

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET CUTS

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am appalled by the cruel and short-sighted leadership the Republican Party is giving us in planning to ram through this reconciliation next week. They want to provide an additional \$70 billion to \$100 billion in tax cuts for the privileged and the powerful and their Fortune 500 corporate benefactors. In order to pay for this, they plan to cut \$4.9 billion from child support programs that help collect money from deadbeat dads; \$14.5 billion from student aid programs, \$9.5 billion in Medicaid, and they even want to cut tens of millions of dollars from low-income energy assistance.

Mr. Speaker, you will hear more from the Progressive Caucus, more from the Democratic Party next week about just how unfair these cuts will be to real moderate-income people and the very poor people in this country and how much they will benefit the very, very wealthy people in this country.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE BUDGET

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, next week the Republicans have discovered that we are awash in a sea of red ink, supposedly. Under the Bush watch, with the Republicans in charge of both Houses of Congress, the national debt has increased by 62 percent, to \$8 trillion in 5 short years, quite an accomplishment. We are borrowing \$1.3 billion a day to run the government. If we eliminated everything the government does except for homeland security and defense, we would still have a deficit.

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They say they are going to make some infinitesimal cuts and little

phony baloney and that is fiscal responsibility. Let us talk about what they are proposing to cut.

Well, the biggest whack they are taking is at students. They do not know any students who have to borrow money or get scholarships to go to school. Why, the children of the rich, they just write out a check and pay cash; they are legacy students at the best schools. \$14.3 billion of additional costs on students who want to borrow a little money to get a better education and get ahead, doubling the origination fee, costing them as much as \$6,000 over the life of their loans.

Kids are graduating with mountains of debt. That is a responsible cut, according to the Republicans. Well then there are those little guys in the elementary and secondary schools who are eating too much. They are eating too much. They are going to cut back on the school nutrition program and the breakfast program and the eligibility of poor kids to eat.

They are just eating too much. They do not know anybody who is hungry in this country. And then the phony baloney. I am on the Resources Committee. They are assuming over \$3 billion for leasing the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, 50 times as much per acre as the Naval Petroleum Reserve was just leased for, where there is known oil, in an area where there is no known oil.

So we got phony baloney and mean spirited cuts. Now, why? Are they really fiscally responsible? Well, this would be a big, you know, almost one-tenth of 1 percent of the projected deficit over the next 5 years. I guess that is better than nothing. Except that there are ways to make much bigger cuts. We could roll back the 2001-2003 tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent, those who earn over \$350,000 a year. That would bring in \$327 billion, six times what they are pretending to save here.

We could do away with some offshore tax shelters, \$65 billion more than what they are talking about here. We could cancel the President's mission to Mars. That is \$1 trillion over the next 20 years, \$100 billion to go back to the Moon again. That would save twice as much money. No, those things go after the powerful special interests or the contributor class, and God forbid they should take them on.

But they can get the little kids in the schools and take the food off their plates. They can go off the students struggling to rise up or stay in the middle class and double their origination fees for their loans.

But they will not make these kinds of real cuts, ones that would hit at those who earn over \$300,000 a year or hit at the powerful special interests who are, you know, who are involved in the Federal contracting with NASA.

And then there is waste and abuse. What about the waste and abuse? Apparently, the Bush administration, Brownie is still writing, Brownie, you are doing a heck of a job. He is still on the Federal payroll for \$150,000, and he

is letting out contracts, such as a contract, put a blue tarp on a roof. A lot of people in Oregon do that when they find out they got a leak when it starts to rain, they go up, climb up on the roof, put up a tarp. The tarp costs \$8.

Well, the Federal Government is paying a contractor \$2,500 to put blue tarps per roof down there in the Southeast, yet another great job by heck-of-a-job Brownie, who is still pulling down \$150,000 a year from the Federal taxpayers.

So there is a little waste, fraud, and abuse that they can go after. No. But these are the big contractors, Fluor and others, who are benefiting and profiting immensely from gouging the Federal taxpayer.

So we should have real fiscal responsibility; but they have no sense of it, because the real money goes to the powerful and the special interests in this country. They are the ones looting the Federal Treasury, and they have the gall to come to the floor of the House and say it is the Democrats. You have been in charge for 5 years. Five years. The Presidency, the House, and the Senate for almost that whole time, and you have increased the debt by 62 percent.

You have done nothing about the waste, fraud and abuse. In fact, it has gotten worse on your watch, and now you want to stick it to the kids who want to get an education and to hungry children and primary and secondary schools and pretend you are going to sell leases for a heck of a lot more than you will.

You should be ashamed. The sea of red ink spreads, and it grows deeper. Most Americans are drowning, but the yachts of the wealthy are floating high.

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

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

PROPOSED LETTER TO THE
PRESIDENT

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to share a letter that I will be sending to President Bush next week. I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in signing this important letter, because it is time for Congress to end the war in Iraq and bring the troops home.

