Government programs, primarily three programs, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

This chart here outlines the percentage of the Federal budget that goes for those programs. These are the programs that are on automatic pilot. They just kind of continued to increase because of the demographics of our society, aging population. The monies for these programs continue to increase year after year unless there is particular reform.

So, in 1995, those three programs that are in this yellow portion of this pie chart here were about 48.7 percent of the Federal budget. In 2005, they measured 53 percent. They are a little over 54 percent now. In 2017, they will be 62.2 percent with no changes, and within another, oh, 10 to 15 years beyond that, they will consume the entire Federal budget, if the budget remains at its current level, which is its historic rate.

Now, many of my constituents might say if you are going to increase taxes like the majority party has done by adopting the largest tax increase in the history of our Nation, nearly a $400 billion tax increase, if you are going to do that, that might be okay if you are going to solve real problems, if you are going to solve real problems. But the fact of the matter is that the budget didn't solve any of the problems, none, zero.

When we look at this graph, this graph is evidence of the absolute emptiness of the promise that the majority party had to reform entitlement spending, to reform automatic spending, mandatory spending. In our budget, in 1997, we had 125, $130 billion in appropriate reform and reductions. The Deficit Reduction Act, in 2005, had about $43 billion in appropriate reductions.

The budget just adopted for the coming years, by the new majority party, had zero, zero, no money at all for appropriate fiscal reform, responsible reform in the area of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security.

Those programs are social compacts with the American people, but they are programs that left on their current course will not be able to survive. They will not be able to survive. So every day that we wait, the problems get greater, the solution gets more elusive for each of those programs. So it is imperative, it is imperative that we move forward.

I would challenge my friends on the other side of the aisle to join together with those of us who are interested in true fiscal responsibility and true entitlement reform, and let's get it done. Let's get it done on behalf of the American people, because, frankly, that's what they sent us here to Washington to do, to solve big problems.

This graph demonstrates that we are not solving big problems here. As I say, if you were going to increase significantly the amount of taxes that the American people are paying, then many of them may say, I think there is a better way to do it, as I mentioned. Because I think tax reductions increase revenue to a greater degree to the Federal Government.

But many people across this Nation might say, well, I am all right paying a little more taxes if we are solving real problems, but not if we're on a spending spree that appears to be what is occurring with this new majority. This graph demonstrates the commitment to entitlement reform, which apparently in this new majority is zero. So I urge my colleagues to rethink the process and the policies that they put in place that will result in no significant entitlement reform.

As they are looking, once again, at their budget and at their policies, I would urge them also to look back into history. The next graph demonstrates clearly what kind of economic policy does work. This graph could be a number of things that show, that demonstrate negative growth or negative activity in the economy to positive activity in the economy over the years of this decade.

This graph, as a matter of fact, is the graph about job creation. How many new jobs have been created in our Nation since the beginning of 2001? As you can see, what we have here for month after month after month after month, between 2001 and 2003, virtually negative job growth during that period of time, no new jobs, in fact, losing jobs in the economy. For every single quarter, with the exception of four during that 4-year period.

Something happened, miraculously, in the beginning of 2003, the early months of 2003, in this vertical line here that marks the beginning of moving toward quarter after quarter after quarter after quarter of increased job growth, over 7 million new jobs since the summer of 2003.

What happened at that time is, as you know, this is when the final appropriate tax reductions were adopted by the Republican majority with this administration and this Congress. What that has resulted in is remarkable increase in job growth across our Nation. Virtually every single State, virtually every single State has seen increase in job growth over that period of time, average job gain of 168,000 new jobs per month on average.

So one would think that if you were charged with coming up with economic policy for our Nation that you would look back and say, well, this looks to be a pretty good program here that has resulted in significant job growth.

As I said before, this could be economic development, you could see a significant decrease in unemployment. All sorts of things could go on these axis, and you would see positive activity during this same period of time.

So if you were charged with coming up with economic policy for our Nation, one would think that you would look at this and say what happened, what happened at that point that made the resulting number of quarters to the current time, made it so productive? How did we become so productive as a Nation compared to where we were earlier in this decade?

