

It appears that the days of working on a bipartisan basis with the Republican Congress are over. Liberals are upset. In fact, they are mad at the President for finally helping to pass a tax cut for middle-class families last year. So the liberals will not let the President continue down the road of tax relief, IRS reform, and overhaul of the Tax Code.

I guess the New Democrats at the White House are no longer calling the shots these days. It is too bad. The American people want tax reform.

IMPROVING EDUCATION

(Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, sometimes standing on the floor of the House of Representatives is like standing in an echo chamber. As soon as one member says they want to do something to help rebuild our public schools and provide a better education for our children, everybody starts saying it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is time to stop talking about it and to start doing something about it. That is why we have introduced legislation that would reduce class sizes by hiring an additional 100,000 qualified teachers, and legislation that would give states and local school districts help with new school construction and new renovation.

I believe these bills are a great opportunity for every legislator who says they care about education to follow up their words with actions. If Members are serious about making improvements in our education system, I urge them to cosponsor these bills.

BEING TRUTHFUL ABOUT THE BALANCED BUDGET

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, we did get good news yesterday, and that good news was that for the first time in 30 years, the Federal Government is about to pay its bills. For the first time in 30 years, we are about to run a surplus, not a deficit.

But we also need to remember that we run two sets of books here in Washington. One is the external set of books, the books that reflect the money that comes in and the money that goes out into all funds, and the second set of books reflects what we are doing to continue to borrow from the Social Security Trust Fund and from the Highway Trust Fund.

Mr. Speaker, we need to not only balance the budget on that one set of books, but we need to balance the budget on the second set of books as well. Do not continue to increase the debt; do not spend this new money, this external surplus, on new programs;

stop borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund and stop borrowing from the Highway Trust Fund. Pay all the bills and be truthful with the American people, and treat the trust funds like they are truly trust funds.

TARGETED TAX CUTS NEEDED

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I came to the well because I have heard one speaker after another from the other side suggest that the President came out against tax cuts and that the natural reaction of the Democratic Party is to be opposed to tax cuts.

I would remind my colleagues that in fact the President has proposed a number of tax cuts, and that in fact a majority of the Democrats voted for tax cuts as part of the balanced budget agreement. What we are opposed to is eliminating the Tax Code, as the other side has proposed, without anything to replace it. That could wreak havoc on our economy.

Imagine when banks and the real estate community have to determine what would be the real cost of homes, for example, if you did not have a mortgage interest deduction, or any number of other assets if you did not have depreciation expenses.

We are in favor of tax cuts, but targeted tax cuts; tax cuts for families who are finding it difficult to afford child care expenses, or higher education expenses. Targeted tax cuts is what we need, not irresponsible elimination of the Tax Code.

CONTRACT WITH AMERICA A SUCCESS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, in 1994, along the campaign trail, Republicans said that if the Republican Party became the majority, that we would pass a legislative agenda called the Contract with America within the first 100 days of the 1995 session.

Washington pundits and the typical status quo Washington liberals said, number one, they would not; number two, they could not; and then when the process was going on, they said they should not. All the Democrats fought it, kicking and screaming and yelling, saying it was going to lead to economic disaster, and all voted against welfare reform and voted against tax cuts for the middle class.

What happened? Within 100 days, the Contract with America passes, and what is the result? In 1995, the deficit, \$164 billion; 1996, the deficit, \$107 billion; 1997, the deficit, \$22 billion; and in 1998, just announced, a surplus of \$8 billion.

Where are all those Democrats who said that the Contract with America was going to be an economic disaster, who fought tax cuts for the middle class? The proof is that the budget is balanced, it worked, and I hope next time they do not fight us.

IMPROVING AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, last week the Washington Post reported some grim news: The scores of Americans high school seniors ranked near the bottom in a rigorous new international exam in math and science.

This is unacceptable. Our schools clearly need help, and this body needs to get moving. Democrats are eager to get to work to reduce our class sizes, to repair crumbling schools, to put computers in classrooms and to provide an atmosphere in which our children can learn.

But my Republican colleagues, what they want to do is they want to throw out public education, to end public education as we know it. What they want to do is one more time make education the purview of the rich and of the wealthy. They also want to have tax cuts, tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, one more time.

Let us put our kids first, and not last. Education should be our top priority, public education, the great equalizer, which has allowed all of us to be able to live up to and work to our potential, no matter where we are on the socioeconomic scale. Let us get to work on education. Let us improve America's public schools.

MAKING AMERICAN EDUCATION THE ENVY OF THE WORLD

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any disagreement in America that perhaps the most sacred responsibility we have is the education of our children, and I do not think there is any doubt in anybody's mind that the best way to beat the world and to be the envy of the world in the education of our children is to have the very, very best public education system in the world. There is no one I know that wants anything less than the very, very best public education for our children.

But, unhappily, Mr. Speaker, we have some children that are being left behind today. In Washington, D.C., we have some very, very good schools, and in Washington, D.C. we have some catastrophically bad schools.

