

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I would like to make a point, because as the oil companies reap these profits, and again I am not saying for you not to make profits, but not at the expense of every-one else in society.

So I want to make this point: The oil companies benefit a great deal from the public, from what the taxpayers support, A, point number one, the \$16.3 billion in corporate welfare that they are getting from the public tax dollars that is going to them. So they can't say they don't benefit from the public.

But their product is sold on roads that are funded by the taxpayer. Those roads are protected by the taxpayer, paved by the taxpayer, secured by the taxpayer. The ports in which the oil comes in and out of our country, all funded by the taxpayers. The Coast Guard, by the taxpayers. The military, the over \$400 billion budget that we have here that we spend on our military that goes to protect the transportation lines and the oceans, and as the ships start distributing this all over the world, that is protected by the taxpayer.

So all we are arguing here, Mr. Speaker, is that the taxpayer has an interest; and when this company and this certain industry benefits so much from the public tax dollars, they should be responsive to the public in these instances.

I would be happy to yield to any one of you to wrap up this brilliant discussion. I am going to yield to Debbie.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

The only thing I want to add to tie a ribbon on this whole discussion is that what we have all noticed, whether we are in our districts with our constituents or talking to people across the country, when we interact with them, is that people have reached the breaking point. They don't buy it. They don't buy the garbage that is being fed to them by this administration that the economy is rosy, that everything is going well, that everything is hunky-dory.

They are falling off the cliff into the Republican cavernous abyss, and they are tired of it, and they want to have the Democrats or someone other than the people who are taking them in this direction that they no longer are willing to go, to fix it. Even their former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said that they are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Newt Gingrich, former Republican Speaker of this House.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is time to move this country in a new direction and restore America's confidence in their government. We know we have a plan that we can do that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as we go through this tonight, the 30 Something's two key third-party validators are the former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and former

Congressman Pat Toomey, now president of the Club for Growth, both saying that there is out-of-control spending, out-of-control government, dysfunctional, and the American people know that.

Any Members who would like to come to our Web site, www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something, www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Also, Mr. RYAN, I want to share with the Members, Mr. Speaker, that all of the charts tonight will be on that Web site, on the 30 Something front page.

Also, I would like to share with the Members that Ranking Member GEORGE MILLER and also U.S. Senator DICK DURBIN put forth a proposal to reverse the raid on student loans. Earlier this year, as you know, \$12 billion was cut out of the Federal student loan program in order to help finance tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

This proposal will roll that back and cut in half interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. And it has to be done sooner rather than later. If not, it will be a financial burden after July 1 for so many kids that want to go to college. They will actually qualify, but kids will be priced out and not be able to make it to college.

Of course, this wouldn't be a discussion if the Democrats were in control, but we hope that we can work in a bipartisan way to change that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who joined us here tonight on the floor and thank the Democratic leadership for the hour.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has shown lenience toward the rather informal pattern by which Members have been claiming and yielding and reclaiming the time controlled by the gentleman from Florida. But Members should bear in mind that the Official Reports of Debate cannot be expected to transcribe two Members simultaneously.

Members should not participate in debate by interjection and should not expect to have the reporter transcribe remarks that are uttered when not properly under recognition.

THE CONTINUED MISDIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be here in the House tonight and be joined by some of our colleagues in the freshman Democratic class that was elected in 2004.

I believe my colleague, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida, is going to stay on and talk with us a little bit tonight, and we

expect to be joined by some other of our colleagues to talk about the continued direction of our country and, in particular, this budget and tax plan that has been put before this Congress by President Bush and congressional Republicans.

I really want to rise and express my deep, deep concern about this budget. The cuts in programs across the board, no other word can be given, but they are staggering. This budget does not provide for the average American. It continues to line the pockets of the wealthiest Americans.

Like so many of the President's priorities, this budget is a misplaced opportunity to actually effect positive change for our citizens. I would like to draw particular attention to the energy provisions in this budget.