Here is the letter: Dear Mr. President. Despite 2½ years of warfare, including the deaths of over 2,000 soldiers and injuries to 15,000 others, Iraq remains as unstable as it was when you

declared an end to major combat operations in May of 2003.

We need to face the fact that the situation in Iraq is not improving, nor will it improve as long as our troops remain there. Because the presence of over 160,000 soldiers in Iraq and on Iraqi soil is the main catalyst fueling Iraq's insurgency. The time is long overdue for the U.S. to change course in Iraq and bring our troops home.

To transition from war to peace, we recommend that your administration immediately make four pivotal policy changes in Iraq. First: engage in greater multilateral cooperation with our allies. Second: pursue diplomatic non-military initiatives. Third: prepare for a robust post-conflict reconciliation process. And, fourth: withdraw the U.S. armed Forces. Multilateral cooperation.

The United States must engage the international community, including the U.N. and NATO, to establish a multinational interim security force for Iraq. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations, for example, is well suited for this task.

Diplomatic nonmilitary initiatives. The U.S. must pursue a diplomatic offensive, shifting its role from that of Iraq's military occupier to its reconstruction partner. This means giving Iraq back to the Iraqi people, working with them to rebuild their economic and physical infrastructure and creating Iraqi jobs.

The U.S. must also engage the United Nations to oversee Iraq's economic and humanitarian needs, renounce any desire to control Iraqi oil, and ensure that the United States does not maintain lasting military bases in Iraq.

Post-conflict reconciliation. Establish an international peace commission to oversee Iraq's post-war reconciliations. This group would include members of the global community who have experience in international peace-building and conflict resolution and would be tasked with coordinating peace talks between Iraq's various factions.

Withdrawal of the U.S. Armed Forces. The cost of the war in Iraq, both human and financial, has been staggering. Tragically, the American and Iraqi lives lost and the billions of dollars spent have failed to actually make our country safer from the threat of international terrorism. To end the war in Iraq, save lives, and prevent the U.S. from spiraling even further into debt, the U.S. must withdraw its Armed Forces now.

Mr. President, after Iraq holds its December parliamentary elections, the country's leaders will be responsible for charting Iraq's course. The international community, including the United States, can then provide non-militaristic support to ensure the sufficiency of Iraq.

We look forward to your response to our recommendations, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you further. Mr. Speaker, I

will send this letter to the President in the coming days. Not only is it long overdue from the Bush administration to end the war in Iraq; it is long overdue for this body, the Congress of America, to do our part in ending the war in Iraq.

I urge all of my colleagues to lend their signatures to this timely, important letter.

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

(Mr. BURGESS 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 California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF 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 California (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of California 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 Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HURRICANE WILMA VICTIMS NEED HELP IN SOUTH FLORIDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon all across south Florida, there are thousands of people whose homes have been condemned. They have been condemned following a category 3 hurricane called Hurricane Wilma.

Subsequently in the last few days, it has been pouring rain. I went door to door in my district over the weekend and met hundreds of men and women in their 80s and 90s stuck in their apartments with no power. At one point, I came upon a 93-year-old woman in her kitchen with her 90-year-old next-door neighbor who were looking with despair at an MRE, trying to figure out how to get it open, put it together, and get it heating so that they could have the first hot food, something resembling hot food, that they had had in 5 days.

I literally had to help them with the print on the instructions that was this big, try to figure out how to put that

meal together without burning themselves, because as soon as you put the water in the meal, it starts to immediately heat up.

This was not an isolated incident. In the 2 days after that, those women and the other senior citizens that I represent in the Sunrise Lakes Condominium were told that they needed to leave their apartments because after the rain, the leaking through their condominium roof was so bad that their apartments were uninhabitable.

They are now in an elementary school with no shower, with a make-shift shower that was put together with two porta-potties shoved next to each other and plastic sheeting taped up with a hose stuck over the top so that they could bathe. We are talking about men and women in their upper 80s and 90s.

Hurricane Wilma has caused tremendous suffering in south Florida, and there has not been enough national attention on the plight of my constituents and the constituents of my south Florida colleagues. We need to make sure that we are able to provide the help and assistance that they so desperately need.

There is need across this country, and next week we are going to add insult to injury and apply a manmade disaster in the form of the budget reconciliation, which is Washington-speak for budget cuts. There are going to be proposed housing cuts, Medicare cuts, food stamps, school lunches. Between Katrina and Wilma, and all of the suffering going on across this country, now is not the time to add more harm and do more damage to people who are badly in need.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do right by Americans, not pull the rug out from under them. I urge my colleagues to make sure that we provide the badly needed assistance, both to victims of Hurricane Katrina on the gulf coast and to victims of Katrina from south Florida.

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

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be back here on the House floor on behalf of the 30-Something Working Group. We have been coming to the floor, Mr. Speaker, now for a couple of years weekly; and over the past several months we have turned it into a nightly, and sometimes bi-nightly, event, where we come down