Well, as I said, what happened during that time was appropriate tax reductions, making it so that individuals paid less of their hard-earned taxpayer money, that they are allowed to keep more of their money so that they decide when they spend, or they save or they invest. It's those kinds of policies that have resulted in can significant economic growth and economic activity.

I would urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, as they are working through their process, as they are trying to figure out how to make certain that we stay a global, world competitive economic engine, that what they ought to do is look into history. Just a few short years ago there was a policy that was adopted by this Congress that resulted in remarkable, remarkable economic activity. So that we have the most economically productive Nation in the world, the industrialized world.

We continue to perform month after month after month. One of the main reasons for that is, indeed, the decrease, the appropriate reductions in taxes all across the Nation so that anybody who has paid taxes pays fewer taxes, less taxes today from a percentage standpoint than they did prior to that early point in 2003.

That's what results in increasing economic activity. It's not something that is unique to these tax reductions in 2003. In fact, that's what we saw when President Reagan decreased taxes in the 1980s, decreased taxes for the American people. Many folks said, oh, you can't do that, you won't be able to fund the programs in the Federal Government.

But what happened is that, as happened here, it increased revenue to the Federal Government because you decreased taxes because you cut taxes and because you allow the American people to keep more of their hard-earned money.

□ 2015

And that's what results in increasing economic activity. And it hasn't only been on the Republican side of the aisle. Democrats, indeed, have shown this same kind of discipline in the past. When President Kennedy, in the early 1960s, in fact, cut taxes, decreased taxes, appropriate tax reductions for the American people, because he knew that if you decrease taxes to the American people, what happens is that they will determine for themselves responsibly when to save or to spend or invest and, in fact, that increases economic activity for our Nation.

It points out, Mr. Speaker, one of the fundamental differences that I talked about between a conservative Republican philosophy and a liberal Democrat philosophy, and that is that we believe that the American people know best how to spend their money, not Washington. There are very few times when Washington knows better how to spend someone's money than themselves. And it just makes common

sense, because only an individual, only people know their priorities.

Now, there are certain things that we have to spend common money on, without a doubt, and we talked about one of those that we dealt with earlier today. But there's a responsible way to do it, and that responsible way to do it, Mr. Speaker, is to identify, clearly identify those programs that ought to be absolute priorities.

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that is so many fewer programs than this Federal Government is currently undertaking. But the Democrat liberal majority has a mentality that tends to come from San Francisco, I guess, which means that you just ought to spend just as much as you can get. You just ought to spend as much as you can get.

And so I'm pleased to join with my colleagues and point out that the economic policies that have been successful in the past and will continue to be successful if they're adopted, are those policies that will result in more hard-earned taxpayer money being able to be kept by hard-earned American taxpayers.

I just want to highlight once more a chart that demonstrates exactly that. And that is that when you reduce taxes to the American people, when you reduce, appropriately, taxes so that the American people can keep more of their hard-earned money, which is what occurred here in the early part of 2003, tax revenues were going down and down and down, 3 straight years of decreases between 2000 and 2003, tax reductions occurred with the Tax Relief Act being passed, and then the revenues increased significantly so that greater revenues than ever seen by the Federal Government because of tax reductions. And that's the kind of responsible economic policy that we believe, that I believe, ought to be put in place and kept in place, so that you decrease the tax burden on the American people, you allow them to determine when they save or they spend or they invest their own money. And then what happens is that the economy flourishes because there's more money available to drive the economy, more jobs created, more economic activity, more independence, and more liberty, more liberty and more freedom, because when people are able to keep their own money, they're freer, they're freer to make decisions about how they indeed spend or save or invest their own money.

So we're talking some economic policy tonight, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully, we'll be able to encourage our friends on the other side of the aisle to adopt some of these commonsense reforms.

I'm pleased to be joined by my good friend from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) who's going to talk a little bit also about some economic activity that's been going on here in Washington, and I'm pleased to yield to my friend.