Last week, the AP reported that the average cost of a gallon of regular, unleaded gasoline was \$2.92, up 35 cents from just a month ago. Moreover, U.S. drivers are now paying about 14 percent more to fill their tanks than just 1 year ago. Recent polls show that over 65 percent of Americans are suffering from financial hardship due to rising gas prices. But we don't need a poll to tell us that when we fill our tanks.

DEBBIE, you told us earlier, like many of us, we go to fill up our tank of gas, and it is nothing to pay \$50 or more to fill our tank of gas, just to do our routine chores and drive around town where we live.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And the astronomical increase we have had in gas prices, which affects everyday Americans every single day, has just been unbelievable.

Actually, Mr. CARNAHAN, we have a chart that illustrates those drastic increases, that is being brought over right now, that I think would be helpful; because I am a visual person, and graphically depicting some of these significant problems is really helpful.

Mr. CARNAHAN. I have to add, by the way, you have great graphs.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. CARNAHAN. And I loved your top ten.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We have good graph-makers among our staff.

You talk about summer gas prices. Just look at the difference over the years since the Republicans have been in charge.

In 2002, Mr. CARNAHAN, the average price of a gallon of gas was \$1.39; that was the summer of 2002. Then you go to the summer of 2003, it was \$1.57. 2004, \$1.90. Move over to the summer of just last year, \$2.37. And then this April, just last month, we hit \$2.91. Now, most of us in the last several weeks have all paid over \$3 in most communities across America.

So this is the reality of the rosy Republican economy that they have been describing and painting for us over the last several days.

Mr. CARNAHAN. It certainly is. And we have all had the stark awakening as we fill our tanks each week.

I am reminded, as you were talking about President Bush, in his State of the Union Address in this very Chamber, he told the Nation that our country was addicted to oil. He also said that this administration was committed to reducing our dependence on foreign oil. But then the very next day, the President's own Energy Secretary was back-pedaling on the President's promises.

The President's solution in his budget was to end our dependence on foreign oil with just paltry, really crumbs, from our budget. Our budget is a document that sets our national priorities, and a mere \$130 million was set aside for all, for all renewable energy programs.

Not only is this increase in renewable energy programs insufficient, the President proposed to eliminate research on other renewables, including geothermal and hydropower.

As reported in the Atlanta Journal Constitution in February, the total proposed increase in clean energy research is equal to just 7 percent of ExxonMobil's profit for the fourth quarter of 2005. So while big oil companies are recording record profits, the Bush administration is showing limited increases in funding for renewable energy. In fact, his budget would not get renewable energy efficiency back even to where it was at the end of the Clinton administration, this at a time when gas prices are squeezing the American families.

President Bush's budget should reflect the needs of all Americans. It should be a budget that supports programs to end independence from oil and not one that encourages it. The energy provisions in this budget do not meet the needs of our country, and this budget should be defeated.

I am pleased to be joined here tonight by my good friend and colleague and fellow Missourian, EMANUEL CLEAVER.

Mr. CLEAVER. It is good to be here. We were sworn in together to this Congress, and I have often been asked, what has surprised you the most?

In fact, today, a group of students from the Bloch School of Business at the University of Missouri in Kansas City was here, the Bloch School named after Henry Bloch, the founder H&R Block, who is a Kansas Citian; and the question they asked was, what has surprised you the most?

Having served as mayor of Kansas City for two terms, I have seen a lot in the political environment. So they were obviously wanting me to describe what I saw here as opposed to and what was different from what I saw as mayor.

The number one issue I always report is the incivility. I don't think any of us who were sworn into the 109th Congress expected the incivility to be at the level that we have witnessed.

I have gone to some of the long-time Members of Congress from the Democrat side and asked, for example, when

we were in the majority, did we do mean-spirited things? Did we leave the vote open for 3 hours? Did we lock the door to keep people out from the other side?

