

to have become more concerned with funding than enforcement. At least some of the reports produced by these Agencies are erroneous and misleading.

3) The pressure that is being applied to Latin American Countries by Certification does not hinder drug traffickers who have no interest in that country's real economy, but it definitely creates strong anti American feelings and distrust among the citizens of these Countries.

4) The "War on Drugs" is not a winnable war as it is being fought today. Billions of US tax dollars are being squandered. In Latin America, thousands of innocent persons are being killed, tortured and illegally detained by corrupt forces that are supported by the US. Meanwhile, drugs continue to flow at an ever increasing rate. The surge from drug use in the US is a result of the addicts lack of education. If we can not blame the addict then we must blame our society. The torture and killing of innocent persons in Latin America is also the result of ignorance, but not of these tortured citizens nor of their society.

I have lost my business, and my life's savings because of mistakes made by Ecuadorian and US Law Enforcement Agencies. Congresswoman Corrine Brown recently made a trip to visit me in Ecuador. She is doing her best to help me get a fair and expedient trial in Ecuador. The stigma associated with the words "drugs" and "Colombian" scared other US representatives away from my case. Congresswoman Brown was able to see first hand some the results of police brutality and injustice in Ecuador. I beg of you, for the sake of tortured souls in Latin America and for the integrity of our Great Nation, please reconsider your policies on the "War on Drugs".

Respectfully,

JAMES G. WILLIAMS.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my distinguished colleague from Florida, Congresswoman CORRINE BROWN, in expressing concern for the human rights situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. I congratulate Congresswoman BROWN for her leadership in requesting time so that we can have the opportunity to address these issues.

As my colleagues know, my commitment to human rights around the world has often focused on the Americas, whether by pushing for declassification of our own Government's documents with regards to Guatemala and Honduras, or inquiring into our own end-use monitoring capabilities with regards to Mexico, or even monitoring human rights conditions in the Brazilian Amazon and its link to our contributions to the World Bank. So I welcome this opportunity to remind all of my colleagues that our human rights task in the Americas, while headed more or less in the right direction, is far from over.

Indeed, we have much work ahead of us. We must remain ever vigilant to ensure that the fragile peace that was won in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua does not revert to the tempest of human rights violations. We must lend Mexico a helping hand to prevent that government from heading down the slippery slope of increasing human rights violations and to reinforce attempts at institutional reform. We must strengthen the resolve of Hondurans who are prosecuting those who tormented their society through illegality. We must support efforts in Haiti to ensure accountability in its newly trained police forces. And whether we are dealing with Chile or Venezuela, Brazil or Peru, we must unequivocally support all efforts to obtain justice for the

countless victims and survivors of some of our neighbor's darkest periods of their history. Justice is a human right and as such is the birthright of every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth. We must not forget that human rights are not luxuries or privileges. They are birthrights which I am proud to support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to salute those courageous men and women who strive to make the respect for human rights a part of the everyday reality of their communities and their nations. These human rights defenders unfortunately are under attack in many areas of the Americas. But it is these same people who are our early warning systems in times of trouble. They are the ones on the front lines who can tell us whether or not a situation will worsen. The Colombian human rights defenders have been warning us—and dying while they do so—and we have all witnessed in horror as the paramilitaries in that nation have committed massacre after massacre, often in a preannounced fashion.

Mexican defenders have warned us of the deterioration in basic respects and we have witnessed attack upon attack, while the defenders themselves are subjected to death threats, harassment, and even deportation. In Peru, defenders have received funeral wreaths from the same type of cowardly anonymous thugs who torment defenders elsewhere and in Honduras, not even the children are spared of attacks because of the work their parents do to protect those in need. Clearly this pattern of attacks against defenders must be reversed and we must do all we can to highlight the importance of defenders and our support for what they do. Our Nation must use all of its available resources and occasions to voice support of their courageous work. Indeed it is ironic that those who become involved in protecting the rights of others themselves become subject to attack and having their rights violated.

Finally, we must not forget our role in this equation. We are members of the most powerful Government on this Earth. Every wink, every nod, every transfer of money and every piece of military hardware we send is interpreted as supporting one policy or another. Our silence is equally scrutinized so that when we remain silent in the face of human rights violations, those who commit them think that our Government does not care what happens. We can use this power for good or for ill and an important step is assuming our responsibility for our actions and becoming aware that our intentions must often be followed by our deeds and our words lest what we do or what we fail to do be misinterpreted. By siding with human rights and with its defenders, we assume this responsibility and face this challenge and ensure that the next generations will inherit a better world than what we inherited.

