

we need investment in Main Street as well as Wall Street. I have sponsored legislation to give small businesses incentives to invest and grow, and I hope that the President will tell us tonight how all Americans can prosper together and not just the large corporations and the fortunate who are their shareholders.

Mr. Speaker, the key to economic success begins with education. The President needs to keep his promise to truly leave no child behind by committing tonight to providing the resources that America needs to have the best public school system in the world. Also, we must make college affordability a national priority. Recent tuition increases have put college out of reach for too many Oregon and American families. I will be working on the Committee on Education and the Workforce to make college more affordable and accessible.

In closing, we must work together to address the most important issues facing our Nation, extending unemployment benefits, investing in Main Street small businesses, and providing the best education possible to all Americans.

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

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

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

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

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

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

STATE OF OUR UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss what I hope President Bush will address this evening in his State of the Union message. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I would like to place President Bush's speech in some context which I believe America should use in evaluating the President's address.

We can all agree that the President will give a good speech. He has prac-

ticed, he has rehearsed and he will do a good job. However, I hope that his rhetoric will match actions that will benefit all Americans and benefit all Americans soon. It was just last year that the President stood in this hallowed hall and set forth a number of priorities that were to guide this Nation throughout 2003. I, along with the rest of the Nation, listened very intently to the President searching for some affirmation in his speech of the principles that have successfully guided our constitutional democracy thus far. The Founding Fathers of the United States understood that governments are instituted to secure the God-given rights of all men and women to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In 1976, the late Senator Hubert Humphrey said, "The moral test of government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this administration has miserably failed that test. As stewards of the government, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that the poor are granted the same access to opportunity as the rich; the sick are afforded the medical attention needed to restore health; and that the scourge of racism and discrimination is forever dispelled from our national identity.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that the true measure of our Union is the state of the least among us. So long as there are 9 million Americans looking for work, 43 million Americans without health insurance and nearly 2.5 million American men, women and children without a place to call home, then America has not reached her full potential. We need leadership that demands equity, parity and equality. We need leadership that is progressive and forward-thinking. And, Mr. Speaker, we need leadership that delivers results to all of the American people.

□ 1330

The American people deserve bold leadership, the demands of frank and honest discussion of the issues that are at the center of people's lives.

Just yesterday, we celebrated the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, and I have noted so often we listen to the "I Have a Dream" speech; but one of the things that he said is that every citizen should demand the full, the full, the full measure of their citizenship. In other words, what he was saying was that this Nation owes every citizen certain rights and at the same time every citizen has a duty and responsibility to this Nation.

Since the President's last State of the Union Address in 2003, our Nation waited in vain, Mr. Speaker, for the President to recognize the importance of liberty, diversity, and charity beyond the superficial context of a speech. Yes, the President is quick to

say that he is compassionate and conservative. As I have said on many occasions, I have seen much of our President's conservatism. So we are long on conservatism, but it appears that we are very short on compassion. Americans look to the President to set forth policies that would transform these lofty ideals into reality for almost 300 million men, women, and children that reside in our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, a year later, we see that the President has not yet been able to synchronize his conscience with his conduct. Yes, we have a lot of photo-ops, but the photo-ops do not bring a paycheck to that worker in Baltimore who has been laid off for the past year. It does not bring an insurance policy for health insurance to that mother in Appalachia who has no insurance; nor does it bring the \$7.5 billion to our education system where children need computers, children need books, children need better classroom atmospheres so that they can grow up to be all that God wants them to be.

So it was last year, Mr. Speaker, that the President stood before this Nation, as he will do tonight; and there he announced the new initiative to fight the war against global HIV/AIDS with \$15 billion to the global fund. After years of work by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), my colleague in the Congressional Black Caucus, and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), our health chairperson, and many of my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus urging the Congress to be more proactive in fighting this epidemic, the Congressional Black Caucus applauded the President's effort.

We are very pleased that he had listened to us 3 years ago. By the way, I might add that it was 3 years ago when the President met with the Congressional Black Caucus; but 3 years later after many requests, he refuses, actually refuses to meet with the 39 members of the Congressional Black Caucus who represent over 26 million people, at least a third of whom are white. And it is interesting that he laid a wreath at the Martin Luther King memorial just a few days ago and then turned right around the next day and appointed Judge Pickering from Mississippi, whom, as a matter fact, every civil rights organization in the country had opposed and he had been opposed by the Congressional Black Caucus; but this President saw fit to appoint a man who had been turned away by the Senate twice.

So we come back to today. A year later we are already underfunding our annual contribution commitment by \$600 million, that is, to the AIDS fund, the global AIDS fund, by \$600 million. It was just this weekend that members of the Congressional Black Caucus met with the U.N. ambassadors from Africa and they talked about how so many of their people are dying; but yet and still, after we agree that \$15 billion should be allocated, we come up \$600

million short in the first year, and they too are asking why are we holding back, because they say as long as we hold back the money, more and more people on that great African continent will die.

Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union Address, President Bush said, "My economic security plan can be summed up in one word: jobs." Yet 2 years later, there are 9 million Americans who woke up this morning without a place of employment. On his watch America has lost nearly 3 million jobs. And I know that he will paint a rosy picture. He will tell us that we have a 5.7 percent unemployment rate. He probably will not mention that African American unemployment is 10.2 percent. He may not mention that in certain areas of our country, like parts of my district, the black male unemployment rate may be as much as 21 or 25 percent. He will not mention that.

