

economy? Well, we now have the highest unemployment rate in 9 years. Severe cuts in State budgets and programs and the largest among deficit in national debt in our Nation's history. Not content with these successes, the Republicans now want more tax cuts largely skewed to the wealthiest Americans, the top rate income tax reduction in dividend taxation provisions are particularly egregious when 8.8 million Americans are unemployed, with the average length of unemployment now at about 20 weeks. The Republican tax cuts ignore the situation of those Americans. Furthermore, our Nation will have to borrow to pay for the funds to pay for these tax cuts at a time when the United States has a \$6.4 trillion national debt and spend \$1 billion per day on interest payments for that debt. In fact, debt interest payments are now the third largest expenditure in the Federal budget. Money that could instead be used for homeland security, health care, prescription drugs for our seniors, or education for our children.

Almost as outrageous as the provisions of the Republican tax plan was, the House leadership decision not to allow the Democrats to offer their alternative was even more egregious. Our plan was far more fiscally responsible, costing only \$129 billion in immediate spending, and even those costs would be offset for long term economic gains such as income taxes from newly employed Americans. The Democratic plan would create 1 million new jobs, more than double the estimate for the Republican plan. Additionally, it would put money in the pockets of families most likely to spend, provide tax relief for businesses most likely to invest, and hire and provide direct financial assistance to States that are struggling to provide health care and other vital human services to their citizens. This financial assistance would forestall State tax increases or service cutbacks that would otherwise deepen the recession and destroy jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disturbed by the outcome of today's vote, as well as the heavy handed tactics used by the Republican leadership that denied a debate on our responsible alternative. I will maintain my opposition to irresponsible tax and budget policies that are leading this Nation down a path that could put the economic survival and stability of our Nation in jeopardy.

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

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BUSH ECONOMIC STRATEGY LEAVES AMERICA BEHIND

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my Democratic colleagues in expressing my outrage with the Bush administration and the Republican majority who are truly waging economic warfare against the American people, most notably our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the tax package the Republicans undemocratically and very brutally rammed through here today represent dropping a big bomb on American families. It is un-American to devastate the lives of American families who happen not to be rich. This budget, this tax cut will leave a huge crater in the economy and the Federal budget that will take decades to repair.

What is most troubling about this irresponsible, unfair, and ill-advised plan for economic disaster? What does it mean for our children, especially our most vulnerable children? You simply cannot be for leaving no child behind when you are handing out massive tax cuts for millionaires at the expense of our children. What do we tell the parents of these children when they ask what is our government going to do to create jobs? What is our government doing to help kids? What is our government doing to expand health care to help senior citizens or to improve education or to ease inequality?

I guess we tell them that we have a President and a Republican majority in Congress who care more about eliminating taxes on stock dividends than eliminating poverty. We tell them we have a President who is slashing Head Start funds, cutting job training programs and after school programs and spending the entire Social Security surplus. We tell them that this may be the first President in over half a century who may serve an entire term in office without creating one single job. And we tell them we have an administration that is seeking to wipe out affirmative action because it is apparently blind to the enormous inequalities in our country. And we let them know that this mean-spirited tax cut will disproportionately affect African American and Latino children. We tell them that we have a President who is, yes, waging war at home, a war on our future, a war on opportunities for our children, a war on equality and war on our economy. There are 9 million people unemployed in this country, including 2 million unemployed African Americans and almost 1.5 million Latinos. That is a disgrace and there is no help for them in this Bush plan.

We are in a jobs depression. What our economy needs and what Americans need are more job opportunities. How do you benefit from a tax cut when you do not even have a job? Where is the compassion in this?

We need increased technical training for young people and transition assist-

ance for displaced workers, many of whom are victims of our trade policy. Just look at NAFTA. Under NAFTA we have seen a quarter of a million actual and potential jobs disappear. Now the administration is looking to expand NAFTA to virtually every single country in the Western Hemisphere. How many jobs will we lose then?

As Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund, said, It is awfully hard to be a poor child in this country. It is awfully hard to be a parent. It is hard to be one of the millions of Americans desperately searching for jobs and not finding them while their unemployment benefits are expiring.

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It is hard for tens of millions of people in Bush's mark. We could be turning the tide on this jobs depression. We should be investing in our future, but on the eve of Mother's Day, rather than saying Happy Mother's Day, the Republicans are shattering the lives of millions of mothers by cutting taxes for the rich, sacrificing the poor and neglecting the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, the President waged an immoral war in Iraq and now he is doing it right here at home. Wake up, America, and fight this very unpatriotic assault on American families and children. You must fight back.

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

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

ALLOW DEMOCRACY ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, we have seen many Democrats here speaking out of a sense of frustration. The bill we voted on today is a bill of tremendous importance, and yet all we had was one hour to debate this bill. Many of us that wanted to come down and participate in the debate could not even get one minute's time to debate this bill because the Republicans kept a closed rule, which said there will be one hour of debate, 30 minutes for each side, and no substitute allowed.

I did a little calculation. There are 435 Members of the House of Representatives in this country, and if every one of us wanted to speak on this bill with only one minute total time, that would leave each of us a grand total of eight seconds each to speak on a bill worth billions and billions and trillions of dollars. Surely our Founding Fathers are rolling in their graves when they

see how the Republican majority has turned this House into an undemocratic institution where the people who are elected by the people cannot even have the ability to speak their minds.

We are fighting for democracy in Iraq, but we will not allow democracy on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. For shame.

