

OUR ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, data released Monday on productivity and wages show why the American people do not believe President Bush when he says our economic prospects are bright and improving.

Yes, productivity is strong, and the economy is growing. But the benefits of that growth are showing up in the bottom lines of companies, not in the paychecks of American workers.

While productivity grew at a 4.7 percent annual rate in the third quarter, workers' pay, including benefits, shrank at a 1.4 percent rate. Let me repeat that important point. Workers' pay shrank by 1.4 percent.

Americans are working harder and producing more, but they are getting paid less.

President Bush is seizing on some recent favorable economic indicators to claim that the Nation's economic outlook is brighter than we have seen recently. I certainly wish that that were true for most Americans. The typical American family has a very different view because they know that they are still being left behind in the current economic recovery.

When I listen to the President recite the numbers he thinks show Americans are doing better, I am reminded of his speech in the Rose Garden several days after Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, when he recited the numbers of trucks, pounds of rice and the National Guardsmen he had ordered to New Orleans. Meanwhile, anyone with a TV set would see that Americans were still desperately struggling to survive with absolutely no Federal help.

The President seems equally out of touch on the economy. Ask your constituents how they are doing. Ask them if they have a secure job with benefits. Ask them if they are confident that they will have a job until they are ready to retire. Ask them if they think their children will have a job when they graduate from college.

In fact, a closer look at the numbers show that the administration has run a strong economy into the ground. Here are the facts. Under the Bush presidency, the economy has experienced the most protracted job slump in the postwar era. That is the worst record of any president since Hoover and the Great Depression.

The unemployment rate is nearly 1 percentage point higher than it was when President Bush took office. That is a 25 percent increase from where it was in the Clinton administration.

Over 1.6 million more people are unemployed. Twice as many people are long-term unemployed. Most people are actually earning less. The typical worker's earnings have barely kept up with inflation under President Bush, and real wages have been declining recently.

Under President Bush, real median household income is down \$1,700, and 5.4 million more Americans live in poverty. That is the greatest decline in real household income and the second largest increase in the poverty rate of the last nine administrations. The most vulnerable among us are being hit the hardest. Under President Bush, real median family income has fallen for each fifth of the income distribution, but the largest decline has been in the poorest fifth of the distribution.

Because of the reckless economic policies of this administration, large projected budget surpluses have been turned into large actual deficits and the Federal debt is ballooning, rather than shrinking as it was at the end of the Clinton administration.

And here we see the numbers in blue of the surpluses during the Clinton years. Yet when the Bush Administration came to power, that surplus disappeared and we have had ever increasing deficits reaching the highest deficit recorded in our history of over \$412 billion. It has come down to \$319 billion, but it is still a structural problem.

We also have the largest trade deficit in the history of this country, of over \$670 billion.

□ 1645

As Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan and many other economists repeatedly noted, our exploding deficits and debt are long-term structural problems that are rapidly getting worse. Only last week he repeated that warning: "In the end, the consequences for the U.S. economy of doing nothing could be severe," and our allies have called our deficits "unsustainable" even as we continue to increase the amount of U.S. debt held by China and other Asian nations.

As Chairman Greenspan also warned recently, "at some point, foreign investors will balk at further financing" the growing U.S. deficit.

Thanks to the economic policies of this Administration, our national debt now stands at \$8.3 trillion. That translates into over \$27 thousand of debt for every man, woman and child in the country.

What is this Administration doing about this crisis?

They have increased the debt ceiling three times.

They have pushed for deficit-raising tax cuts for the very wealthiest while refusing to give tax relief to the middle class.

This Administration is continuing to set records for debts and deficits while turning its back on working Americans.

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

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

WE ARE WINNING THE WAR AND WINNING THE PEACE IN IRAQ

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, despite what many Americans may see on cable television networks over the last several months, as I learned again today in a meeting with the President of the United States; the Secretary of Defense; with General Casey, the four-star general in charge of Operation Iraqi Freedom, through a satellite link, Mr. Speaker, we are winning the war in Iraq. And 7 days from today in the midst of an ongoing victory for the freedom of tens of millions of Iraqi people, we will once again see the people of Iraq use the freedom won by the American soldier in forming their own government and adopting parliamentary elections.

The ongoing victory in Iraq was described by the President at a speech just 1 week ago at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; and like the meeting that I attended at the White House today, I had the privilege of joining the President for that address, and there he described his strategy for victory.

And let me say that while there have been sometimes loud and cacophonous debates on this floor about the need for a plan or the lack of a plan, what is available today, Mr. Speaker, at whitehouse.gov for all Americans to examine is a recently declassified version of what has always been the plan. It is, in effect, a three-track approach that involves political, military, and economic initiatives to achieve a free and stable and democratic Iraq, and we are winning in this cause.

With less than 7 days to go before the Iraqi people will engage in parliamentary elections, I am delighted to report to the Members and any looking on that the American people, the people in Indiana that I serve, will be proud to hear what I have heard, to see what I have seen in my three different trips to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and they too would conclude inexorably that we are winning the war in Iraq.