He will not mention that over the past month only a thousand jobs were created. He will not mention that. He will mention that the economy seems to be going in the right direction; but he will not mention that we have such a lack of an increase in jobs, and when we think about it, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about a thousand jobs for 50 States, that means that we have got very few per State. So in all, a total of 14 million American men and women of all ethnicities are unable to feed their families, pay their mortgages, and clothe their children.

The President will not tell us that when he mentions the 5.7 percent that the reason why the number has come down is that so many Americans have become so tired of looking for work. They have been unemployed for so long that they have given up on looking for a job. So he will not tell us that their numbers are not in that 5.7 percent. He will not tell us that.

While the President travels the country boasting about the Nation's economic recovery, he neglects and will neglect to mention these 14 million Americans whose families have yet to recover and remain in a state of financial disrepair.

Mr. Speaker, last year after listening to the President's State of the Union speech, I asked the following question: "Where was the assurance that we will adequately fund legislation to guarantee that every vote will be counted in determining who will lead the Government of the United States?" A year later this question is even more poignant. Just last week students at Prairie View A. & M. University, a historically black college in the President's home State of Texas, marched in protest of their local district attorney's challenge to their fundamental right to vote. It is an affront to democracy that in the year 2004, African Americans are still marching for voting rights, still marching to exercise the very thing that underpins our democracy, still marching, trying to make sure that they are participants in this wonderful

thing we call a democracy, still marching.

Mr. Speaker, if our Nation is to retain the strength that has sustained us in times of war and in times of peace, in times of depression and in times of robust economic growth, then we must redouble our efforts to ensure that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is indeed granted to all. And when I think about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, one of the greatest things that we can do for any human being is to educate them.

Then I think about FAM U University, another historically black college down in Florida, when I visited there just recently and had students come up to me and ask the question at what point will the Congress get it? At what point will they realize that we have worked so hard to get to college, that our families are making less than \$30,000 a year and we are trying to be the best that we can be? Can we get a little help from the Congress that spends all of this money in Iraq? Can we get a little help? We Americans, who are trying to be the best that we can be, just want to pursue a little happiness so that we can grow up and contribute to this society.

But yet and still, they see the Pell grants leveling off. They see no real increase there. They see their tuitions rising. They work the part-time jobs. They give it all that they have. They try to borrow from Aunt Sally and borrow from Uncle Jim and Momma, but the money simply is not there; and then they find themselves, like the students at Morgan State University, another historically black college where I am on the board of trustees, where we have to actually release some 800 students. Why? Because they simply do not have the money to go to college. Tuition is going up; aid from our Federal Government for our students is going down, when we talk about our hope that the President, when he addresses us tonight, will address the question of how do we support our young, how do we make sure that they rise up to be all that they want to be.

I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that terrorism, by the way, is not the only threat to our democracy. Indifference to the ills of the least among us and denial of basic human rights challenges the foundation upon which this country was built.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I sincerely hope that President Bush will address all the issues which I have outlined this afternoon in a meaningful way. I have heard through newspaper accounts that the President will articulate a plan to insure the uninsured. I certainly hope that this plan will be proactive, realistic, and designed to actually achieve the intended results. I hope that if, in fact, the President does present a plan to insure the uninsured, it will not emulate the Medicare plan that does nothing to make prescription drugs more affordable and will in practice destroy Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, this evening my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and the 9 million, and I repeat that, 9 million unemployed Americans will be listening to the President very closely in expectation of a real plan to create economic growth and, most importantly, jobs. America does not want the President to give lip service to the idea of job creation while lining the pockets of corporate America as he did in his 2002 State of the Union Address. America wants the President to promise to work in a bipartisan manner to enact policies which we know work to create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, just yesterday we lost another 20 soldiers to a bomb in Baghdad. This evening America wants the President to pay homage to the over 500 men and women, brave young men and women, who have lost their lives in Iraq by presenting a plan to create stability in the region and bring our troops safely home. And, finally, Mr. Speaker, on the eve of another Presidential election, the Congressional Black Caucus and the over 130 million registered voters in the United States want the President to make a real commitment, a real commitment, to protect our right to vote and have our votes counted. Americans want to be absolutely certain that when they arrive at the polls on November 2, their vote will be counted. These are our national priorities, Mr. Speaker, that Americans of every color are looking to the President for leadership.

□ 1345

The Congressional Black Caucus will be watching, and waiting to work with the president to strengthen our Nation and to secure the state of our Union.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, once again let me just thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, for his leadership, and for calling these special orders to discuss the real state of the Union. I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for once again attempting to wake up America.

Today I hope that people listen very carefully to the President as he tells us about his vision of America. I hope that they listen and ask themselves just what America does George Bush see out there? Who gets left behind in his vision, and really just where does it take us?

I want to remind the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the entire country of what President Bush told us, I believe it was the year before last, in terms of creating the "axis of evil." Then last year he told us that the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Of course, that has been questionable, but it did serve, however, as a very central and very critical piece of the spin campaign that led the country

into war. I must remind you this was last year in the State of the Union that this critical piece of information was put forward. So tonight I hope the country listens very carefully to what the President says.

