was out there that an adequate amount of folic acid had the potential to avert these birth defects. The risk to women of child bearing age who could have received this information was zero. The benefit potential was thousands of birth defects prevented.

Now the same thing is happening with a class of nutrients called antioxidants which scientific research is showing huge potential in reducing or eliminating known risk factors for cancer and cardiovascular disease. When I introduced this legislation, the June 21st edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association published a study on vitamin E which provides compelling evidence that it can reduce the risk of heart disease. This is another study that adds to the overwhelming number of scientific studies that antioxidants have important contributions to make in the fight against degenerative disease that are driving our health care costs into oblivion. And in May, scientists confirmed that a mineral antioxidant, selenium, has the ability to protect the human immune system and minimize damage from viral infections. These studies promise innovation and cost effective treatments for people with viral illnesses. But such information will never reach the consumer in time under current FDA policies.

I want to emphasize that this legislation does not affect the current statutory and enforcement authority of the agency to protect the public. The FDA will continue to have its present authority to prosecute and remove mislabeled and fraudulent products.

Our desire must be to avail ourselves of this information so that the public can safely and beneficially use these inexpensive nutrients to protect their health. The American people have a right to hear truthful and nonmisleading health information about the foods and supplements they consume.

I think the philosophy and public policy objective concerning claims should be guided by the sage words of Justice Stevens who recently wrote in Rubin versus Coors Brewing Co.

> Any ''interest'' in restricting the flow of accurate information because of the perceived danger of that knowledge is anathema to the First Amendment; more speech and a better-informed citizenry are among the central goals of the Free Speech Clause. Accordingly the Constitution is most skeptical of supposed state interests that seek to keep people in the dark for what the government believes to be for their own good.

Over 100 million Americans consume dietary supplements on a regular basis. Americans are getting better educated and familiar about the food they eat by reading improved labels for foods. The payoff we anticipate is that Americans will use the power of nutrition and a healthy lifestyle to prevent or delay chronic disease and achieve optimal health.

Second, the American public does not want food or dietary supplements turned into drugs. They want unhampered and affordable access to health promoting foods and supplements.

Mr. Speaker, one of the ways the FDA uses its power to interfere with public access to products is by declaring them to be drugs and forcing their removal from the market. I think this is an important distinction and clarification that has to be made. The Senate passed version of S. 784 in the 103d Congress made it clear that dietary supplements could not be classified as drugs. However, this provision was deleted in the House when the final bill was passed. We should enact my legislation to make it clear that foods and dietary supplements cannot be drugs. In the context of health care we have created a system where when one classifies something as a drug a whole new set of regulations befalls that product. This system is specifically designed for patentable products for which industry is given the ability to recover the hundreds of millions of dollars required to go through the approval process. Unfortunately this system is poorly designed for foods and dietary supplements which are generally naturally occurring products and are nonpatentable. It also creates the unfortunate consequence on the public health that there is no low cost medicine. The best low cost medicine is prevention, Mr. Speaker. Nutritious foods, dietary supplements, and an overall healthy lifestyle can be good preventive medicine. It is therefore important that foods and supplements be kept out of the drug category in order to protect their ability to be used economically and affordably in the maintenance and preservation of good health.

Third, the American public has the right to make its own health choices.

The American people want their health freedom. With a $1 trillion sickness based health care system, people are looking for prevention and more treatment options. Let's give the people the information and access they want and let us empower them to take responsibility for their own health. Enactment of this legislation preserves this principle without sacrificing the role of Government to eve the guardian of the public health.

There are some other minor provisions in the bill which will save money and help to create uniformity among the 50 States. The legislation will ensure uniformity among the 50 States by requiring the same labeling, definitions, and claims standards for foods and dietary supplements. I think we all would agree on the necessity to make it economically efficient for manufacturers and consumers to have uniform standards for labeling, definitions, and claims.

The legislation also acts to resolve what is now a no longer needed result of Public Law 103–417, the establishment of a Presidential Commission on Dietary Supplement Labels. This Commission is unnecessary and would be a waste of taxpayer money. I don't believe, and many of my colleagues would agree with me, that we really need another Commission to spend the next 2 years and the FDA another 2 years thereafter to figure out how to inform the public. As long as the communication and information is truthful and not misleading as outlined by Supreme Court decisions, there should be no difficulty in arriving at cohesive and sensible public policy on labeling.

