

The fact is that what we do in Washington does matter, and matters a lot.

1400

True, the lion's share of the credit belongs to hard-working men and women around this country who, through industry and innovation, have built this economy. But our people were hard-working in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, and yet we suffered with high unemployment in an unsuccessful economy, because we had huge deficits. It is the fiscal responsibility that the President has brought to our Federal Government that has added the one additional element which, with the hard work of the American people, has led to our prosperity.

The second fallacy that we have heard from the Governor of Texas is his statement over and over again that his plan will provide tax relief to all Americans who pay taxes. The facts are otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, some 15 million Americans pay Federal FICA tax that is pulled out of their wages every time, every paycheck; and yet they will receive no, no tax relief under Governor Bush's proposal. Those 15 million Americans who pay FICA taxes to the Federal Government, but do not owe income tax because they are earning the minimum wage, because they are not earning very much, because they are trying to support a family on incomes of \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year, these low-income taxpayers get nothing from the Governor of Texas. Yet, he does provide 43 percent of his tax benefit to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

This leads me to the third fallacy, and that is his statement that he will provide only \$223 billion, only \$223 billion to the richest 1 percent of Americans. The problem here is fuzzy fiscal figures, because that \$223 billion leaves out the effect of the repeal of the estate tax. The Governor will often talk about how he wants to eliminate the estate tax, but will leave out from his budget the fiscal effect of that repeal. The estate tax will be bringing in \$50 billion a year, \$500 billion over 10 years, and so the governor's tax reduction for those in the wealthiest 1 percent is not \$223 billion over 10 years, but over \$700 billion over 10 years.

That is why it is true when we point out that the governor would provide more tax relief to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans than everything he proposes to spend to improve our health care system, strengthen Medicare, strengthen our military, and improve education combined.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is clear. On one hand, we can have fiscal responsibility, economic expansion, reduction and eventual elimination of the national debt, and moderate tax cuts for working families, all combined with important investments in education, Medicare, military preparedness, and our health care system. On the other hand, we could choose to provide \$700

billion of tax relief over the next 10 years to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the choice before America could never be more stark.

#### SHALLOW RHETORIC UNDERMINES CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I did not get over in time to speak on the motion to instruct conferees, but I think it is time for a reality check with the other side.

We heard a lot of rhetoric, unfortunately, about the education debate on our plan versus the President's plan and how Republicans do not care about the condition of our schools. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that I am one of the few who actually is a classroom teacher in this body. In fact, I spent 7 years teaching in the inner city schools in and around Philadelphia. In fact, I helped to run a chapter 1 program for 3 of those years.

I want to remind my friends on the other side that for the 7 years that I taught, I taught in a portable classroom; two trailers bolted together without adequate heat, without adequate air-conditioning, 32 children in a self-contained environment, in a portable classroom. Guess who was in charge of the government when I taught? It was a Democrat President, a Democrat House and a Democrat Senate. Where was the concern for those of us who were teaching in portable classrooms in inner cities back then when my colleagues controlled the whole ballgame? Where were their efforts to deal with school modernization? Where were their efforts to increase funds for school construction? I was there on the front line teaching in that portable classroom with 32 kids that were challenged in an environment that was very difficult.

Now, I will remind my colleagues on the other side of one further fact. The first 2 years that President Clinton was in office, the Democrats controlled the House and they controlled the Senate. They could have passed any bill they wanted, and we could not stop it. They had all of the votes. We could not have stopped any issue that they wanted to address for the American people.

I find it a little questionable that in the first 2 years of Clinton's administration, when the Democrats controlled the entire ball game, there was no bill for school construction. There was no rhetoric down here on the floor about the need to deal with kids. There was no concern about the people teaching in portable classrooms like I did for 7 years. There was no concern about falling ceilings. What are they telling us? All that occurred within the last 5 years?

The fact is, this is nothing more than political rhetoric. The first 2 years that the Democrats controlled the House and the Senate and the White House when they could have done anything they wanted, they did not even propose a bill to deal with school construction. This Congress has. With a bipartisan piece of legislation that we are going to pass, and hopefully this President will sign, we will do what a responsible Congress could have done 7 years ago, and that is deal with the issue of the need for modernization of our schools.

So I bring up this reality check, Mr. Speaker, because unlike most of my friends who are attorneys who never taught in the classroom, I taught in the classroom for 7 years. I know what it is like to teach in a portable classroom with 2 trailers bolted together, with kids who cannot go outside because when you open the door, the cold is right there. My point is I think a lot of what we heard today is nothing more than shallow rhetoric.

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

(Mr. HILL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

#### DEMOCRATS DEMONSTRATE SERIOUS COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to address this issue earlier today, but I came over and after the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) spoke just a minute ago, I felt it incumbent to do so. I too was a classroom teacher. I taught for 9 years, I say to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, 2 more than he did, and I have lived in those classrooms and even had the experiences of the roof falling in, only this was not a roof, it was only a blind that fell and cut my face. We had to evacuate students from classrooms in my building because the walls leaked so badly that the kids could not sit in there because there was so much water.

Granted, that was a couple of decades back. I thought we had pretty much addressed all of that stuff.

Interestingly enough, my daughter today teaches sixth grade math, in Beaumont, Texas, the same school district in which I taught. She has children who do not have chairs in her classroom. They will fix it. They are in portable buildings right now. They are making the repairs in the regular school building.

The problem is that so many school districts do not have the ability to take care of these problems today, and