Of course, in preparation for the upcoming election, the President is again getting ready to tell the Nation something that really should be questioned. According to news reports, the President will declare victory in the fight to provide the Nation's elderly and the disabled with health care. He will point to the Medicare bill that he and the Congressional Republicans pushed through Congress. But there is one small problem: The Medicare bill will not help Medicare, and it will not help seniors. In fact, it is designed really, if you ask me and ask many of us, to do the program in.

He will claim that the economy is surging ahead; but will he talk about the millions of jobs that have been lost during his presidency?

He will talk about homeland security; but will he talk about the insecurity in our ports and elsewhere, about first responders who still lack vital resources? So let us all listen very closely to what he says.

What is the state of the Union today? We have about 130,000 American troops in Iraq, sent there in a preemptive war that we did not have to fight.

We face an economy here at home that has been dominated by tax cuts for the wealthy and job losses for the rest of the country. We have an administration that seems eager to expand these tax cuts for the rich, and just as eager to privatize one of our most successful programs in history, Social Security.

We have a healthcare system marked by disparities and deficiencies which leaves 44 million Americans without any health insurance and which the President seeks to reform, not by expanding benefits for the public for universal health care, but by expanding profits for the insurance industry and the HMOs.

And we have health care problems, including skyrocketing asthma rates, which will only grow worse as the administration erodes fundamental environmental protections such as the Clear Air Act.

That is the real state of the Union: A foreign policy based on preemption, not cooperation; an economy based on tax cuts, not job creation; a health care and retirement system that promotes corporate benefits, not individual care; and an approach to the environment that protects polluters and oil companies, rather than promoting public health or developing alternative energy sources.

How did we get in this situation? We got here really not by accident, but through a series of choices made by the administration and the Republican majority in Congress.

We have to begin this discussion by confronting the question of war. Under-

standing this war and preventing future foreign policy disasters requires us to understand how we got here and to demand answers about the abuse of intelligence in the process so that it never happens again.

Over 500 Americans have died in Iraq. Over 3,000 have been wounded, many of them suffering terrible injuries. We owe it to them and we owe it to the unknown number of Iraqi men, women and children who have been killed to ask how we got there, how we can get out and how we can prevent future tragedies.

This Nation went to war not because we were attacked, not because we were in imminent danger, but because this administration was just determined to do so. They have captured Saddam Hussein, but they have yet to find a single weapon of mass destruction, although the administration told us with absolute certainty last year that there were tens of thousands of them and they were aimed at us.

This war of preemption without justification goes against both American ideals and international law, it has made the world a more dangerous place, and it has carried with it enormous costs in both lives and treasure.

Yesterday, this past weekend, we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King knew all about the danger of war and the terrible toll that it exacted here at home. Dr. King said, "In the wasteland of war, the expenditure of resources knows no restraints."

Dr. King said, "A Nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Mr. Speaker, I think it makes a real mockery out of Dr. King's life to place a wreath at his tomb one day, appoint a segregationist to the Federal bench the next day, and then come forward with a plan for military expenditures that, again, will wreak havoc on the areas in America which need the kind of help that our resources could provide in terms of alleviating poverty and helping young people with their college education. This Nation, the state of this Nation, Mr. Chairman, is approaching, as Dr. King said, spiritual death.

What then would Dr. King say? What would he say about the \$87 billion supplement passed last year, and the fact that the \$87 billion came on top of the \$78 billion that Congress already appropriated for the war, on top of the \$400 billion defense budget? What would he say about the priorities and choices that led to a preemptive war abroad and social and economic distress here at home, for as we confront the war, we must also confront the domestic choices that this administration has made that have led to the present state of our Union.

The economy, health care, Social Security and the environment are all at stake, and, yes, they are all at risk today.

First the economy. This Nation has lost nearly 2.5 million jobs since President Bush took office. That is the worst job creation since Herbert Hoover. Reports indicate that in his address tonight, the President will propose \$120 million, I believe that is what I understand, in new job training grants. That sounds fine. But this President has sought over \$800 million in cuts to job training and vocational education since moving into the oval office.

This same administration has refused, refused, to extend unemployment benefits, at the very moment when millions of Americans are desperately looking for jobs but simply not finding them. Almost 90,000 jobless workers are running out of regular State-funded unemployment benefits each week. As we speak, almost 400,000 Americans are jobless and have no unemployment compensation.

We are all excited about economic growth in the last quarter, but we want to see real economic development, real jobs and real economic opportunities for all Americans, and we want to see poverty rates in America reduced, rather than go forward. We want to see those rates go down. We want to see homelessness conquered; we want to see hungry children fed; we want to see a real commitment to end poverty in the President's State of the Union address tonight.

Secondly, just as the Americans are concerned about the economy, they are deeply and justifiably worried about their health care. We have raging health care disparities in this country that separate black from white, rich from poor, African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Latinos, all from the poor, from the middle-class. This really is a national disgrace in the wealthiest country in the world.