□ 2130

And they said, we did shamefully some things. We never left the vote open for 3 hours. We never locked out people from a markup. And I cannot tell you how upset I became to find out last year, that just before Christmas, many of us sat here all night for a vote on the defense bill, and the American public probably does not know that there is not a single human being on planet Earth who read the bill, because the bill actually was a compilation from a number of committees. And so while there may have been one group familiar with one part of the budget, there was nobody, no group familiar with the entire budget. And I sat on the front row, and I actually fell asleep about 6 a.m. and I got up and I said, I am not going to vote for this.

And then a number of my colleagues came over and said, yeah, this is wrong, they should not have done it. But you have to vote for it because if you do not vote for it, they will send e-mails throughout your district saying that you were opposed to the troops, you were against supporting the troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And I said, will they do things like that? And so I wondered if they were overstating it. I voted for it like most Members of Congress. And then 1 week later, e-mails were sent all over the State of Missouri, in fact I received a phone call from a constituent in Congressman CARNAHAN's district because I voted against a bill to protect the symbols of Christmas.

I could not believe that the Congress of the United States, the 109th Congress, with \$4 billion being spent every month in Iraq, with No Child Left Behind not receiving full funding within my State, and in Congressman CARNAHAN's State there have been 97,000 people kicked off Medicaid. When you consider the fact that we do not have an energy policy in this country, at least not one that makes sense, I could not understand why the Congress of the United States needed to protect Christmas. As if, you know Christmas was in danger, and if we did not vote, if the people in here did not vote, Christmas was not going to occur.

And so I voted against it, because I thought it was ridiculous then, I think it is ridiculous now. I have a master's degree in theology and never read anything which would suggest that God needed the help of the 109th Congress.

But it gives you an idea about the civility or lack thereof. And so it causes me a great deal of pain to see many of the things that are occurring. I do not want to suggest that we do not have some people on our side who may also from time to time contribute to the vitriol that I see. The difference, of course, is our vitriol means very little

because we do not have the power and the ability to bring legislation up.

And so when I go home and tell people, they say, well, why do you not introduce a bill to do such and such? And I said, you do not understand. I can introduce 1,000 bills. If I introduced a bill that would cure cancer, it would never get a hearing. And it is always a surprise for the public to hear that because they do not understand that you cannot introduce legislation no matter how great the merit, if you are not with the majority party.

Mr. CARNAHAN. We have also been joined by our colleague, Congresswoman SCHWARTZ from Pennsylvania. And welcome. It is great for you to be with us tonight.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity. As my colleagues know, I am a Member of the Budget Committee. I serve on that committee in an effort to, both of course, understand the budget and the decisions that we make in this Congress on behalf of the country, on behalf of American families, and hoping to speak up on behalf of American families and their priorities.

I was particularly interested in coming out this evening to talk on the perspective as a new Member of Congress. I came from the State Senate. As for most State Senates in this country, the States have to balance their budget. We have to make decisions, and we have to decide the priorities. We cannot spend money we do not have.

And so as a State Senator, those were difficult choices we often made, in how to do that. And certainly as a Member of this freshman class, I recognize that many of us come with broad perspectives and experiences that we bring. Some of us come from State legislatures, many of us do, so we have that experience in how to make those decisions in our priorities.

Some came from running small businesses and being mayors, being on city councils, being in county government, again tough choices that we have to make. And I think on the eve of what we expect tomorrow, the Republicans to bring their proposal before us and ask for a vote on it, I think it is a time for us to use our perspective as new Members of Congress coming maybe even closer than some of our other colleagues from hearing the concerns of our constituents, of the families, of the seniors, of even the kids in our districts, certainly of our local governments.

And to be able to really ask some of the tough questions of this budget, to be able to say, and I think we should all be thinking about, if I could just lay out a few, and then maybe you want to add some of your comments and thoughts about this.

I think we do have to think about the budget at the time when we do decide on our priorities, when we do think about what is important to us as Americans, and how we should best use our taxpayer dollars. And so as we face this

decision tomorrow, certainly I think we have to talk about and think about does this Republican budget value fiscal discipline? Is it honest budgeting?