What the American people asked for in the food and vitamin labeling debate was clear, cohesive, rational, and sensible public policy with the responsible regulatory agency. In the 103d Congress, the U.S. Senate enacted legislation which would have accomplished this. However, the House amended the legislation to defer the most important issue on the information access question. The food and vitamin debate was not fully resolved and outstanding questions still remain. That was what was enacted into law. This debate will linger and smolder unless we act decisively to resolve this issue once and for all now. The U.S. Supreme Court has offered its wisdom to guide us to resolving some of these issues and I am confident that the 104th Congress will act decisively on the subject.

I am aware that some in this Congress believe that we ought to wait and see how the FDA regulates foods and supplements. However, the truth is that millions of letters were sent to Congress asking for a definitive solution and reform of this agency's regulatory mission. The public did not get what it asked for. Rather than tolerate anymore delays and foot dragging by this agency in implementing the will of Congress, it is time that we act now. I believe this Congress can deliver comprehensive and all-inclusive FDA reform. Reform of the Food and Drug Administration is one area where Congress can really make a difference to improve the lives of our constituents.

DECISION DAY FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LONGLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we are fast approaching a decision date for America's future. The decision deals with balancing the budget for the first time since 1969. This is a bipartisan issue. While the Republicans are leading the way, it is for all Americans that we want to balance the budget. By doing so, it will generate economic dividends for families and individuals. It will mean, by balancing the budget, Mr. Speaker, lower housing costs.

According to a study conducted by the National Association of Realtors and McGraw-Hill, the average 30-year mortgage will drop by 2.7 percentage points on a 30-year $50,000 mortgage at 8.23 percent. Families will save $1,081 annually or $32,400 throughout the life of the loan.

By balancing the budget, we will lower car expenses. Car loan rates will be 2 percentage points lower than they otherwise would be. On a $15,000 5-year car loan, Mr. Speaker, at 9¾ percent interest, that is an extra $900 in the family budget.

By balancing the budget we will lower college costs. Student loan rates will be 2 percentage points lower than they otherwise would be. A college student who borrows $11,000 at 8 percent interest will pay $2,100 almost $2,200 less for schooling.

A balanced budget will lower taxes. A child born today will pay an average of $187,000 in taxes over 75 years to cover his or her share of the interest on the national debt. By balance the budgeting we can keep these payments from getting any larger.

Balance the budgeting will mean more jobs. By lowering interest rates, a balanced budget will create 6.1 million new jobs in 10 years. That will provide greater opportunity and economic stability for high school graduates, for college graduates, and for those who

are looking for new opportunities. We must also, Mr. Speaker, reduce the tax burden for all Americans. By reducing taxes for single mothers with a $500 child tax credit, the single parent with 2 children will pay $7,000 less in taxes over 7 years. By reducing taxes for working families, with a $500 per child tax credit a 2-income family with 3 children will keep $10,500 more of their own hard-earned money.

Also by reducing taxes for senior citizens, we will repeal the 1993 unfair tax on Social Security, which reduces the average tax liability of $7.7 million for our seniors, and this is something that is supported by the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

We also will lower taxes for working senior citizens. Right now, Mr. Speaker, seniors under 70 who wish to work are capped at earning $11,280. If they earn $1 over, that is deducted from their existing Social Security. Under our plan to reduce taxes for senior citizens, we will be able to have them make up to $30,000 a year over the next 5 years without having deductions from their Social Security.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan Republican-sponsored package to make sure we balance the budget, which is fair to our seniors, fair to working-class families, and fair to all Americans. We are about the business here this week in the House of making sure we return choices to our citizens, we restore fiscal integrity to our country, and we reduce the cost of families trying to move ahead in this country to earn a living, to provide for their education of their family, and to make sure they are secure in their Medicare and their other health care needs as they move on in the years here in the United States.

CUTS IN MEDICARE AND MEDICAID AFFECT ALL AMERICAN FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, there comes a time when it is very important for us to reflect upon this Nation and some of the actions of this august body. However, sometimes we cavalierly resort to viewing what we have done as last week's headlines, or yesterday's story on the 6 o'clock news.

Last week on October 19, 1995, this body, controlled by the Republicans, offered to cut, and did, some $270 billion out of our Medicare Program. Of course, it was under the pretense that seniors themselves wanted to see the program fixed, and certainly no one would argue with that point.