A LEGITIMATE DEBATE: HOW WILL AMERICA GET TO A BALANCED BUDGET?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the importance of the budget agreement is

that we are saying that America is no longer going to debate having a balanced budget. We are going to have a balanced budget.

Now that we have answered that question, the next part of it is how are we going to get that. I think that is a legitimate debate: What is the role of government going to be; what are the roles of these bureaucracies; is the expenditure something that the private sector could do better? Is it something a nonprofit organization could do, or is it something that the government should do, but on a State or local level, or is it the domain of the Federal Government? These are all relevant questions as we fight to balance our budget.

The vision of America is what the actual debate is about. It is not just a matter of liberals versus conservatives or urban versus rural, it is a matter of what is it that we think the Federal Government should be doing, should be offering. Should it be involved with your life to the Nth degree, or should it kind of stand back, and so forth. All this ties into the money debate.

As we have it right now, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH], the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH], and Mr. DOMENICI and Mr. Clinton and the various players in the House and Senate and the White House have agreed that we will balance the budget by 2002. We have agreed on a number. We have agreed on a downward slope toward it.

The beneficiaries of this will be the American families. When the budget is balanced, interest rates, according to Alan Greenspan, will go down. When interest rates go down that means we will have less interest that we will have to pay on our home mortgages. A 2 percent interest rate on a \$75,000 home mortgage could mean over a 30-year period of time that you pay \$37,000 less; on a \$15,000 car loan, it could mean that you are paying \$900 less. On student loans, anything else you want to borrow, that would be a benefit to the American families.

The other thing about the benefit of a balanced budget to the American family is it would give tax relief. Mr. Speaker, right now we are taxed higher than any generation of Americans in the history of our country. The average tax burden in America today is 38 percent. When you have a tax burden of 38 percent, if you look at this figure just roughly, a two-income family with a combined income of \$55,000, one spouse is making \$22,000, that means that that income is going to pay taxes. That means that that spouse is working for the Federal Government. We might not call it the Federal Government, we might call it a shoe store, we might call it the insurance agency, we might call it clerking at a law firm or working at a hospital, but the fact is that 100 percent of that income goes to pay taxes.

That is higher than what the average Americans are paying for food, shelter, clothing, and transportation. It is an

astronomical figure. In the 1950's the average American family was paying 5 percent Federal income tax. Today they are paying 24 percent Federal income tax. I am only talking about income tax, not all the other taxes combined.

If we balance the budget, Americans can move toward tax relief and lower taxes. In the balanced budget agreement there is capital gains tax relief. The capital gains works like this. If you are an elderly couple and you bought your house 20 years ago, and the husband, let us say, because this is very common where I live, the husband is dead and the woman lives on Whitmarsh Island, or Wilmington Island, because we have a lot of waterfront property in the area that I represent in Savannah, the house they paid for in the 1970s, they paid \$30,000, today it is worth \$400,000.

But she is living alone. She is on a fixed income of maybe \$10,000, maybe \$15,000 a year. If she sells that house, because she may need the money for long-term health care, or for medical reasons or whatever, if she sells that house she is taxed as if she makes \$400,000 a year. Capital gains tax relief will help that widow. It will also give death tax relief.

Death tax relief works this way, Mr. Speaker. If you have saved all your money and you have a good, frugal lifestyle, and you bought IBM stock in the 1960's, in the 1970's, and even the 1980s, and today the value of that stock has tripled, and you have foregone nice vacations or boats or fancy clothes because you are a saver, not many left in America but there are still a lot of them out there, but you have saved your money and now you want to sell that IBM stock or pass it on to your children, if you try to sell it you have a capital gains tax problem. If you try to pass it on to your children, you are limited to \$10,000 per child per year.

So generally what happens is our seniors, our savers, die. Then Uncle Sam makes his move. For the amount of money over \$600,000, about 40 percent of it is going to go to Uncle Sam. That is not fair. You have paid taxes on the stock already when you purchased it, and if you have that stock you are not going to be able to pass it on to your children because Uncle Sam is going to get his fair share. That is the death tax. You cannot escape taxes even when you die, in the United States of America.

The final tax that is given in the balanced budget agreement, the tax relief is a \$500 per child tax credit. That would help people who have small children.

I have a couple of charts, but just to show this, Mr. Speaker, this chart says so much. Balancing the budget is good for America because it is good for American families. Balancing the budget is not about numbers, it is about people. It is about Dad and Mom and little Jane or little Bob and whoever else, because it is very important that we look after American families.