Mr. GOHMERT. And I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia yielding, and appreciate the work he's been doing and pointing out some real economic truths. Some of these things are just so basic. As we've talked about before, you mentioned before, Ronald Reagan said we don't have a taxing problem, we've got a spending problem. And he was so right.

But over the last 2½ years, Mr. Speaker, that my friend from Georgia and I have been here together, we've seen lots of indications, lots of signs out in front of offices talking about the national debt, and your share is so much. And I just think those are so good and so helpful.

As we see here, Blue Dog Coalition, today the U.S. national debt is $8,809,000,000, and your share is $29,000. I mean, that's just staggering. And frankly, you know, I've begun to think I want one of those signs, because we know who's in control. And there are those of us for the last 2½ years, or the last 2 years that we've actually been here, that have been trying to push this body into having more economic responsibility. And we did see, last year, great strides made in the first time that discretionary spending wasn't just held even, it actually was cut. So we were making some real progress.

We saw the Federal revenues come streaming up, as the gentleman from Georgia points out, that real progress is being made. And so I just want to applaud what has been done because really it's consistent with the efforts that so many of us have made, like earmark reform. We were trying to get earmark reform. And it only took a few dozen conservative Republicans to band together and not vote for key legislation unless we got some earmark reform.

□ 2030

And that is when we finally got some earmark reform. Of course, you wouldn't know it to listen to me. They never talked about what we got accomplished, but being able to object, make a point of order on earmark reform. But I think this is a good idea to keep reminding everybody of how high the debt is, how much everybody's responsibility is. And, frankly, I want one of these signs. I may have to change the name to the ''Blue Hound Dog Coalition'' or something, but I would like to see everybody encouraging this Congress to move as we were able to push the Congress in doing in the last year or so, and hopefully there are people on the other side of the aisle that will be able to push the Democratic majority away from this just uncontrolled spending. Not only is the President's request up in most every area, but the proposals for appropriations from the Democratic majority just skyrocket above that in so many areas.

So I don't know what the gentleman from Georgia intends to do. But I tell you, I like reminding the majority it is time to do something. We made some real progress the last 2 years, and I am hoping that folks are not going to let that die. Even though there is a major effort to try to get that killed, I think we should keep pushing, keep pushing. I just encourage all Republicans get a sign outside your door. Let's remind folks, not just the 36 that pushed for earmark reform. Let's get everybody out there reminding the majority.

I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia's yielding, and I would just encourage you in all your efforts, let's get this done.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I appreciate his bringing that sign because it highlights the Orwellian nature of this majority. You say you have got folks who are members of the Blue Dog coalition and what they say is that they are opposed to increasing that number. But, Mr. Speaker, what happened earlier this year is that the 8 trillion plus dollars of debt that have increased over multiple administrations have been increased to over $9 trillion now. The debt ceiling was increased by the Democrat majority, along with the Blue Dogs, to over $9 trillion. By this majority. By this majority, Mr. Speaker. Something they said they would never do. But, in fact, that is exactly what they did do. And in so doing, they adopted the second largest debt increase in our history.

So it is important for the American people to be listening and watching. It is important for them to appreciate what happens when you decrease taxes, that Federal revenues increase. It is important for them to appreciate, as this chart demonstrates, what track we are on for spending with this new majority.

This green line here, Mr. Speaker, that is moving along demonstrates the significant increase in spending. And much of that is driven by the entitlements that we talked about earlier, the mandatory spending, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and demands reform. Demands reform. But that is not what has been enacted by this majority. The problem is that this majority is adopting policies in their current appropriations bills that will not decrease that line; it will increase. It will further increase that slope. And that is not the kind of leadership that America needs or deserves or desires or, Mr. Speaker, I believe, not the kind of leadership that they voted for in November.

One of the things that they did do in November was send us a good new Member on our side of the aisle, Mr. LAMBORN, and I am pleased to see him join us this evening and I look forward to his comments on economic policy.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman from Georgia yield for purposes of a colloquy?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I would be happy to yield to you.