Many of us have stood on the House floor and have said that the fraud, waste, and abuse that has plagued that system needs to be remedied. But nowhere could any of the statisticians and financial experts, and even the trustees, of which the Republican body has so much relied upon, that is the trustees of the Medicare trust account, none of these persons can justify the $270 billion in cuts. In fact, one trustee, Deputy Secretary Rubin, wrote a letter and said that such cuts would be harsh, and I paraphrase him, ''and devastating.''

Was anybody listening? No, they were only gloating over the headlines of Friday and the big articles, and that they now have another victory or another notch in their gunbelt. Why gunbelt, because these cuts destroy the very lives of those who have made this country—senior citizens—by cutting their health care.

Yesterday, I was in my district, the 18th Congressional District in Houston, TX, and visited with a room full of seniors, about 800 to maybe 1,000 seniors at a luncheon program. I did not make a speech. I went table to table, hand to hand, face to face, and looked into the faces of those senior citizens, some worn, some wrinkled, to talk seriously about this issue called Medicare. I told them that I voted against, resoundingly, the Republican plan, but I was prepared to fix this system and to eliminate the waste, fraud, and abuse, and so I voted for a $90 billion reduction that in fact was responsible, but as well, accepted by the trustees as reasonable to deal with this question of reducing unnecessary Medicare costs acknowledging that unlike the scare tactics of the Republicans, Medicare is not going bankrupt. There is a 7-year life until the year 2002.

I do not know about you, and we do more talking rather than the necessary work to repair Medicare, but I think there could be a lot of fixing in 7 years. Those seniors told me the pain they would experience with increased premiums, not being able to see their own physician, the cuts in the hospital payments would severly hurt our small hospitals, and, as well, the heavy burden on the Harris County public hospital system, of which many of them are part.

As we continue this process, we now approach the budget reconciliation process, in that process you will find $182 billion in cuts on Medicaid. Some people do not understand. They throw Medicaid to the side, saying ''That is another deadbeat program.'' For those of you who are working and supporting children in college and may be part of the baby boomer generation, Medicaid protects your seniors who are indigent, who may need long-term nursing care. It helps mothers with children and children who need immunization. It is a program that has helped this country become healthier. Do we need to get rid of the abuse? Who would not stand on the House floor and gladly say yes, we do, but $182 billion in cuts? No. Do you think it is for any reason? Yes, it is. It is to give tax cuts to those making over $200,000.

My seniors told me yesterday, they said ''Keep explaining this to us, because when the news trickles out beyond the Mississippi and other places, it is portrayed to look like the Congress is being obstructed,'' but they say ''now we understand. What work we, as senior citizens, have done in this country is disrespected and disregarded. When we come to a point in our lives when we need long-term nursing care that will not be there because of the actions of the Republican majority.''

I heard my colleague talk about this process of budget reconciliation this week, as I have indicated, this will be done on the backs of seniors and children by cutting the $270 billion in Medicare and $182 billion from Medicaid. This budget reconcilation process will hurt the working families of America. I heard a gentleman talk this morning on C–SPAN and mention that he had five children or five persons to take care of, he is doing it himself, and he makes about $28,000. I applaud him. He was complaining about taxes in this country.

Do you know what the Senate did last week, in conjunction with what we did here in the U.S. House of Representatives? They cut out the earned income tax credit that would benefit those individuals making under $30,000, a program President Reagan said has been the best program on getting people out of poverty, that he has ever been able to support, a program proposed under the Ford administration. Yet, hypocritically, the U.S. Senate showed by their actions that this earned income tax credit was not a valuable program.

Might I add as I close, Mr. Speaker, that one of the seniors I met at the luncheon yesterday was an older woman living alone. In her face I saw pain and distress, and she said to me ''Can you help me with my utility bill?'' That is the kind of person whose Medicare and possibility Medicaid that this Congress will cut. Is this the kind of person we want to face. It was not a pretty picture, it was a sad, sad picture.

I do not want to sit by idly, watching while our seniors and children suffer. What about you?

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN HAITI?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post took valuable editorial space last week to alert anyone who might be paying attention to what is going on in Haiti to the fact that the Presidential election process seems to be falling off track. In fact, the United Nations said last week that they need 110 days to do the job correctly, putting those elections—not the inauguration of a new Haitian President—into the first week of February.