Forty-four million Americans have no health insurance. Four million of those have lost their coverage since President Bush took office. Americans who are fortunate enough to have health insurance are not only facing massive premiums hikes, but also live in constant fear of losing their insurance, and those fears, sadly, unfortunately, are warranted.

Minorities have an even greater reason to be insecure and to listen closely to what the President will propose tonight. Minorities are sicker, and when they finally make it to the emergency rooms of this country, they get poorer care. Like the uninsured and the under-cared for, our seniors are also left out of the so-called Bush recovery.

The Medicare bill passed this fall will leave the seniors who have the gravest chronic diseases with the highest out-of-pocket costs. But, again, there are beneficiaries to these policies. The insurance industry, the drug manufacturers and the HMOs, they will make billions.

Thirdly, there is Social Security. This program was one of the great inventions of the 20th century. It has

made enormous differences in the lives of millions and millions of Americans. But the Bush administration seeks to partially privatize this program. The New York Times says this would cost \$100 billion to undertake. It would also make the seniors of tomorrow subject to the whims of the stock market. Privatization presents risks that we cannot afford and that we do not need. We must not dismantle this vital program.

Finally, I cannot leave without addressing what this administration has done and seeks to do to our environment. Like Social Security, environmental protections exist to safeguard all, but this administration has refused to enforce existing laws and has even worked to strip them away, including such absolutely critical protections as the Clean Air Act.

It has failed to create an energy policy that matches the needs of the 21st century. We could be reducing our dependence on foreign oil, fighting global warming and creating new jobs all at the same time, but, instead, this administration subsidizes big oil and big coal, refuses to address concerns such as MTBE, and tells Americans that all the answers to the energy crisis and problems lie in the drilling of the Arctic wilderness.

So the common theme running through all of these domestic policies is that the Bush Administration has signed a contract with corporate America at the expense of the American people. That is the real state of the union today, and it sounds pretty bleak.

In fact, I am pretty optimistic about the future of America, because these things can be fixed. We can forge a foreign policy based on international cooperation that truly enhances our own security. We can get our troops home from Iraq and end the daily news reports that another two or three or 16 Americans have been killed. We can craft domestic policies that create jobs, expand health care, protect Social Security, reduce poverty and safeguard our environment. And, yes, we can invest in health care and education and affordable housing. We can redirect our resources and realign our priorities. We can do better. Dr. King, again, left us a road map of how to do it better.

So tonight, Mr. Chairman, I hope the country listens very carefully to the President's picture that he will paint of the state of the Union and raise some of these very critical questions as we enter this next year, to make certain that his State of the Union is not the state of the Union that we want to see for the American people.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her statement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to a friend of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding. I think that as we prepare for this evening, the necessity of putting

up a minority report on the state of the Union is crucial for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article from the Independent, which is a major newspaper in the United Kingdom, called "George W. Bush and the Real State of the Union."

[From the Independent, Jan. 20, 2004]

GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE REAL STATE OF THE UNION

Today the President gives his annual address. As the election battle begins, how does his first term add up?

232: Number of American combat deaths in Iraq between May 2003 and January 2004.

501: Number of American servicemen to die in Iraq from the beginning of the war—so far.

0: Number of American combat deaths in Germany after the Nazi surrender to the Allies in May 1945.

0: Number of coffins of dead soldiers returning home from Iraq that the Bush administration has allowed to be photographed.

0: Number of funerals or memorials that President Bush has attended for soldiers killed in Iraq.

100: Number of fund-raisers attended by Bush or Vice-President Dick Cheney in 2003.

13: Number of meetings between Bush and Tony Blair since he became President.

10 million: Estimated number of people worldwide who took to the streets in opposition to the invasion of Iraq, setting an all-time record for simultaneous protest.

2: Number of nations that Bush has attacked and taken over since coming into the White House.

9.2: Average number of American soldiers wounded in Iraq each day since the invasion in March last year.

1.6: Average number of American soldiers killed in Iraq per day since hostilities began.

16,000: Approximate number of Iraqis killed since the start of war.

10,000: Approximate number of Iraqi civilians killed since the beginning of the conflict.

\$100 billion: Estimated cost of the war in Iraq to American citizens by the end of 2003.

\$13 billion: Amount other countries have committed towards rebuilding Iraq (much of it in loans) as of 24 October.

36%: Increase in the number of desertions from the U.S. army since 1999.

92%: Percentage of Iraq's urban areas that had access to drinkable water a year ago.

60%: Percentage of Iraq's urban areas that have access to drinkable water today.

32%: Percentage of the bombs dropped on Iraq this year that were not precision-guided.

1983: The year in which Donald Rumsfeld gave Saddam Hussein a pair of golden spurs.

45%: Percentage of Americans who believed in early March 2003 that Saddam Hussein was involved in the 11 September attacks on the U.S.

\$127 billion: Amount of U.S. budget surplus in the year that Bush became President in 2001.

\$374 billion: Amount of U.S. budget deficit in the fiscal year for 2003.

1st: This year's deficit is on course to be the biggest in United States history.

\$1.58 billion: Average amount by which the U.S. national debt increases each day.

\$23,920: Amount of each U.S. citizen's share of the national debt as of January 19, 2004.

1st: The record for the most bankruptcies filed in a single year (1.57 million) was set in 2002.

