

mother, and a great supporter of this institution.

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, while the Democrats continue to want to raise the taxes on the hard-working Americans, or when they keep proposing, as they did this year, over a \$1 trillion increase, or close to \$1 trillion, \$890 billion increase, to be precise, on the already, I think, large deficit, thank God the President, though, has released the President's agenda that we are all familiar with, which outlines a plan to clean up this mess of just waste, fraud, and abuse that exists and is rampant here in Washington and that has always been rampant here in Washington.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) eloquently mentioned some issues that should concern all Americans as to how Washington wastes America's taxpayers' money. I am reminded of all of the cases, case after case, of fraud, waste, and abuse that continue to happen, including money that is just absolutely lost in this huge bureaucracy.

In 1999 the Army, for example, took an inventory of its assets and found that, check this out, 56 airplanes, 32 tanks, I do not know how you lose 32 tanks, and 36 Javelin-command launch units for which it had no record, had no records for them. That same year, GAO identified more than \$3 billion in inventory that the Navy had "lost in transit." How do you lose \$3 billion of inventory in transit? The GAO also found \$400,000 in computer purchases that the Department of Education had not recorded in the property records. By the way, 200,000 of those computers could never be located.

Yet, I repeat, the Democrats insist on raising the taxes on the hard-working Americans, because there is not enough money. There is not enough money if you want to lose more money, if you want to throw away more money, if you want to splurge more money; but there is clearly more than enough money to do what we need to do here, as long as we get a little bit more responsible.

I commend the President for his efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the Inspector General at the Department of Veterans Affairs alone has identified more than 5,500 possible cases of individuals who may be defrauding the Veterans Administration by receiving benefits intended for veterans, these are benefits that are intended for benefits, but for people who are dead. Mr. Speaker, 5,500. Fourteen thousand, almost 14,000 incarcerated veterans have been paid about \$100 million, and these are not small sums, \$100 million in benefits that they were

clearly not eligible for. And yet the Democrats insist on coming up with proposal after proposal and budget after budget that raises the taxes of the hard-working Americans in this country. To do more of this?

Over \$100 million, another \$100 million in improper payments of missed Medicare beneficiaries who rely on them. Over the last 4 years, by the way, for example, the Department of Agriculture has spent \$5.13 billion in improper payments, improper payments intended to go to food stamp beneficiaries. Yet, the Democrats say, there is not enough money, and they insist on trying to raise the taxes on the hard-working Americans of this country.

Mr. Speaker, that is why, with a number of my colleagues, we have come up with the Washington Waste Watchers to not only highlight the fact, not that Washington has enough money, but that we have too much money, and that there is not enough accountability. We commend the President for his steps in the right direction, and we are going to continue to let the American people know where their money is being spent and, in many cases, misspent. And, no, we are not going to support raising taxes. We are going to support changing the culture up here from a culture of waste, of fraud, and abuse to a culture of fiscal responsibility.

WASHINGTON WAR WATCHERS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, in 2 days the House Committee on Appropriations will take up the \$87 billion that the administration has requested for Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the second down payment on top of the first \$75 billion that has been requested. Secretary Powell and others in the administration recently said this is a down payment, and that they will be back in 6 months from now with an additional request on top of the \$160-some-odd billion we spent on these two operations, for more money for reconstruction of both Afghanistan and Iraq. This funding contains a \$20 billion request, taxpayer financed, for the reconstruction of Iraq.

Back in April I introduced a bill called the American Parity Act, which required that for every dollar we invest in Iraq's health care, education, and transportation and infrastructure we also invest here at home. Today we have 102 cosponsors.

Now, I think everybody that has signed on to this agrees that the same values that we hold for Iraq, we must pledge for all Americans. The same goals we envision for Iraq's future, we must envision for America's future. Unfortunately, to date, we have had two priorities, two sets of values, two sets of books, one for Iraq and one for

America. I did a T-shirt the other day which I brought down to the floor showing all of the investments we had planned for Iraq and all the cuts here at home we had planned in the corresponding areas.

Now, two colleagues before me who are part of my freshman class from the other party talked about waste, fraud, and abuse. I would like to bring to their attention, and I have the same sense that if we were able to cut some of the waste, fraud, and abuse, we could fund other initiatives dealing with the uninsured in this country.

But to point to some waste, fraud, and abuse: in the President's request for Iraq, there is \$3.6 million for 600 radios and telephones at \$6,000 each. I highly recommend that maybe we should hear the word Radio Shack. If you cannot get a telephone for less than \$6,000, you may want to consider Radio Shack.

We have also in the request \$2.5 million for pickup trucks at \$33,000 apiece. Has anybody ever heard of zero percent financing by GM, Ford, or Chrysler? You can get a pickup truck for less than \$33,000. Mr. Speaker, \$100 million to hire 500 people at \$200,000 a person to investigate crimes. Mr. Speaker, \$20 million to finance 200 election experts, election experts for 6 months at \$100,000 per expert. Now, I come from Chicago. I think I can get a ward committeeman to do it just slightly cheaper than that.

So if we are interested in waste, fraud, and abuse, I recommend maybe we take a look at what we are recommending as a first down payment of what will be a total bill to the American taxpayers for \$60 billion in the area of waste, fraud, and abuse.

If I may take some more time, they did not want to mention the \$5.6 billion for the new electric grid in Iraq. Yet here in America, what did we get for that? The blackout. And how much is invested in America's electric future, in our energy future, in a massive investment here? Zero. We could create 100,000 jobs. We do not mention that when it comes to waste, fraud, and abuse.

In the area of health care, we are talking about \$150 million more for a new children's hospital in Basra. Yet, in that same week, we had a report that there are 10 million uninsured Americans. And what is the initiative? We cut the funding for the children's health insurance program. We have 44 million uninsured Americans, and not a single bill on the floor to insure the uninsured Americans.

In the area of police, there is \$4 billion planned for the Iraqi police, and yet what do we do? We cut the 100,000 police program here in the United States practicing community policing at \$1 billion. Mr. Speaker, \$5 billion for water, drinkable water in Iraq and wetlands restoration and irrigation; yet we have frozen the funds for the Corps of Engineers, and we do not fund any cleanup and improvement in the Great