

that our constituents are opposed to increasing taxes. Make no mistake about it: If the American people believe that an increase in taxes would once and for all eliminate our debt problems here in this country, they would support it.

But, you see, this institution has a credibility problem—in fact, the entire Federal Government has a credibility problem with the American people. The American people do not have confidence in our ability to be prudent with their tax dollars. Do you blame them? When over the course of the last 2 years we have spent over \$3 trillion on money, on stimuluses and bailouts, promising that we would increase their opportunity to be more financially secure, and of course that didn't happen. The proof is in the pudding. We spent the money, and guess what? No results.

We have a spending problem. Why? Because so many politicians here who have been here for a long time believe that everything in the budget is a need, not a want. As a parent of a young child, I'm constantly having to explain to him the difference between needs and wants. So the longtime politicians here believe that government is the solution to everything. Well, my friends, believe you me, some of us know it's not, and the vast majority of people know it's not. Trust me. Trust me.

We must get serious. Washington is not an elastic piggybank that is able to continue to fund everyone's wants. Let's get serious. Let's quit spending what we don't have. Let's restore credibility. And we do this by cutting spending through prioritizing. It is that simple. Restore credibility, restore trust. Get down to creating certainty, reducing redtape and creating jobs.

DEBT AND RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker and my colleagues, last week, I tried to point out that there was a serious meeting going on in the White House last weekend between the President and our congressional leaders to point out that we were facing a serious crisis and that we had to do something to make certain that the President felt sure that we would increase the debt ceiling and that we would make certain that we did stop this unnecessary spending. And of course the question of revenues has always been a part of the debate.

What I was trying to do was to point out that on one side it appeared the issue was that we shouldn't tax those people that created jobs—and these are people, as people have pointed out, who are the wealthiest corporations that have record profits, and of course the wealthy that have really had the lowest tax rates and have received more money in the last decade than in the history of the country.

And I was really trying to say that, since the vulnerable and the poor did

not have any lobbyists or voices to debate this issue, that when we talk about entitlements, that when we talk about Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid, these are not just political labels. The Medicaid, of course we're talking about the vulnerable, the poor, and those who are sick. Medicare, we're talking about the aged that need help. I was also pointing out that, unfortunately, Social Security has become the main income for so many Americans. And we have veterans that are coming home, we have the jobless, the homeless, the hopeless. And even though they did not have a lobbyist to say, hey, I want to have a seat at that table, that I called to all of our spiritual leaders, since I knew that in every religion there was a good Samaritan aspect which really ended up saying, just do the right thing. I didn't put politics in it, I didn't put party labels in it. And I wasn't just talking to Christians and ministers and Catholics and Protestants; I was reaching out to the rabbis, to the imams, to the Buddhists, to the Mormons, to the Muslims and saying that in every Scripture, in every religious document, taking care of the vulnerable and those who can't take care of themselves, that that moral issue should be on the table.

Well, as a result of that, some people thought that instead of just a good Samaritan, I would ask what Jesus would do. And I just want to make it clear: I haven't the slightest idea what he would do, but my very dear friend, Governor Huckabee, said one of the things that Jesus would do would be to pay his taxes. And, of course, that was something that reminded me.

□ 1030

He also went to Deuteronomy. And he said it on TV: "For the Lord your God will bless you as He has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. And you will rule over many nations but none will rule over you."

Well, again, that scored for the good Governor, but however, when you have got a \$14.3 trillion debt, it's kind of late for that message to have a strong impact.

But what I want to make clear is that no matter what religion you are, it appears to me that what we're talking about are two sides of sincere Americans that do recognize that this is not just saying that the sky may fall. All economists agree that there are various ways to do it, and we cannot just cut back spending in order to resolve this serious economic problem we have.

As a matter of fact, we have to be very sensitive when we do cut back spending that we don't create an addition to the unemployment and those that provide services to the disadvantaged. And I am talking specifically about our hospitals, about our social workers. Because there is no one in this Chamber that doesn't believe that the homeless and the sick, those that

are disabled and those that are dependent on these programs should be ignored as we protect those people who, for whatever reason, have not participated in the creation of those jobs, even though we all are waiting.

But more importantly, we have not heard any complaints from the wealthiest of Americans that more equity should be involved in our taxing system. When the billionaires can say that their secretaries have a higher tax rate than they do, it means that we have a responsibility not to raise taxes but at least to close the inequity that exists that would raise revenue.

So when we do get home it seems to me that we would say this is not a Democratic issue, this is not a Republican issue alone, it is a moral issue.

Thank you, Governor Huckabee.

HONORING COLONEL GERALD F. RUSSELL OF CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor a true patriot, humanitarian, and all-around great American, Colonel Gerald F. Russell, United States Marine Corps, of Centre County, Pennsylvania. Colonel Gerald F. Russell is a combat veteran of Guadalcanal, Korea, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and World War II, including the Battle of Iwo Jima, which remains today a seminal event in our Nation's history.

May 1 was Colonel Russell's birthday. I use this time to celebrate his service to our country and his thankless contributions to our local communities of central Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, May 1, 1916, was the beginning of a long life of service. In 1940, Colonel Gerald F. Russell graduated from Boston College, enlisted in the first Marine Corps Office Candidates Class, and later that year was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. He was assigned to the 11th Marines, 1st Marine Division, Parris Island, South Carolina, and then promoted to first lieutenant.

In September 1942, Colonel Russell landed in the assault waves on Guadalcanal in the first U.S. offensive of World War II. He was promoted to captain that very same day, assigned as battery commander ship, he was hit by Japanese aircraft during landing, which later sank. Colonel Russell suffered shrapnel wounds during the campaign, was not evacuated, and soon contracted malaria. Shortly after, he moved with the 1st Marine Division to Melbourne, Australia, and only returned to the U.S. to recover.

From 1943 to 1945, Russell was assigned to attend the United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College. He was assigned to the 5th Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, as artillery battalion exec, promoted to major, and