Did the Republican leadership make those tough choices needed to balance the budget to pay down the debt, to be able to use those resources really well? The answer I would say on that score is no.

This Republican budget continues the borrow and spend policies that we have seen certainly in the 2 years that we have been here. It certainly does not balance the Federal Government's checkbook. And it does, in fact, run a new deficit to this coming year of \$348 billion of new deficit to add to the debt that of course is already at \$8 trillion and that we know we will pass along to our children and grandchildren.

Second, does this Republican budget value our shared economic future? Does it do some of the things that I think we have heard about already this evening? Are we making the wise investments in education, in workforce development, in some of the energy discussions that you were having already, and whether we, in fact, are investing in alternative fuels and renewable fuels and really reducing our reliance on foreign oil so we can be competitive in a global marketplace?

Again, the Republican budget does not do this. It cuts funding in education and renewable energy initiatives and in fact impedes some of the concerns that we have on health care and education.

Third, I would just say two more, then I am going to yield to my colleagues. But to say that this Republican budget, we have to ask does this Republican budget value enhanced security and a strong defense? In fact, does it provide for the men and women who have served this country in Iraq and Afghanistan and in previous wars? And the answer is no, it does not.

It cuts veterans health care, and it does not, we are concerned, does not provide for the troops in the field the way it should. So we are looking at a cut of \$6 billion in veterans health care.

And our ability to make sure that our current homeland security is as strong as it needs to be? Again, we have had numerous debates on the floor of Congress. But this budget does not meet all that we know that we should be doing so that we can assure our constituents and our families that in fact they are secure at home.

And finally I would say, does this Republican budget, is it based on, in fact, sound and fair tax policies? Does it recognize the priorities of everyday Americans? And the fact that again this Republican budget is relying on what is the major goal, it seems to me, of the other side of the aisle, and that is to provide tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

That seems to be their singular purpose, and all else flows from that. When in fact, there are so many, as I

point out, issues and concerns. We, in fact, need to make sure, because the tax cuts that they are looking at really benefit, and 90 percent of the tax cuts go to the wealthiest Americans.

Is that really what we want to be doing in this country at this particular time with this kind of debt in this country and with this kind of growing deficit? So I would say this budget fails on so many levels to meet fiscal discipline, to meet the priorities of American families, for us to be able to go home and say, we came here to fight for our constituents, for everyday Americans, and does this budget do it?

And I think the answer has to be that it does not, that we can do better, that we must do better, and we must put forward the needs of American families. I would be happy to add on what I think we ought to be doing, because you should know, and of course as you know the Democrats put forward a Democratic alternative on the Budget Committee.

I was part of crafting that. I am proud to say that I have done it. And what we have done is to be able to say that we can live within our means, we can, in fact, meet our obligations, and we can, in fact, build a budget that begins to pay down the debt, the enormous debt that this country is in, at the same time making the important investments that we need for the future in this country.

So that is our obligation to me as a Member of Congress of what we bring as freshmen. It seems funny to call ourselves freshmen. You are experienced people who have brought a lot to our first tenure here.

But the fact is that we should draw on these experiences that we have had in the private sector and in other areas of the public sector to say that we know that we have to make these tough choices, and we should, and we should do so in a way that is fiscally responsible, that in fact we can say proudly to our constituents, to our children, to our grandchildren that in fact we have done right in making the right investments, and, in fact, we have done so in a fiscally disciplined way.

It would be wonderful to be voting on that kind of budget tomorrow. But, unfortunately, it is unlikely that we will have that opportunity, at least for the majority budget that is going to be presented to us.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Thank you. I just want to say I am so proud to be one of the new Democrats in the House and be here with you all tonight.

I was listening to you and thinking about our freshman class, and particularly the Democrats involved. Almost all of them came from prior experience in the State government, in the State legislatures, like Congresswoman SCHWARTZ, and I know Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was also in the State legislature, and Congressman CLEAVER was Mayor in Kansas City, a lot of experience.