Just a few months ago, 7,500 families, distressed about what was happening

with their children and the bad schools in which they were trapped, applied for a meager 1,000 scholarships that would enable those mothers and those fathers to move their children to a better school of their choice.

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The people of Washington, D.C., especially those who are not at the top rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, want their children to have the same opportunity as the wealthy people who have their children in Sidwell Friends.

We have a bill that we will bring to the floor here in a few days, a bill that would allow 2,000 scholarships for the very poorest families in America, from among those who apply to be chosen at random, so that those parents can use those scholarships to take their child to that school where the child can succeed.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, I have met some of those children who up to this point have been the lucky recipients of the private scholarships, privately funded scholarships made available to their families. By over 60 percent, these bright young boys and girls say they like math and science the best. If we put a bright young mind in a school where they are encouraged, where somebody cares and takes the time, and yes, indeed, offers a little discipline along with that encouragement, we see a bright, happy child.

We will bring that bill to the floor. We will pass that bill. I hope Members on both sides of the aisle can find compassion for the children that overrides their desire to comply with unions, and I hope when we send that bill to the President and he picks up that pen, he will realize he has the lives of 2,000 beautiful children in his hands. He can sign the bill and give them the opportunity, or he can veto the bill and satisfy the unions.

BEFORE WE SPEND OUR FEDERAL SURPLUS, WE BETTER MAKE SURE WE REALLY HAVE ONE

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, every day we hear all kinds of talk now about how we are going to spend the Federal surplus. Before everyone gets all giddy about all this extra cash, however, we had really better take a closer look.

Alan Sloan, the Wall Street editor of Newsweek, recently wrote in the Washington Post, "But get a grip. There is no surplus. If you do math the normal way, instead of Uncle Sam's way, there is nothing resembling a budget surplus on the horizon." Mr. Sloan wrote that all the talk about a surplus comes because we are using Federal budget accounting instead of real world accounting.

As he pointed out, "Virtually the entire difference between Federal math and real-world math involves Social

Security's retirement and disability funds, whose surpluses are masking the deficit in the rest of the budget."

If we were not using the Social Security and many other trust funds to offset or mask the size of the deficit, we would still have a huge deficit on top of an already horrendous \$5.5 trillion national debt.

Mr. Speaker, before we begin celebrating and spending our supposed, alleged surplus, we had better make sure that we really have one. We are very far from it right now.

PRESIDENT CLINTON TURNING HIS BACK ON TAX REFORM

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, President Clinton turned his back on fundamental tax reform by reforming the tax code. He said that getting rid of the current tax code and replacing it with a better one is irresponsible.

The President is finally revealing his true liberal self. As we enter a new century, we need a new tax code. We need a tax code that encourages savings and investment. We need a tax code that is simple, so that our citizens do not need to hire accountants and lawyers to comply with the rules. We need a tax code that takes less money from working families. We need a tax code that gives the American people a break, not manipulates their lives.

For 40 years, the Democrats in this Congress built a tax code that was riddled with loopholes, ridiculous rules, and hard-to-understand regulations, all to control our lives. It is time to tear that system down and build a better, simpler, and fairer tax code for the next century.

THE SOLOMON ENGLISH LANGUAGE EMPOWERMENT AMENDMENT

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes this House will begin debate on something that is probably the most important issue that we will take up on the floor this Congress during this entire year. It is the question of whether or not to start in motion the wheels that will begin to admit Puerto Rico as a State to this Union.

I would just hope that all Members, and because of their interest for their constituents, would pay particular attention. I would suggest that they come over here. This debate is going to take 7 or 8 hours on this floor, but it is very, very important.

I will be offering an amendment that will begin to emphasize that based on this premise, for the past two centuries we have forged a Nation out of our dif-

ferent peoples by emphasizing our common beliefs, our common ideals, and perhaps, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, our common language.

Our English language has permitted this country to live up to our motto, our national motto, and that motto is *e pluribus unum*, and it means "out of many, one." The English language is the reason that we have survived these last 200 years. Think about it.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 856, UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 376 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 376

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 856) to provide a process leading to full self-government for Puerto Rico. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed ninety minutes equally divided and controlled by Representative Young of Alaska, Representative Miller of California, Representative Solomon of New York, and Representative Gutierrez of Illinois or their designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Resources now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 1 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute for failure to comply with clause 5(a) or rule XXI are waived.

SEC. 2. (a) Before consideration of any other amendment, it shall be in order to consider the amendment printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 3 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. Consideration of that amendment shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate, which shall be confined to the subject of that amendment and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by Representative Solomon of New York and a Member opposed to that amendment.

(b) Consideration of the amendment printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 2 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate, which shall be confined to the subject of that amendment and shall not exceed thirty minutes equally divided and controlled by Representative Serrano of New York and a Member opposed to that amendment.

(c) Amendments specified in subsections (a) and (b) of this resolution shall be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. Consideration of those amendments, and all amendments thereto, shall not exceed one hour.