Mr. LAMBORN. To the gentleman from Georgia, you have been in Congress for about 3 years now, I believe, if I am not mistaken, and you came from the Georgia legislature. Like you, I

came from the Colorado legislature. And one thing that the great State of Georgia and the great State of Colorado share, as do all 48 other States, is that they have a balanced budget amendment. It is written into the State Constitution of both Georgia and Colorado that every year we have to balance the budget.

Now, unfortunately, I think the biggest glaring problem with our national budget is we don't have such a balanced budget requirement every year, and it is so easy to go into debt. If we had strong willpower, we could hold the line, and that is what we are going to talk about here, and I have some questions for you. But in the absence of that strong fiscal strength of character, moral fiber, whatever you want to call it, it is so easy to want to please everybody, spend for the projects, not prioritize, and we run up massive deficits. And I know that in the past deficits have been run up under all kinds of administrations of both parties.

But to the gentleman from Georgia, what would be the difference here if we had some kind of balanced budget amendment? I mean until we have that and if it takes a constitutional amendment, which I would favor but that is going to take two-thirds of the House and Senate and three-quarters, or 38 of the 50 States, to ratify that, and until that day comes, we just have to have the strength of will and the commitment to the American people and the taxpayer that we will balance the budget.

Could you respond to that?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman's comments, Mr. Speaker. And I am so pleased that he brought that up because oftentimes when we have these discussions, you hear people never provide any solutions, and you have put a solution on the table that I think is very important.

As you mentioned, I have been here just 3 years. This is my third year in Congress. And I came from the State level, where you have to balance the budget, and the reason you have to balance the budget is because you can't print money. States can't print money and Washington can, and that may be the crux of the problem right there. But I recognized early on that all of the inertia, and we see it during this appropriations season, all of the inertia here in Washington is to spend money, to spend more money. There are very few institutional, if any institutional, parameters in place that force you to hold the line on spending, which is why a balanced budget amendment is so incredibly important. And it is one of the reasons that many of us have supported a taxpayer bill of rights at the Federal level. We certainly did at the State level. I know I did. I suspect you did as well at the State level.

But we believe and we have introduced legislation for a Federal taxpayer bill of rights because we believe taxpayers have a right to know that the Federal Government doesn't grow beyond their means; that they have a right to receive back every single dollar that they put into their retirement program, into the Social Security program. We believe that taxpayers have a right to a balanced budget amendment without raising taxes, which is one of the issues that you stated. And it is so important, and the reason it is important is because of the programs and the policies and the traditions, if you will, of Washington. And the American people understand this clearly. The traditions are to continue programs that are already in place and then add some more on. It is just the natural tendency, and that is simply not what the American people want or desire, I believe.

I am happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you. And it is probably a concern to you, as it is to me, that the current appropriations bills, about 12 of them, that are going through the House have an excess of $23 billion over what the President has requested. And if it was me in the President's place, I might have even had that lower. But let's go with that as a base amount to start with. We are going $23 billion over that. And he has said that, with the exception of the military construction bill, he is ready to veto bills that go over his spending requests. So let's say eight or nine of those get vetoed. Doesn't that mean we are going to have to come back? You have been through this process a full cycle, and I have not. Doesn't that mean we are going to have to come back later this summer, go through these bills all over again, and start from scratch?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend for his comment.

I am hopeful that the President will follow through on his admonition to Congress to toe the line on spending, and I am hopeful that he will indeed veto a bill that gets to his desk that has an increase in spending.

Remember, the amount that the administration requested is the amount that the departments believe is the appropriate level of spending to carry out the needs of the American people.

Now, it is perfectly appropriate I believe for Congress to reprioritize within that basket, to say we think we ought to be spending, as a Nation, more here as opposed to here. I am one of those who believe we ought to be spending less as a Nation; so I would hope we would reprioritize and say this program is a priority of the Federal Government and, in fact, this one is best done elsewhere, maybe even the private sector and consequently doesn't need to be funded.