And we all had to work with our State and local budgets and be fiscally responsible, the same way that many of our American families have to be with their household budgets. And the way that priorities have been set in this budget are so skewed from what the average people in this country need.

And probably one of the best examples of that is the energy bill that we passed. And I know all of us voted against it here on the floor tonight. At a time when we provided \$14 billion in tax breaks to the big oil companies, and weeks later, just weeks later, they announced the biggest profits in the history of the world. And now we see the prices at the pump, we continue to pay. Again, very, very misplaced priorities.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. In fact, we are often asked, how would we find additional resources in a budget? And you make a good point, that there are, in fact, expenditures that we would not make, that we would choose to use in different ways.

And certainly, the subsidies that we offered, that the Republicans pushed through for the oil industry at a time when there were record profits, we are talking about \$113 billion profits for the oil industry last year, and that is not revenue, that is profits.

\$36 billion just for Exxon Mobil. It is really sort of an extraordinary sum. But there are other ways that we would also cut. We would not spend some of the dollars that they have. There are enormous subsidies given to the HMOs for the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

That has been talked about a good bit, too. Should we continue those subsidies for the HMOs rather than making sure that more of our seniors have access to prescription drugs and in fact reduce the cost of that program to Government? Is that the choice we make?

We are looking at tax loopholes that still incentivize companies to ship their jobs overseas. What about closing those loopholes, bringing those dollars home, investing that in workforce development, for example?

Or a favorite of ours on the Budget Committee is the fact that there are in fact billions of dollars of tax revenue that is not collected in this country. And there is an interesting report recently that suggests as much as \$350 billion is not collected from people who owe taxes to this government.

If we went out and just got 10 or 20 percent of that, you are talking about \$35 or \$70 billion that we then could use, that would go to some of the priorities that we are talking about. That is the kind of way we would be more fiscally responsible in drawing on money that is being spent now, that could be spent in a better way for everyday Americans to be able to meet their responsibilities and their goals for themselves, their families and for our country.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. One of the other elements of our alternative budget plan would embrace once again, as was the policy during the Clinton administration and when Democrats controlled the United States Congress, was the concept of PAYGO.

□ 2145

That is, I know, with you as a member of the Budget Committee and Mr. SPRATT as the ranking member, is an idea that our Democratic Members have championed as a part of our alternative. And we have done that on a number of occasions and attempted to get the Republicans to go along with us and the concept of PAYGO.

PAYGO is very simple. We came from States, and in our State legislatures you have to operate in the black. Just like people who are members of their families, they struggle not to have to go into debt, not to have to live paycheck to paycheck and not to have to go into massive credit card debt.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership here does not subscribe to that philosophy, and that is evidenced by their rejection of pay-as-you-go rules whereby we would not spend more than we have.

On March 17 of last year, Mr. SPRATT, our ranking member on the Budget Committee, offered a substitute amendment to the 2006 budget resolution that failed 165 to 264, no Republicans supporting pay-as-you-go legislation. And we have the rollcall indicating that we were supportive.

Again, Mr. SPRATT offered another amendment dealing with PAYGO that would have reestablished PAYGO, 224 Republicans voting "no," none voting "yes," and it failed, to 232. So we have certainly tried. It is not for our lack of trying to make sure that we restore some fiscal discipline here.

The thing that has been the most frustrating for me as a new Member of Congress, and I am sure it is a frustration you have faced, is that the Republicans try to lead people to believe that they are the party of fiscal responsibility. Yet, I am someone who believes that actions have to back up words and talk is cheap, and that seems to be all that they have been about since I have gotten here.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. It was interesting in the Budget Committee when we talked about the principle that you are talking about, that we should know where the revenues are coming from if we are going to spend money. That is really what we are talking about.

It is basically being unable to meet their obligations. It is knowing where that money is coming from. Of course, we do budget not just for next year, but we budget out 5 years. We used to budget to 10 years. But we do see those kinds of numbers so we can anticipate what we think might be happening.