On the military front, as General Casey described today, over 200,000 Iraqis have been trained and equipped, both military and police personnel. For the national elections that took place earlier this year, there were 80,000 fewer Iraqis in uniform. Today there is one full Iraqi division, four Iraqi brigades, four Iraqi battalions that are leading the fight in places like Najaf, Karbala, the dangerous road to the airport in Baghdad, in Tikrit. In one city

after another, these Iraqi military personnel are on the point. They are leading the fight, along with 160,000 American military personnel.

And the Iraqi people themselves are becoming more involved in advancing their own security and stability. Here is an interesting fact, Mr. Speaker, that I just learned today: in March of this year, there were essentially 400 tips by Iraqis of insurgent activities, tips made to U.S. and coalition forces. In the month of November, we logged more than 4,700 tips from regular and ordinary Iraqis. The people of Iraq are partnering in their own security and in their own freedom, and that 10-fold increase of that partnership speaks for itself.

On the economic front, we have seen 30,000 new businesses. And GNP per capita in the last year has more than doubled in Iraq for ordinary Iraqis. It is an extraordinary record of success.

Politically, we have around the corner parliamentary elections; and as we speak, Mr. Speaker, there are 327 political entities, or as we might call them, parties or organizations, and 7,000 candidates that will be answering the call of millions of Iraqis who will put themselves, as 8.5 million Iraqis did in January of this year, in harm's way to exercise their own freedom.

It is my fondest hope, Mr. Speaker, that when the President of the United States comes into this well on January 31 of 2006 that maybe in this Chamber, in a seat in this Chamber, might be a legislative leader, or two, of the newly elected Iraqi Parliament.

I have been to Operation Iraqi Freedom three times. I have sat even today with our military commanders and the President of the United States. As we go into this weekend, let the word go forth from here: we are winning the war and winning the peace in Iraq.

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

(Mr. WYNN 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. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT 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 Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT 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. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER 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 Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP: TAX CUTS AND THE BUDGET

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 on the House floor here tonight with my good friend from Florida (Mr. MEEK) to continue our discussion that we have been having with the American people and with Members of Congress from all over the country the past few months and even few years.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the Republican-led Congress has once again taken a step in a direction that I think moved it and this Congress away from mainstream America.

Today, the majority has passed another wealthy-focused tax cut in which \$60 billion, up to \$80 billion, over the next 10 years will be spent subsidizing the wealth of the people in this country who make millions and billions of dollars, an average tax break of \$32,000 to wealthy millionaires who have already received more than \$103,000 in tax cuts. More than half the taxpayers making less than \$100,000 a year will receive less than \$30 back from this tax cut. This is a tax cut that has clearly been focused on the wealthy Americans.

And coincidentally enough, a couple of weeks ago, our friends, our good friends on the Republican side, have said that they passed a budget deficit reduction package which made cuts of \$50 billion; and then they passed a tax cut which took away \$80 billion, which is a negative \$30 billion deficit in the hole. Only in Washington is that deficit reduction.

And before we get going here, I want to just share and read into the RECORD, if my friend does not mind, a letter that was sent, and I know I received one of these and a statement on behalf of several religious organizations. Bishop Frank Griswold of the Episcopal, Anglican, Church USA, together with leaders of four other mainline denominations, has called on the United States Congress to defeat the 2006 Federal budget once and for all because it betrays the poor.

And I just want to say to Bishop Griswold and the Anglican Church in the United States of America and the other denominations that are there,

Dr. Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church; Reverend Thomas, general minister and president of the United Church of Christ; Mr. James Winkler, general secretary, Board of Church and Society for the United Methodist Church, thank you for speaking out against this.

Because in this day and age, morality and values have been such a strong topic of conversation in the United States, I want to commend these folks for stepping out front and saying that this budget and tax cuts for the rich while we are cutting food stamps; free and reduced lunch; child support enforcement payments; money for college, Pell grants; cutting those programs and then giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country is something that goes in direct contradiction to what they are trying to teach.

And if I could just take a minute or two to read some of these comments into the RECORD, if my friend does not mind:

The church leaders declare: "At each stage of the complicated legislative process, we have viewed the budget through the lens of faith and our values and found it wanting. Now we ask that it be defeated once and for all."

"Despite the exposure of poverty in the U.S. revealed in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the statement says, 'Congress continues to make decisions which benefit the rich but are paid for by the poor and most vulnerable in our land.'

"The leaders criticized the budget's potential compromises which would cut funding for food stamps, heating subsidies, Medicaid, and child support enforcement.

"They will seek to find compromise where there should be no compromise, that is, with the lives and future of the poor of this country."

"They asked that Congress reflect during the season of Advent, reject the budget and join with the President to craft a budget that will reflect 'our Nation's historic concern for justice and the least among us.'"

This is not TIM RYAN. This is not KENDRICK MEEK. This is not the 30-something Working Group. This is a group of bishops and church leaders all over the country who have stepped out front and stated that cutting taxes for the wealthiest people in our country and doing it on the backs of the poorest among us is not consistent with the values that they teach in their churches every week.

Here is Cal Thomas. Cal Thomas is one of the most conservative columnists. I do not even know if he is a Republican, but he is a conservative columnist with the Washington Times. When we are finding all this money to balance our budget, Cal Thomas says: "Here's a suggestion: Don't start with the poor. Start with the rich."

We passed an energy bill several months ago out of this Chamber that had \$16 billion in subsidies for the energy companies and the oil companies,