When was the last time that the budget was balanced? In 1969, and Mr. Speaker, you were a young man back then, and so was I. In 1969 the Beatles had just released Abbey Road, Nixon began the SALT talks with the former Soviet Union, the Smothers Brothers and the Mod Squad were still on TV, and *Apollo 11* had men on the moon in July, 1969. That was 1969.

Pocket calculators were not even on the drawing board in those days, Mr. Speaker. Pocket calculators were not even a pipe dream back then. Computers were not. In 1969 probably not a school in the United States of America had a computer in it. Look at today. We have computers in just about every school.

What does the balanced budget agreement have? It has these components, very important: The budget will be balanced by the year 2002; it will provide tax relief for American families, and we have talked about that; it will provide entitlement reform; it will save Medicare from bankruptcy.

I have already talked about this date, the year 2002. You have to have a deadline on these things. We have talked a little bit about tax relief. Let me talk a little bit about entitlement reform. Entitlements take up about 50 percent of the entire budget. Entitlements are generally known as programs that are automatic. They benefit people. It includes anything from VA to Medicare to Medicaid, Social Security, all types of programs. But if that is where 50 percent of the budget is, or where the expenditures are, we have to know we get the best bang for the buck.

We have a debate going on right now about WIC. WIC stands for women, infants, and children. It is a formula program. It is a program, a nutrition program, that everybody agrees on on a bipartisan basis, generally.

Last year, as Members know, the Republican conference funded WIC at a full \$3.7 billion. It passed on a bipartisan basis. Everybody was in favor of it. This year, on the emergency supplemental, Members of Congress decided that WIC needed a little bit more money. WIC has an escrow account of about \$100 million, and that has not even been touched. But nonetheless, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, increased WIC funding by \$38 million. What do some of the liberals do? They turn around and say, you have increased WIC, but not as much as we wanted you to. Therefore, you have cut.

Follow me closely, Mr. Speaker. If we increase a program \$38 million and people call it a cut, it is a new assault on truth in debate by the rhetorical terrorists of Congress. We are seeing this over and over again. When it comes to making difficult decisions that involve important programs for seniors, for children, for education or the environment, rhetorical terrorists in Congress parade out the person involved in the benefit and use them as a pawn to in-

crease the size of Government and increase the size of bureaucracy.

Never mind that in this case the USDA has told us that \$38 million is sufficient for WIC, and that there is another escrow account, along with the \$100 million, of about \$40 million that is available. The numbers are already there. Yet, some Members of Congress want to use WIC as a political issue, and have misconstrued the debate one more time in Congress to increase funding, and therefore, most importantly, increase the bureaucracy. Twenty-five percent of WIC goes to the bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker.

It is interesting that the liberals who are pushing this do not want to study the program. I am on the Committee on Appropriations, as the Speaker pro tempore is, and we have recommended, let us study it, because there is genuine concern about this. The concern even was brought up by Democrat Members, liberal members of the committee, about are these numbers real or not.

We had said, let us study it. The same people who say the numbers are wrong refuse to sign off on a study of WIC. I say, if we are going to have entitlement reform, we have to have truth in debate. We have to agree that we can improve programs without being against children or being against the elderly or whatever.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, last year on Medicare funding when the Republican Congress went from \$190 to \$270 billion, it was called a cut. When we went from \$89 to \$124 billion in Medicaid funding, it was called a cut.

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When we went from \$26 to \$40 billion in student loans, it was called a cut. If America wants a balanced budget, America has to be mature enough to say this is worth a truthful debate. We can have an honest disagreement and have studies that find better ways to get more money to the children back home.

But I am worried about, Mr. Speaker, a friend of mine. I am going to call her Jane. She is a real person. She has two kids. She is a single mama. Sometimes she gets child support, and sometimes she does not. Our office has been involved in it; and having been involved in child support battles, it is real hard to get child support from somebody who does not want to give it. We have all kinds of deadbeat-dad laws in Georgia, and sometimes they work and sometimes they do not.

Mr. Speaker, Jane is out there with two kids. She is not on public assistance. She is not on WIC. She is not on food stamps. She is not on public housing. Yet, she is paying over and over again for people who are not on public assistance, many who have the financial ability or physical ability to get off of it. She is paying for 25-year-old men who are able-bodied to be on welfare, while she is out busting her tail working 40 and 50 hours a week at her

job to come home and to cook and to sew and to do the dishes and to wash the clothes and drive the car pools.

That woman deserves better than what we are giving her, Mr. Speaker. She is getting abused by the big government crowds who favor bureaucrats over people, and it is time that we change it. So I think on so many of these programs we do have to take a look and find out how we can make the program better. We should be able to do that without crying foul from either side.

