

drugs, the proudest achievement of the Bush administration is huge tax breaks, 40 percent of which went to the wealthiest 1 percent.

And in the midst of all of this, in the midst of workers working longer hours for lower wages, the decline of manufacturing, the Bush administration, if one can believe it, is now attacking overtime pay for American workers. Can you imagine that? Attacking overtime pay for American workers and trying to undo laws that have been on the books for decades which say that if you work over 40 hours a week you will get time and a half.

I am very proud that a number of Republicans joined many of us Democrats, Independents, on the floor of this House to say that that is wrong and that in fact we were not going to cut back on the overtime pay that workers earn and deserve.

Now, when we talk about the Bush administration, we should also point out a very strange irony. The President considers himself a conservative. That is fine. But, generally speaking, conservatives have told us over and over again, year after year after year, what a terrible thing it is to grow the deficit and grow the national debt because when you do that they have told us, and they were right, you are simply passing on today's problems to our children and our grandchildren. Over and over again I have heard from these podiums right here how terrible it is to grow the deficit. Well, guess what? We now have the largest deficit this year in modern American history and the largest national debt that we have ever had.

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In the midst of that and accelerating that deficit and accelerating that national debt are the huge tax breaks that the President and the Republican leadership have given to the wealthy.

Now some people, many conservatives, they say why would a conservative President grow the deficit and grow the national debt. That is not conservative. Let me suggest my view as to why they are doing that. We can all understand that if the wealthy contribute large amounts of money, you are going to give them a tax break. I think that is obscene, but that is nothing new; that is politics. But there is something more cynical going on here. That is, I believe, by driving up the national debt and the deficit, what the President is saying is that we will be so deeply in debt that we have got to tear apart many of the important social programs that have protected tens and tens and millions of Americans.

It is my opinion that in many respects this President wants to undue many of the major gains that were won by working people over the last 100 years and bring us back to the 19th century where workers had no guarantees, and when trouble struck them and their families, they were dependent on charity and the largess of the wealthy.

I think that is one of the reasons why this national debt is going up, so the President and future Presidents will be able to say we can no longer afford to maintain Social Security; let us privatize it. We can no longer afford to protect Medicare; let us privatize it. Let us do away with Medicaid. Let us do away with the Veterans Administration. Let us do away with Pell grants. We cannot afford it. I think what this administration is doing, and this is the most right-wing administration in modern history, is essentially trying to remove all of the protections that the elderly, the poor, the sick, and the young have and were won over the last 100 years. That is what I think is going on, and I think that is a very, very dangerous trend.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude my remarks by mentioning that this weekend I am going to be going to Madison, Wisconsin, to participate in a major media conference where we expect some 1,500 people from all over the country. I want to congratulate some of the organizers of that conference, Bob McChesney, John Nichols and many others for putting it together. The issue that they are going to be talking about and I will be talking about is the danger that faces our country when a handful of huge media conglomerates increasingly own and control what we see, hear, and read.

On June 2, the FCC by a 3-2 vote voted to make a bad situation worse and to allow even fewer large media conglomerates to control more and more media. That certainly will be one of the many issues that that conference will be dealing with.

I believe it is a very frightening day for democracy when so few large corporations control so much of the flow of information in this country. And if we are not able to overturn that FCC decision, and I and many of us are working hard on that, the day could come in the not-too-distant future where in a community like Burlington, Vermont, you can have one company owning the major television station, the major newspaper, and a number of radio stations. That is one of the rules that was undone; the prevention of that was one of the rules that the FCC just eliminated.

Now the good news is that the United States Senate, the other body, voted for a resolution of disapproval against that by a 55-40 vote. Liberals and conservatives came together, Republicans and Democrats came together and said that is not what media should become in America.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter which has 205 signatures on it for the Speaker of the House, and it says to the Speaker, let the U.S. House of Representatives have a vote on doing what the other body did. Let us also have the opportunity to vote for a resolution of disapproval regarding the FCC decision. Three million Americans have contacted the FCC, and I think we should listen to those Americans, and I

think the Speaker should give us a vote.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5101. A letter from the Administrator, AMS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Fresh Bartlett Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Increased Assessment Rate [Docket No. FV03-931-1 FR] received November 3, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5102. A letter from the Administrator, AMS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Processed Fruits and Vegetables—received November 3, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5103. A letter from the Administrator, AMS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—National Organic Program; Amendments to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances [Docket Number TM-02-03] (RIN: 0581-AC19) received November 3, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5104. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, APHIS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Mexican Fruit Fly; Removal of Regulated Area [Docket No. 02-129-4] received October 30, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5105. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Joseph M. Cosumano, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5106. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General John S. Caldwell, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5107. A letter from the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule—Risk-Based Capital Guidelines; Capital Adequacy Guidelines; Capital Maintenance: Interim Capital Treatment of Consolidated Asset-Backed Commercial Paper Program Assets [Docket No. 03-21] (RIN: 1557-AC76); Federal Reserve System [Regulations H and Y; Docket No. R-1156]; Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (RIN: 3064-AC74); Office of Thrift Supervision [No. 2003-48] (RIN: 1550-AB79) received October 30, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5108. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule—Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RIN: 1820-ZA14) received October 30,