But what will happen, I trust, is that the President will be good to his word and veto legislation that spends more than the departments asked for and then it comes back to the Congress in order to rewrite a bill that will provide and allow for the President to sign. And as I say, I am hopeful that that kind of fiscally responsible activity occurs as we move through this process.

And I am pleased to yield again to my friend.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you for that answer.

And as a follow-up to that, I would have to say that in the absence of a balanced budget amendment, at least we have the possibility of sticking to the numbers that the President has given us. Those numbers are still in excess of the rate of inflation. He is asking some departments for a 6 or 8, 9 percent increase as opposed to 2 or 3 percent, which would be the inflationary rate. So his numbers are very generous just right there. But when our colleagues across the aisle are going $23 billion on top of that, I just see a chance for a little bit of fiscal restraint if they would back off $23 billion and say let's stick within what the President has recommended. There are still many things that can be done that are worthy projects within that amount. And I just see that we are missing a golden opportunity here, and I just think that until we have a balanced budget amendment, we have to do it by our own sense of fiscal discipline.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments. And I will point out that our side of the aisle, when we had responsibility for these budgets over the past at least 2 years that I have been here, we kept the rate of increase in the discretionary programs to less than the rate of inflation. And that was something that I and many others here thought was important.

I think it is important to put on the table solutions because the American people want solutions. They want us to work together in a positive way and provide solutions. And the Taxpayer Bill of Rights is indeed a program of solutions, making certain that we don't grow beyond our means, that the Federal Government budget doesn't grow faster than the rate of inflation and the increase in population. Perfectly appropriate. Making certain that the Social Security Trust Fund money is spent on Social Security.

We heard a lot about that from our friends before the election, that that is exactly what they would do. In fact, they have had an opportunity to put that in place and have not done so.

A balanced budget amendment without raising taxes, it is clearly possible from historical precedent and from economic policy that has been written before that it is easily done to balance this budget without raising taxes. You will hear our friends on the other side say, no, you have got to raise taxes in order to balance the budget.

I am happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you. And I have another question from the gentleman from Georgia.

You were here over the last 2 years before January, when I was sworn in and I came on, although I am new since then. Isn't it true that we had a rule that the Republicans initiated that said it took 60 percent to raise taxes,

not in statute but in rules, and that that was one of the first things that went out the window when we turned control over to the Democrats?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend for asking it because it is one of the things that resulted in a 12-year history in this Congress of no increase in taxes. And one of the reasons for that was we required in our rules a super majority to raise taxes. And you are absolutely correct. On that first day there were a lot of rules that changed that determined how the House works. One of the rules that was changed said, no, you don't need a super majority; all you need is a simple majority, which, as you know and as the American people know, means that the majority party can do anything they want in terms of taxes, which was how they were able to pass a budget that includes the largest tax increase in the history of our Nation, nearly $400 billion in the future.

So I appreciate my good friend's comments and would yield to him if he has another question or comment.

Mr. LAMBORN. Yes. And then I will turn it back over to you.

But you remember the year 2001 in the Georgia legislature. I remember that very well in Colorado. When 9/11 happened, the tragedy involved with that, and then on top of that the subsequent horrendous economic problems that our country had, and each State suffered losses of revenues. We had to look at cutting programs or doing with less. But at the same time, the American public and families had to do with less also.

□ 2045

But then when times were better, we had more, and we can spend more, if necessary.

So I just think that it's unfortunate that we don't have such a balanced budget amendment. But it's good that we had rules, at least up until January, where we took a supermajority before we had a tax increase, and even now we have an opportunity, if we will all only seize upon it, to say, okay, we'll stick with the President's numbers. I think we can do even better than that in terms of saving money for the taxpayers. But let's say we stick with the President's numbers, that would still be a $23 billion savings over what our friends across the aisle are proposing in these various appropriations bills. And that we would, by going to the President's numbers, we would still be over the rate of inflation in most of the different agencies.

