

in 1874, where lawns, trees, and shaded walks were first put into his plans. Many trees have already been removed. Some have been saved for the new center.

But I join with the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BASS) and other colleagues to focus our attention in Congress on one particular tree, an English Elm, the oldest tree on Capitol Hill, on this campus, that some here, as the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BASS) has said, would like to cut down to make room for a construction site, for use of the construction materials, or a temporary parking lot for Members of Congress.

This oldest tree, a rare English Elm, is reputed to be over 150 years old. It was never slated to be removed. In fact, an earlier assessment by the Davey Tree Company employed by the Architect of the Capitol said it should be preserved. Reports now that the tree is dangerous seem to have little factual foundation, other than a more recent report by Davey. Furthermore, there are other old trees on the Capitol campus that are no more or less dangerous than this elm.

As the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BASS) has said, there is news that the contractor for the visitor's center would dig a 60-foot hole at the base of the tree. This would virtually kill the tree.

This is a tree that deserves to be preserved and protected. We urge all Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats and citizens, to urge the Capitol Preservation Committee to direct the Architect of the Capitol to save the tree.

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#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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#### SALUTING THE NBA CHAMPION LOS ANGELES LAKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the victorious world champion Los Angeles Lakers from my congressional district. It is challenging enough to win the championship title once, and it is extremely rare to repeat and win the title a second time. Nevertheless, the world champion Lakers have in fact three-peated by sweeping our friends, the New Jersey Nets, in the

2002 NBA finals and winning the title for 3 consecutive years.

In all of NBA history, only three teams have achieved this feat, including, of course, the Minneapolis Lakers. I extend my special congratulations to Lakers Coach Phil Jackson and the most valuable player for the third year in a row, Shaquille O'Neill, for their impressive accomplishment.

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No one alone can achieve this "triple crown" of excellence in basketball. The Los Angeles Lakers' victory was a triple team effort consisting first of the talented players themselves; second, the coach and management staff; and third, the Lakers' fans in Los Angeles and across the Nation.

Today the Lakers' sweet taste of victory brings with it the sweet taste of New Jersey Italian treats: cannoli and biscotti. My colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN), wagered these treats against my Los Angeles wager of tamales, guacamole and salsa. Today he delivered the fruits of the Lakers' victory. I congratulate the Nets, their fans, and their coach, Byron Scott, who, by the way, is a Los Angeles native and former Laker himself, for their valiant effort.

Angelenos, it is time to make room in the rafters of the Los Angeles Staples Center for yet another banner. The Lakers are NBA world champions again.

Mr. Speaker, next year I look forward to cheering for the Lakers to "four-peat" or, in the words of Coach Jackson, the "four-sweep."

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to replace the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

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#### PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES HONORED GUESTS AT GOP FUND-RAISING EVENT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, those who are watching might be puzzled, because it does not seem there are too many Members on the floor of the House, and that is because the House has completed its work day. It is about 3 o'clock. Now, why is the House out of session at 3 o'clock when it has yet to do a single appropriations bill, when many other important measures and needs of the American people have yet to be met?

Well, it could be because tonight is the biggest fundraising gala, perhaps the largest single fundraising event in the history of the United States. Downtown, the Republican Party is holding a special fundraising event, and the chair, the fundraising chair of that event is a guy named Robert Ingram.

Why is that relevant? Well, he happens to be the chief operating officer of GlaxoSmithKline, which happens to be the largest drug manufacturing pharmaceutical firm in the world.

Now, why would he give \$250,000 and agree to raise millions of other dollars from other pharmaceutical companies who are also contributing; Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Bayer AG, Merck & Company, they are cheapskates, they are only ponying up 50,000 bucks each for a table, but then PhRMA, their organization, is ponying up \$250,000.

Now, you have to give it to the Republicans. I mean they, the Republican leadership, either has the most incredible sense of irony and humor, or no shame. Here we are at a time when we are supposedly about to consider legislation to provide or not provide a meaningful prescription drug benefit to seniors in the United States of America, 54 percent of whom pay more than \$1,000 a year out of pocket for their drugs; who are charged the highest prices of any customers of the pharmaceutical companies; the uninsured seniors are charged the highest price, prices that exceed those of Canada by 100 percent and other developed nations. Of course, many of those drugs were manufactured in the United States by these very same firms who are throwing this big gala tonight and contributing millions to the Republican Party.

So we have to wonder if there is any connection between the draft of the Republican proposal and the timing of it, because they are considering it right now, and tonight's event.

The Republican proposal is a free market approach. Of course, we have had the free market; it has not been serving our seniors very well, and prescription drug costs have been going up at 2½ times the rate of inflation. Many seniors have to make critical decisions about getting their prescriptions filled. I have actually met seniors, couples who had to decide who was going to get their prescription one month and who was not, even though they are all necessary and prescribed. These are real problems.

The Republicans have decided they cannot ignore this issue anymore, so