And what was interesting about that discussion in the Budget Committee is

that there, in fact, is some interest, I think, on the other side of the aisle in doing this. They understand as well that, I think some of them do know, of course, they would not let that pass, but in fact I think if we really, truly could sit down in a bipartisan way and say, look, we have a responsibility to do this in a way that does not create a debt we do not even have any way of repaying at this point.

The Republicans have, of course, taken certain things off budget. That means, of course, that let's not really consider what the cost to Katrina is, for example; the real cost of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan in which some estimates in the budget this year have been \$50 billion when we know that it could well get up to \$400 billion.

Well, if you know that, we have to be straight with the American people. We have to be able to say, this is what we know it is going to cost us. How are we going to have the revenues to support that? Where is it going to come from? Let's have that as a serious discussion and let's make the hard choices we have to make.

We know we want to support our troops. We want to make sure that they have all the equipment they need. That has been a discussion. Of course, we will support the troops in that. But let's be real about what it will cost us and let's be honest with the American people about how we will do that.

I think there is some interest on the other side of the aisle, but in fact if we do that, there is no way they could go ahead with the kind of budget that we will be faced with tomorrow because it does not reveal all that we need to know about what our obligations are.

And as you point out, for American families who struggle every day to figure out how do they pay, we talk about gasoline prices. That throws budgets into a real problem when you have budgeted really tight.

It is not a problem to budget really tight if you do not have any contingency, if you are not really honest with yourself that there will be an expense next month. But in fact we are making it harder on American families by not being honest with them.

And we are making it harder on them by not bringing down gasoline prices. We are making it harder on them by not helping their kids going to college. We are making it harder on them by not allowing ways for us to be sure that their business can pay for health insurance.

You can almost name any issue and we are making it harder on American families when in fact it does not have to be that way.

Mr. CLEAVER. May I inquire of the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, Congressman CARNAHAN and I are from Missouri. We are in the middle of the country and we are not prone to extremes, so we believe you are supposed to balance the budget. Congressman CARNAHAN's father was the Governor twice in the State of Missouri; he bal-

anced the budget. I had to do the same as Mayor of Kansas City.

In fact, there is a State law in Missouri that you must balance your budgets. There is no such thing as you did not do it this year. You must balance the budget.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. I think that is true in all of our States.

Mr. CLEAVER. Maybe as a member of the Budget Committee you can help me understand why the money for the gulf coast reconstruction and the money for Iraq was not budgeted. I mean, we do not have two of the most costly items in the U.S. budget factored in, and as a new Member that troubles me.

It would trouble the American public if they knew. You mean you do not put in the cost of the war in Iraq? You mean you do not add in the budget the rebuilding of the most devastated region in the history of the United States? Well, how are we going to do it?

So maybe you could address that.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. There is an explanation. I cannot necessarily and I do not want to make explanations about why it was done this year. I will talk about that for a minute.

The fact is that it is reasonable for us to say that there is going to be an emergency that happens in this country that we cannot budget for. Katrina is an example. We could not have anticipated that a year ahead of time there would be an emergency as catastrophic as Katrina and the devastation it caused in the gulf States. And I have been there and many of you have been there to see the devastation.

So that is why we allow for a process that we can have a supplemental appropriations. We get an emergency appropriation, as it is called; and that is appropriate because we need to act quickly. We need to act appropriately to help Americans.

We have done it to help people in other countries as well.

That is certainly true in time of war as well. If you go to war, you did not anticipate going to war. Then you have an emergency appropriation, a supplemental is what we call it, and that is appropriate.

What is less understandable and I think that you make clear is what about a year later? What about 2 years later? Why cannot we anticipate at least in a better way what in fact the costs will be to clean up in Katrina? If we are wrong, we might need to do a supplemental.

But now to not say we are in Iraq. There is a cost; we know what it is costing us every week. We know what it is costing us every month to put \$50 billion in when all the estimations are that it will be at least \$200, probably \$300 billion at least. It is really just not being honest about what it is going to cost us in the future.