10: Number of solo press conferences that Bush has held since beginning his term. His father had managed 61 at this point in his administration, and Bill Clinton 33.

1st: Rank of the U.S. worldwide in terms of greenhouse gas emissions per capita.

\$113 million: Total sum raised by the Bush-Cheney 2000 campaign, setting a record in American electoral history.

\$130 million: Amount raised for Bush's re-election campaign so far.

\$200 million: Amount that the Bush-Cheney Campaign is expected to raise in 2004.

\$40 million: Amount that Howard Dean, the top fund-raiser among the nine Democratic presidential hopefuls, amassed in 2003.

28: Number of days holiday that Bush took last August, the second longest holiday of any president in U.S. history (Recordholder: Richard Nixon).

13: Number of vacations days the average American worker receives each year.

3: Number of children convicted of capital offenses executed in the U.S. in 2002. America is the only country openly to acknowledge executing children.

1st: As Governor of Texas, George Bush executed more prisoners (152) than any governor in modern U.S. history.

2.4 million: Number of Americans who have lost their jobs during the three years of the Bush administration.

221,000: Number of jobs per month created since Bush's tax cuts took effect. He promised the measure would add 306,000.

1,000: Number of new jobs created in the entire country in December. Analysts had expected a gain of 130,000.

1st: This administration is on its way to becoming the first since 1929 (Herbert Hoover) to preside over an overall loss of jobs during its complete term in office.

9 million: Number of U.S. workers unemployed in September 2003.

80%: Percentage of the Iraqi workforce now unemployed.

55%: Percentage of the Iraqi workforce unemployed before the war.

43.6 million: Number of Americans without health insurance in 2002.

130: Number of countries (out of total of 191 recognized by the United Nations) with an American military presence.

40%: Percentage of the world's military spending for which the U.S. is responsible.

\$10.9 million: Average wealth of the members of Bush's original 16-person cabinet.

88%: Percentage of American citizens who will save less than \$100 on their 2006 Federal taxes as a result of 2003 cut in capital gains and dividends taxes.

\$42,000: Average savings members of Bush's cabinet are expected to enjoy this year as a result of the cuts in capital gains and dividends taxes.

\$42,228: Median household income in the U.S. in 2001.

\$116,000: Amount Vice-President Cheney is expected to save each year in taxes.

44%: Percentage of Americans who believe the President's economic growth plan will mostly benefit the wealthy.

700: Number of people from around the world the U.S. has incarcerated in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

1st: George W. Bush became the first American president to ignore the Geneva Conventions by refusing to allow inspectors access to U.S.-held prisoners of war.

+6%: Percentage change since 2001 in the number of U.S. families in poverty.

1951: Last year in which a quarterly rise in U.S. military spending was greater than the one the previous spring.

54%: Percentage of U.S. citizens who believe Bush was legitimately elected to his post.

1st: First president to execute a federal prisoner in the past 40 years. Executions are typically ordered by separate states and not at federal level.

9: Number of members of Bush's defense policy board who also sit on the corporate

board of, or advise, at least one defense contractor.

35: Number of countries to which U.S. has suspended military assistance after they failed to sign agreements giving Americans immunity from prosecution before the International Criminal Court.

\$300 million: Amount cut from the federal programme that provides subsidies to poor families so they can heat their homes.

\$1 billion: Amount of new U.S. military aid promised Israel in April 2003 to offset the "burdens" of the U.S. war on Iraq.

58 million: Number of acres of public lands Bush has opened to road building, logging and drilling.

200: Number of public-health and environmental laws Bush has attempted to downgrade or weaken.

29,000: Number of American troops—which is close to the total of a whole army division—to have either been killed, wounded, injured or become so ill as to require evacuation from Iraq, according to the Pentagon.

90%: Percent of American citizens who said they approved of the way George Bush was handing his job as president when asked on 26 September, 2001.

53%: Percentage of American citizens who approved of the way Bush was handling his job as president when asked on 16 January, 2004.

□ 1400

This article lists the accomplishments of this administration. We all know we are engaged in a war that the President could not keep us out of; he had to go to war. We have had 501 people die. But what people do not know about is that 40,000 of our troops whose enlistments have ended are being kept in under stop-loss orders. There is a major crisis, and the likelihood of the President talking honestly tonight about what is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan, in my opinion, is zero, because he cannot talk about solving this problem with soldiers if people do not want to reenlist, or enlist for the first time. They are offering \$10,000 to people in Iraq to reenlist while they are in country, and 4,000 people are chafing to get out and go home.

Now, that is a situation that is, I think, undeniable. Worse than that, in the President's rush to go to war, is that when he came into office, he had a \$127 billion surplus. In the first 6 or 8 years I was in the Congress, there was endless talk from the other side about, we have to have a balanced budget amendment. Bill Clinton did it and actually started reducing the debt. Now, in this year, in 2004, the President will pile up a deficit of \$374 billion and counting.