So, I just think it's a tragedy that we're not seizing upon this opportunity. I just expected better when I got sworn into Congress because I had heard talk during the campaign that if the majority party would take power, that they would be more fiscally responsible in different ways. And unfortunately, I haven't seen that fully carried out, and I've been very disappointed.

At this point, I'm going to yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend from Colorado for coming down this evening and sharing his comments and his perspective. It's similar to mine. And the disappointment is shared as well because the American people did expect more. And I think that the numbers that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, and the polls that are out now that demonstrate the impression of the American people of Congress is at its lowest point in decades, that that's reflective of the disappointment that they have in this new majority. So I appreciate your comments.

I do just want to end, Mr. Speaker, by highlighting once again what we believe the solutions are. And there are solutions, and they're positive solutions. And they are solutions that we can embrace together, Republicans and Democrats, who truly desire to be fiscally responsible. And they are incorporated in the Taxpayer Bill of Rights at the Federal level. Again, it means that the Federal Government ought not grow faster than the rate of inflation and the increase in population; that every single dollar that goes into the Social Security trust fund ought to be spent on Social Security; that that money ought to be preserved for individuals who send that money to the Federal Government; that a balanced budget occurs without raising taxes. It's very doable. We have demonstrated it time and time again, that you increase revenue to the Federal Government when you decrease taxes. So, a balanced budget amendment without raising taxes.

And fundamental and fair tax reform. Our tax system is woefully flawed, and it is a system that is crying out for reform, crying out for repair. It's unfair for people all across the spectrum, and demands, indeed demands, fundamental reform.

And finally, a supermajority required for any tax increase, as my friend from Colorado highlighted. We had no tax increase over the 12 years when my party was in charge. And one of the reasons for that was that it required a supermajority to pass a tax increase. And that just makes common sense. If you are going to take more of the hard-earned American taxpayer money, then you ought to do it with significant majorities. Thomas Jefferson, I believe, said that ''You ought not make major changes with minor majorities.'' It's something that I think this majority ought to adhere to.

Mr. Speaker, let me just close by saying that we live in a wonderful and glorious Nation, a Nation that allows us to be elected and to come and represent the finest people on the face of the Earth. I challenge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to endeavor to do that in a way that's responsible, that respects the hard work that they do day in and day out, that respects the importance in the correlation between liberty and freedom, and allowing the American people to keep more of their money. When they're able to keep more money, they're more free, they have greater independence and greater liberty. And by so doing, we adhere to fundamental principles that are uniquely American.

I yield back the balance of my time.

PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2764, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mrs. LOWEY (during Special Order of Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, during further consideration of H.R. 2764 in the Committee of the Whole pursuant to House Resolution 498, notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the bill may be offered except:

Pro forma amendments offered at any point in the reading by the chairman or ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their designees for the purpose of debate;

An amendment by Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida or Mr. SIRES regarding funding for Cuba Democracy assistance programs, which shall be debatable for 20 minutes;

An amendment by Mr. WOLF regarding funding for certain assistance programs for Iraq, which shall be debatable for 20 minutes;

An amendment by Mr. SHAYS regarding funding for Iraq Study Group;

An amendment by Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey regarding funding for anti-terrorism programs;

An amendment by Mr. MCCAUL of Texas regarding funding for international narcotics control and law enforcement programs;

An amendment by Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey regarding certain reporting requirements related to U.N. employees participating in U.N. peacekeeping missions;

An amendment by Mr. MACK regarding funding for broadcasting to Venezuela;

An amendment by Mr. SHADEGG to strike language designating funds for renewable energy;

An amendment by Mr. SHERMAN regarding funding for the International Development Association;

An amendment by Mr. PAYNE regarding funding for tuberculosis through Child Survival and Health;

An amendment by Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas regarding funding for Liberia;

An amendment by Mr. BLUMENAUER regarding funding for Pakistan;

An amendment by Mr. CULBERSON regarding funding for rural water and sanitation projects in East Africa;

An amendment by Mr. SHAYS regarding funding for community assistance programs in Iraq;

An amendment by Mr. FORBES regarding ESF funding for Ethiopia;