For Katrina, again let's decide what we can accommodate to pay for and

what we should. And if we have to stretch, then we have an obligation. As you point out, all of us have had to balance budgets. We should have to balance a budget here. We should be able to say, where should that money come from? Where does it come from? Are we asking Americans to all kick in? Are we going to sell Katrina bonds or something?

I am throwing out ideas. Maybe there are ways we can sit down and say, okay, we do not have all the money for this. How can we do it in a way that is fair to the American people, is fair to people of different incomes? Maybe ask them to join in and be helpful as so many Americans did after Katrina, the number of dollars we got from charities, people wanted to help dramatically.

There are ways for us to do this in a way that does not put our country into fiscal difficulties, and in fact respects the kind of budgeting that we should be doing in this country.

Mr. CARNAHAN. If I could interject and amplify on that, I think the process has been very disingenuous when we do know we are going to have ongoing expenses for disaster relief, ongoing expenses for the ongoing efforts in fighting terrorism overseas. And it really, I think, is an effort to separate those questions from really making proper budget choices, and do we want to have more tax cuts for the wealthy and pay for that versus the cost of rebuilding the gulf? Or paying for our military or our education or our Medicare program?

I think that really is kind of an accounting gimmick that we have seen throughout this process, to play down a lot of those serious expenses, but also to water down the quality of the debate.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. I appreciate those comments. I think there are some, the term "gimmick" is one that I am almost reluctant to use. My staff and I discussed whether we should talk about some of these gimmicks because it is such a serious process we are in.

What we do matters in the lives of American families. I take it seriously. I know we all do. But the fact is, this is at least an accounting gimmick, if nothing else, in not recognizing some of the very serious expenses that we know we have and we have an obligation to meet.

And again, just as in American families, we need to figure out how to do it. And if we cannot do it, we need to say that too. So in some of these situations, we are not going to say "no." So we should in fact meet the obligations.

Again, the example came up about veterans' health care. And I think we all go home. We all want to be respectful of our veterans, but whether in fact we fund veterans' health care or not really matters in each and every one of their lives. It is not so much about the rhetoric we have at home. It is really about what we do in this budget that

allows them to get the health care that they need.

I see that our colleague has a chart he may want to talk about in terms of the national debt and the deficit and the national debt that it has led to.

Mr. CLEAVER. As I raised the question earlier, my concern was and I knew we would eventually get to this point, was that the money that we do not budget we borrow. And most Americans are outraged over the U.S. debt which is rising even as we speak here tonight.

When we borrow the money for the rehabilitation of the gulf coast and the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, we are borrowing those dollars. And right now we owe Japan \$683 billion. And then next to them we owe China \$249 billion.

We even owe OPEC \$67 billion. And at a time when we are talking about reducing our dependence on foreign oil, it does not make sense to me, I am from the middle of the country so there are some things maybe I do not understand. It does not make sense to me that we are talking about reducing our dependence on foreign oil while at the same time borrowing more money from OPEC.

There is a scripture, Proverbs 22:7 which says that the borrower is always at the whim of the lender. And when we are talking about owing OPEC \$67 billion, I am not sure that we are in any kind of position to be influential with folks to whom we owe billions of dollars.

And the debt continues to rise with even our neighbor to the north, Canada. And most Americans cannot understand that debt because we have to pay our bills each month. And with the gasoline prices reaching \$3 a gallon it means that someone who is earning minimum wage, \$5.15, works the first hour of their week to buy 1 $\frac{1}{10}$ gallons of gasoline. That is obscene.

And so it means that the first day they work, the first day they work of a 5-day work week, 7 hours of that, of that first day goes to fill up that tank of gas at the minimum wage of \$5.15, which means that wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. And so it continues to roll on when you look at the average price per gallon today which is just under \$3; and of course in many cities on the East Coast it has already reached \$3 a gallon, and people are hemorrhaging with this kind of gasoline cost.