Let me show a Medicare chart. In the balanced budget agreement, the 5-year Medicare spending does go up. This is the balanced budget agreement. Medicare is approximately level. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be hearing over and over again that balancing the budget will cut Medicare. Do my colleagues know why we are going to hear that? Because it is easy to hoodwink America's seniors. We have people who only have Medicare and Social Security. It is easy to scare them. It is not fair. It is not right. But we have a lot of people who are willing to do that in the U.S. Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I think again, when it comes to seniors, when it comes to the elderly, we owe them truth, but we also owe them good government. And if we can reform Medicare and keep it from going bankrupt by strengthening it and preserving it and protecting it, not for the next election, but for the next generation, then we have served the elderly well.

I am going to touch base on about one more thing, Mr. Speaker, if I could find my chart; and that is one other program that we need to take a very, very close look at, and that is AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is the program that, at minimum, changes the definition from volunteer, volunteer meaning somebody who works who does something for free, to being a volunteer as somebody who gets paid from a government bureaucracy.

AmeriCorps is President Clinton's domestic Peace Corps. Now who could argue with that? It sounds great, right? Well, consider this. When the President started AmeriCorps in 1993, he said we are only going to give it seed money; this is not going to become a bureaucracy; this is going to become a lean mean venture capital type outfit.

Well, here we are 3 years later, 4 years later. AmeriCorps is \$400 million a year. AmeriCorps spends \$1.7 million a year on PR, public relations, so that they can get people to write Members of Congress and say keep this important program going. AmeriCorps volunteers costs taxpayers anywhere from \$26,000 to \$31,000 per child per year. And the child is a 16-, 17-, 18-year-old and they get \$1,500. Sometimes they get uniforms. Uniforms cost anywhere from about \$150 to as high as a thousand dollars. It is pure waste.

There was one case in Texas along the border that the program issued a \$2.8 million grant, and the director of

that program received an \$85,000 a year salary. Again, Mr. Speaker, what a volunteer. They have cars. They have expense accounts. They go out for lunch on the taxpayers. It is absolutely ridiculous. So Congress says, let us audit AmeriCorps. We cannot do it. The books are too messed up. There are too many different disjointed records. It is in shambles. And AmeriCorps could not be audited.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, that we tell the truth that, look, this program is not working. I have one other story. A friend of mine is volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, and he is a good friend of mine. He does lots of volunteer work for churches, for other churches, for other causes. He is volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, as he always has. And AmeriCorps sends their crew out there, their paid volunteers, to go work side-by-side with the regular, the real volunteers. And he says half the kids are over there listening to the radio talking back and forth, smoking cigarettes, goofing off and playing. And here we have got part-time volunteers, executives that make \$200,000 or \$300,000 a year. And they are working their tail off. And over here sitting on the floor is a 17-year-old getting paid and he will not even work while he is getting paid.

That is a horrible message because what my friend told me, the Habitat for Humanity real volunteer, he said: I have about had it, and I am not going to go out there and work my tail off while some kid is getting paid for it. He refuses to.

That is the type of program that we have to deal with, Mr. Speaker, and we ought to be able to say: You know, America, we cannot afford to do everything for everybody all the time as we have been doing. It is time to balance the budget.

I close with this, definition of a trillion. We are \$5 trillion in debt. If we pulled \$65 billion in train cars, \$65 million per boxcar, how long would the train have to be to have \$1 trillion in it? It would have to be 240 miles long.

Mr. Speaker, we have got a debt right now of over \$5 trillion. It is time to balance the budget and do something for America's children, America's family, and America's future.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FLAKE (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today, on account of personal business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at her own request) to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. PELOSI, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROEMER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BILIRAKIS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MEEHAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GIBBONS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. STABENOW, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material:)

Mr. FORBES, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POMEROY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. SANCHEZ, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NEUMANN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SANDERS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. TIERNEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. REYES, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONDIT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GOODE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TURNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SANDLIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BOYD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BUYER) to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material:)

Mr. SNOWBARGER, for 5 minutes, on May 16.

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HANSEN, for 5 minutes, on May 15.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM, for 5 minutes, today and May 15.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GOODLATTE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. GRANGER, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BUYER) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. WAMP.

Mr. OXLEY.

Mr. SOLOMON.

Mr. BUNNING.

Mr. BLUNT.

Mr. FAWELL.

Mr. GOODLING.

Mr. LAZIO of New York.

Mr. BALLENGER.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. TIERNEY) and to include extraneous matter:)