The average American is not stupid. In fact, the average American is very smart. The average American knows that when he or she has a budget they must live within their budget. They make a certain amount of money. They take home that money. They have to pay their bills with that money, and they know that they cannot week in and week out spend more than they take in. A person can do it for a while. They can charge everything on their credit card for a while. They can keep paying minimums on their credit card for a while, but sooner or later the bubble is going to burst. That is what we are doing here in the United States Congress.

My Republican friends talk a good game about balancing the budget and a balanced budget amendment, and by the way, the balanced budget amendment passed here in the House several years ago, failed by one vote in the Senate, and the Republicans, despite having the majority in both Houses, have not brought it up again.

The fact of the matter is that when Bill Clinton left office we had a surplus of \$200 billion per year, and now in two short years we have a deficit of \$400 billion per year, and these tax cuts, mainly for the wealthy, will dig us deeper and deeper and deeper in a hole.

We are leaving our children and our grandchildren with a legacy of debt. We are having an orgy now of tax cuts and saying to our future generations, you pay the bill. We are going to walk away. We are going to do things that are easy. Everyone likes a tax cut. Of course, a majority of people favor the tax cuts. Everyone wants more money in their pockets, but what are we doing to our children and our grandchildren and the fiscal responsibility of this country?

The Republican leadership, the Republican majority here wants to do this, in my estimation, deliberately. The ancillary benefits, giving their rich friends a tax cut, is only an ancillary benefit. They want to starve this government and make it impossible for there to be any kind of program, entitlement programs like Social Security or Medicare or Medicaid or education, for our children. They do not want it so a balanced budget goes out the window. Deficits and deficits.

Let us take a quote from the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the current majority leader. This is what he said in 1995, "By the year 2002, we can have a Federal Government with a balanced budget or we can continue down the present path toward total fiscal catastrophe." That was in 1995. I ask the majority leader and the people

on the other side of the aisle, what was true in 1995 is certainly true in 2003. We cannot continue to run these deficits. We cannot continue to have this kind of fiscal irresponsibility. The borrow and spend Republicans cannot continue to lead this country down a path of fiscal irresponsibility.

It is a disgrace that we now have to take to the floor of the House after the bill has been voted on because we could not get the time to talk before.

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

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

TAX CUTS AND THE ECONOMY

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

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, just 3 years ago when the President took office, San Jose, California's unemployment rate was only 1.7 percent. At that time, our Nation had a projected \$5.6 trillion 10-year surplus. Today, instead, we have an 8.5 percent unemployment rate in Santa Clara County, and with this tax package a \$2 trillion projected national deficit.

Since the President took office, San Jose has lost almost 16 percent of its jobs. When all is said and done, it is projected that we will, in fact, use the over \$12 trillion in debt ceiling that Republicans slipped into the budget resolution a few weeks ago. What a turnaround.

What does the President propose? For the most part, more of the same failed tax schemes. Tax cuts for a select few have done nothing to improve the economy so far and more of the same will not help. Further, the Republican tax plan does nothing to help unemployed workers and will leave millions of families out in the cold when their unemployment benefits expire on May 31.

Mr. Speaker, since the President took office, California has lost 239,000 jobs. Over 175,000 of those jobs were deleted from my home, Santa Clara County, and I hear from people at home, well-qualified, well-educated and talented people who have been laid off for over a year, people who have sent out 2,000 resumes who cannot get a job interview, people whose stock portfolios are shot, whose bank accounts are drained, whose unemployment insurance is running out and who cannot find work.

It is pathetic that the President's answer is this tax cut scheme. While there are a few temporary crumbs to small business and normal people, the vast majority of the financial impact is caused by the tax cuts for the few, which will not create economic growth. The President's words about creating

jobs and stimulating growth are right. It is just that his plan is disconnected from his rhetoric.

He must think the unemployed are also dumb, that they will not see the truth of what is happening here, but I think he is wrong on that score and is it not ironic that those few provisions in this tax bill we passed today, like the child tax credit and marriage tax reform and expensing for small businesses, the things that benefit normal people, those sunset. The real expensive part of the program that is skewed to the select, those go on forever.

The Republican plan is irresponsible, deceptive, will not create jobs or grow the economy and will saddle the country with debt to hurt our potential for long-term economic growth. We are actually borrowing money from the Social Security Trust Fund to cut taxes for the top 5 percent of households.

Economists tell us that this plan is the smallest bang for the buck in terms of creating economic stimulus of any of the plans that have been publicly discussed. It is projected to create less jobs in the next year than we have lost in the last 2 months.

Republicans both in this House and in the White House talk a lot about faith-based programs. The man who calls the shots here in the House, the majority leader, does not even believe in evolution, and I have heard that is true for the President as well. They have a right to have faith, even when it seems at odds with the facts in their religious lives, but when their faith in tax cuts for the few threaten the economic stability for our Nation, then I think it is time to draw the line on their blind faith.

Today, the Republicans in this House used their narrow majority to shorten debate and prevent consideration of the fiscally responsible growth plan. There is an aura of corruption that clings to the Republican leaders who celebrate the onset of democracy in Iraq but cannot abide real democratic processes in the Congress of our Nation that is supposed to be freedom's leader.

This is a watershed day, one that I think in later years we will recall with dread and with regret.

MORE MEDIA DEREGULATION WILL BE A DISASTER FOR DEMOCRACY

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I recently held a town meeting at St. Michael's College in Vermont to discuss an issue that for obvious reasons does not get much media coverage, and we had over 600 people, Vermonters, coming out to this meeting to discuss the issue of corporate control over the media and the impact that further media deregulation will have on the quality of our democracy.