Now, that means in this country, or it explains, perhaps, why we have the record number of the most bankruptcies in a single year: 1.57 million bankruptcies in 2002 under Mr. Bush. He wants to tell us this is a recovery. Well, explain that for me. Mr. Speaker, 2.4 million people have lost their jobs, and 221,000 jobs have been created since all of those tax cuts. He promised over 300,000 last month. We got 1,000 jobs. That is 20 in every State: 20 in Washington, 20 in Maryland, 20 in New York, 20 in California, and so on. Yet, he has not asked for an extension of unem-

ployment benefits. Mr. Speaker, 68,000 people in the next 6 months in the State of Washington will lose their unemployment benefits because the President refuses to ask for an extension of unemployment benefits.

Now, presently, we are spread out across the world: 130 of the 191 countries on the face of the Earth have an American military presence. Forty percent of the world's military expenditures are done by this country. Will the President suggest that Mr. Rumsfeld's office be changed to the Secretary of War? I doubt it. They are going to keep talking about defense. But, in fact, we are making war.

The average income, and this is where the tax cuts are really amazing, the average income of Mr. Bush's cabinet was \$10.9 million. Eighty-eight percent of Americans will save less than \$100 in 2006 as a result of those 2003 tax cuts. The average American makes \$42,000. Vice President CHENEY will save \$116,000 in taxes every year. Remember, \$42,000 is the average salary. The President cut \$300 million from Federal programs that provide subsidies to poor families so they can heat their homes in a cold winter. I wonder if they have turned the heat down over at the White House. Think so? No. He will come and tell us everything is great: the economy is picking up; everybody is doing better. Look at the stock market. One cannot eat the stock market; one has to have a job. And this President has done relatively nothing.

The previous speaker talked about his assault on public health and environmental laws. As a physician, this has been the most disastrous administration in history. Mr. Speaker, 200 separate issues they have undercut, undermined, done away with; and it has all been done on Friday afternoon about 4 o'clock. They come out, they put a little bit in the paper, and they change the Mercury in the water, or they change the air quality, or they change something. They have made a full-scale assault on the environment in which all of us live.

The state of the Union is not good. If we think about the whole question of the amount of greenhouse gases, the United States leads the world in greenhouse gases; and the President says, we refuse to deal with the rest of the world on this. We are 5 percent of the population. We use 25 percent of the energy in the world. We do not have to care what the rest of the world thinks. Will he make a proposal tonight to get us off our oil addiction, or are we going to continually be at war over oil reserves in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan? This President is taking us into a situation from which it is going to be very difficult for anybody else to dig us out.

The next President of the United States will have a tremendous problem. That is to say nothing of what he has done with the question of Medicare and

what he has done, or not done, with Social Security. He has borrowed all of the money, and we are still going to have a deficit of over \$300 billion. And tonight he is going to say, hey, look, folks, I have a plan for us. You ought to privatize that Social Security. You could be doing a lot better if you just had that money yourself. You should not be giving it to the government and getting a guarantee. Let us just give it back to you and you can open your private accounts, and you can all get privately rich. What do you think the people of Enron think who lost everything and all they have left is their Social Security? George Bush and Ken Lay could not figure out how to get that away from them, or they would not have that either.

So the question tonight is going to be a rephrasing, in my view, of a question that Ronald Reagan asked us a number of years ago. And I really think this crystallizes the problem with where we are tonight in this State of the Union. Ronald Reagan said to the American people, "Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago?" making it all a very personal thing.

Now, the problem with the speech we are going to get tonight is going to be more of the same sort of stuff to confuse the American people: I am going to make the tax cuts permanent; I am going to go to the Moon; I am going to go to Mars, trying to confuse the American people and get reelected. The question that should be asked tonight is, Are we better off than we were 3 years ago?

The question the President needs to answer for us is, What is the common good, Mr. President? Why, why does all the money in the tax cuts, why does it all go to people on the top? Why is it all for those people? What about the people at the bottom, the kids that are going to college and get deeper in debt; the older people who have still got to come up with \$3,500 out of their pocket to get anything out of this pharmaceutical benefit?

The question tonight should be, What is in the common interest? What is the common good for all of us? If it is good for all of us, we will support him. But if it is just for his friends in the oil industry and the munitions industry, then I think he deserves to get a pretty silent response. He does not deserve clapping when he stands up and says the economy is great.

Mr. Speaker, 1,000 jobs last month, 1,000. 68,000 people in my own State are losing jobs, and no unemployment benefit. How can you call that good?

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement. I really appreciate his being here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding; and I thank him, above all, for his leadership in affording the opportunity for members of the Congressional Black Caucus and

other Members to come forward with this so-called "prerebuttal." I am going to speak on one subject instead of on the many subjects that concern me likely to be raised this evening, because this subject is at the center of black misery today. Instead of calling it a prerebuttal, I literally mean it as friendly advice because the subject is the cause of so much chaos in the African American community, and that subject is jobs.

The President got 10 percent of the black vote the last time, something under 10 percent; and there are various figures about how much he proposes to get this time. What the President has got to understand about the African American community is that it is the most bottom line community in the United States, that is to say, it votes its bottom line because it has no choice, because it is further behind in our country because of historic circumstances of which we are all aware. The indication of just how bottom line the black community is, is switch from the Republican Party, the so-called party that freed the slaves, to the Democratic Party when the bottom line was whether or not you could get a job or had enough to eat, and those are the issues that are central to the African American community today.

Yet, I expect the President to boast of the economy. He stands before his economy today, his economy, his economy after almost 4 years. But our response to the President is borrowed from 8 years ago. It is not the economy, Mr. President, it is not the economy, and I will not say "stupid." It is not the economy, Mr. President. It is jobs. There is no such thing as a recovery without jobs. Whatever happens on Wall Street will be irrelevant to the average American if there is joblessness and fear of joblessness; and that is what continues to grip our country, despite improvement in the stock market. Any doubt about that may have vanished yesterday when Iowa, the pre-eminent antiwar State, according to the responses to the Democratic primary, said as its residents left the polls that jobs was the number one issue. Half of the American people indicate they are worse off than when this President took office. Jobs and the lack of health care, which is in our country attached to jobs, is the reason for that sentiment from the American people. And if half of the American people say they were worse off, I can assure my colleagues that the majority of African Americans would answer they are worse off to that question.

This Congress left town this time, the latest in memory; but they left, but they did not leave before they made sure that the pharmaceutical companies had theirs in the Medicare bill, and they certainly did not leave until the tax cuts for the wealthy were secure. But they left a country at 9 percent unemployment.

For African Americans, that represents a 20 percent increase since this

President took office. We have some before and afters to compare here in recent history, because there was a 48 percent decline in unemployment while President Clinton was in office. Yet Congress left town without any jobs program and with virtually no discussion on this floor of a jobs program. I understand the President is likely to talk about a retraining program this evening.

□ 1415

Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to say a few words about what we need more, that is a jobs program, not a retraining program. And I want to have something to say about how we can get there, by the way, with no increase in the deficit.

Congress left town without even any extension of unemployment benefits even though it was just before Christmas. Merry Christmas, America. Congress left town without increasing the minimum wage at all even though average income has decreased every year for the last 2 years. Congress left town with the child tax credit for the 6 million of the poorest Americans not there. Everyone else but the poorest even though the poverty rate in our country is up 3 years in a row.

Congress left town with a provision in the omnibus bill to reduce overtime for 8 million people. You know, for many of these people this is the difference between a low wage existence and a living wage: To work for it; you work overtime and you will get it.

Now, African Americans knew better than to get used to the Clinton economy. For a while we did hold some hope that this two-for-one, that is to say we had always have twice as much unemployment as white people, would somehow disappear, we held that hope because I can tell you here in this city even African American men getting out of jail could often find a job because then employers were looking for workers.

Today, Mr. Speaker, workers are searching endlessly for jobs. And the reason the unemployment rate does not look any worse than it does is because so many millions have dropped out of even looking any longer. I do not expect an economy like the economy of the late 1990s. And that is not the comparison I would make or the standard I would hold this President to. But I do not expect what we have seen, that black unemployment would increase faster than any period for the last 20 years.

I do not expect a month like October, for example, when blacks absorbed all of the unemployment. They were the only part of the population where unemployment grew. That kind of disproportion is not only heartless, it is immoral. And in the face of that, surely we can do more than talk about retraining. We can talk about an honest-to-goodness jobs program of the kind we have always had in times of recession.

Yet what bothers me most about the most recent period is there has been no particular American conversation about the disproportionate effect of joblessness on African Americans. We used to always talk about it. We used to talk about there is twice as much unemployment for African Americans, the effect that was having, having to reach down and do something about it. We ought to go back and read Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Because African American unemployment has become the invisible unemployment.

I indicated earlier that I was not talking about something we could not do something about. The Democrats introduced the Rebuild America Act of 2003. We could have given America a quick start in this jobless recovery with a provision of jobs in areas where they are most needed and where the country most needs work without increasing the deficit because this bill, a \$50 billion bill was paid for. It would have had an extraordinary effect, particularly before Christmas, because many of these jobs would have been in manufacturing and construction, and that is where the ripple effect is in areas like retailing, for example, where blacks are found often disproportionately.

But what did we do? Instead of looking at the Rebuild America Act, we went home. This act was focused on manufacturing and that is where the President is in trouble and where the Congress is in trouble, and on construction where the country is in trouble, where he is in trouble.

We could have relieved our national infrastructure deficit with this \$50 billion bill that would cover every aspect of our own infrastructure. Now, I was particularly interested in this because I am on the Permanent Select Committee on Homeland Security and because I fret daily about the deficits in infrastructure and what that does to security. For example, I want aviation. We have shored up some of airline security, but rail security, for example, is just out there. Amtrak, your Union Stations around the country and the lines that go in between them with tracks that invite mischief.

There was something in this bill for every district. For example, there were several things in there that would have helped my district, \$500 million for pending work items, for rehabilitation of Federal buildings. Pending work items that they cannot get to. And the interesting thing about this bill was that everything it was directed at were projects ready to go. Projects on the table waiting for the money to lift them up so that they could put people to work and deal with ailing infrastructure in our country.

The average length of unemployment today is more than 20 weeks. This is the longest period of unemployment in 20 years. Mr. Speaker, this President must speak directly to jobs, to the fear of jobs, to the loss of unemployment insurance with jobs or else he has given

us nothing that essential to reviving the domestic economy of our country.

Yeah, we got the slogan for tonight. It is not "It Is the Economy, Stupid"; it is jobs. And not "stupid," I respect our President. It is jobs. It is not the economy, Mr. President; it is jobs, Mr. President.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus for giving us the opportunity to lay out a road map, if you will, for this Nation as we prepare to hear the President's State of the Union address.

And I might say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I am told and I have heard that many view this as a state of the world because he is the commander in chief and the leader of the free world, commander in chief of the most powerful Nation in the world. And the world watches tonight.

So, my first concern with respect to the optimism that I hope we hear tonight is that he will restate for the world that we are a country of freedoms, protecting both our civil liberties and civil rights, and that we will not intend or pretend to govern from a position of fear, that we will continue to mourn those who we lost on 9/11 but that we will go forward embracing the freedom of this Nation and reemphasize our civil liberties.

And so that we can address Attorney General Ashcroft to the extent that we began to reinforce the civil liberties of Americans as opposed to take them away, to ask the questions about an enemy combatant without the opportunity to have access to counsel, to wonder why the Transportation Security Administration will begin profiling all Americans who are traveling on domestic flights, and are an outrage, to begin to address the questions that our rights should not be taken away but they should be enhanced. Library books need not be the cause of suggesting someone is a terrorist.

And the civil rights of Americans reinforcing affirmative action, believing in the right to privacy, must be stated tonight. The Congressional Black Caucus has worked for a very long time on a real racial profiling bill, one that would prevent racial profiling. We ask the President to speak tonight about the need to sign hate crimes legislation which we have been working on for now over almost a decade.

And then when it comes to election reform in this year, it is crucial that we add to the election reform legislation a tracking system, a paper trail, so that when we go to the 2004 election, when many jurisdictions have gone to the electronic process, we will not have the crisis of 2000 when we turn people away but, more importantly, when votes were not counted. Now that we have the electronic process, let me say

to you that it certainly is a travesty that we have a situation where we cannot even track how the votes were cast.

I hope he will promote the Peace Corps and that encourage, in the next fiscal year, extra support for the Peace Corps, the face of America, and make sure that we do not assign one person to an area but we assign two Americans to a region for safety and other reasons.

I believe going into space is valuable, but we have to do it in a bipartisan way, protecting American jobs, providing for education and explaining to the American people how we will fund our vision in going to Mars and to the moon and the safety of it.

Let me just say that the Democrats have extended an olive branch. I agree with my colleagues the need to create more jobs. That is a big question, are you going to do it. But I agree that Democrats are saying to the President that those who seek higher education need increased dollars for the Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,800 and doubling the Hope Scholarship Tax Credit from \$1,500 to \$3,000, and getting rid of the disabled veterans tax once and for all. How can we have young men and women in the front lines of Iraq and when they come home as disabled veterans, they are to be taxed?

And finally let me say, Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot of work to do on immigration reform. And my support for moving in the right direction is that I say to the President tonight, let us talk about comprehensive immigration reform including Liberians, including Haitians, including a comprehensive response, Europeans and others from all over who are trying to earn access to legalization, let's not have a flat earth procedure where at the end of 3 years you disappear into the night.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the President will be optimistic tonight. I hope he will accept the olive branch. I hope he will work with the Congressional Black Caucus and the chairman, and that we will get on the right track for America. Because if we do not, the world is watching us tonight and wondering whether America can lead in the 21st century.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order.

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

There was no objection.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr.

FOLEY) for allowing me to have this unanimous consent and let me commend the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for having this special order dealing with some of the very trying problems of our time.

In this new millennium, we will face many hurdles and we are going to hear the first the State of the Union address tonight. But today I would like to rise this afternoon to discuss the true state of the Union as it is, not as we would like it to be. We have our true land and then there is wonderland. And it is great in wonderland because all things are nice and we have the road that leads to all good things.

However, the true state of the Nation is more grim. It is time to face reality. There are too many people in our Nation who are still struggling. They are not enjoying the benefits that have been awarded to the more privileged among us. While the White House tries to put the best face on the economy, the fact is that we have lost about 2.5 million jobs in the last 2 years. Long-term unemployment is at a 20-year high.

While the wealthiest Americans enjoy the benefits of tax cuts, which was tilted their way, millions of Americans continue to live paycheck to paycheck, although the unemployment rate has dropped .1 percent. There are more people unemployed this month than were last month because thousands and thousands have dropped out of the hunt for a job because of the long-term unemployment. And they have just given up, they have fallen out.

□ 1430

So the unemployment rate is not even a true reflection of what is going on. The response of the Bush administration to this inequity is to make lopsided tax cuts permanent.

Our friends across the aisle who used to rail against budget deficits only a few years ago are now willing to overlook the largest, most alarming budget deficit in the history of this great Nation.

Under former-President Clinton's budget policies, we amassed a healthy budget surplus, which has now been totally squandered. We used to talk about mortgaging our children's futures. We do not hear that anymore.

What this means is that resources that can be channeled into positive action to address such key problems as jobs, health care, education, housing are no longer available. They have been drained by the irresponsible tax cuts for the very wealthy in our Nation.

The state of the Union today is weaker in many other ways. Racial disparities in health care continue to take a toll on minorities. Yet the administration's response to this national health crisis is to sweep it under the carpet.

The Washington Post reported last week that a Federal report on racial disparities was rewritten for the first time in our history by the Department