I think it is absolutely obscene that the gasoline cost is rising at this level while, as my colleague, Congressman CARNAHAN mentioned earlier, the oil barons are reaping the largest profits in history. He said of the world; I think it is of the galaxy. No corporate institution has ever earned that kind of profit.

□ 2200

That becomes even more obscene when you add to that the fact that the CEO of one of the major companies has

a retirement package that almost equals \$400 million.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. What makes that more obscene is that the energy bill that Mr. CARNAHAN referred to at the beginning of our hour highlighted the fact that not only did the oil companies make universal record profits. Let us take it beyond the galaxy, we gave away our rights to collect revenue from them in exchange for the drilling rights.

I mean, what so many people do not realize is that the government owns the land underneath where the drilling takes place, whether it is in the gulf or whether it is on land. The United States Government owns that property, and we give the oil companies the right to drill there in exchange for tax revenue and fees. In that legislation last summer, we forgave all of those fees. We gave it to them for free.

Then a few weeks later they are making universal, history making, record, earth shattering profits and now people are paying more than \$3 a gallon for gas, and we gave them our gas rights, our oil rights. It is unbelievable.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, the cynicism is layer upon layer, but here is the other cynical part of this. They are also using, the Republicans and the Bush administration, this as an excuse to say, well, now, we need to go drill in Alaska, in wilderness areas, and now we need to drill offshore in many of our reserved areas off our States along our coast.

Those would not be available for years. They are a small fraction of production that we need, and if we would just channel that money back into true, aggressive investing in research and getting transitioned to a new economy with alternative fuel, ethanol, biodiesel fuels that we can grow and produce in the Midwest, instead of depending on the Middle East, our economy would be so much stronger. It would produce jobs. It would be a cleaner environment, and it would truly lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, what is interesting, I think that something I learned more about, oh, the last year is how close we are to really being able to, in terms of scale up, if you will, the use of some of the biofuels and some of the alternative fuels. So I think something one would say, most of us would say how far is that; will it take years and years?

Well, for most of us in my area, we are seeing ethanol being finally introduced as a mixture, probably 5 percent of our gasoline. We know that we can make it 15 percent, 20 percent. There is even an E-85. We can have 85 percent of the gallon be ethanol which we produce in this country by growing corn, and it has been taking longer to get from the middle part of the country to the East Coast. We have to bring some of the ethanol, but in fact it is coming. We need to make it happen much faster.

There needs to be incentives to make that happen. I think it will happen as consumers make more demands to make sure that that happens because in fact we do want more fuel efficiency. We want cleaner fuel, and we want less reliance on foreign oil because there is, as the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER) pointed out, it is also creating a dynamic internationally that is not really very helpful to us as we look towards a more peaceful and stable world.

So that, in fact, we could be doing much more, and this budget cuts, rather than adds, to the initiatives that have actually been making these biofuels and the research and technology and using the innovation in this country to be able to push forward much, much more quickly.

I think that Americans want to see the price of gasoline go down. It works for their pocketbooks, but they also understand that they want to know, well, where is it going? If it is going to just keep going up, how can I make this work?

I am proposing this as Democrats. I introduced a \$250 million initiative that we could have put in or maybe even should be more money, but it is much more money than this budget proposes, and really pushing forward on renewables and research and development and more fuel efficient vehicles and more fuel efficient cars.

So there is a lot of things that can go into all of this. In fact, we are there already. We are really close to making it happen. We will be looking at American innovation and moving forward and not just borrowing and spending, which is really what this budget puts forward, and putting an enormous debt on our children and grandchildren.

Mr. CARNAHAN. It is really exciting that we not only have the ability to grow the corn, to produce ethanol, and soybeans, to produce biodiesel, but we also have our auto industry retooling, and I want to yield to my friend Congressman CLEAVER to tell about some exciting things happening in his area in Kansas City.

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, the Ford plant in Kansas City is now in mass production of a hybrid, which they are placing on the market because there is hopefully going to be a great demand, and we think that in the middle of the country it makes perfect sense for us to manufacture hybrids because, after all, we produce the agricultural products that were mentioned earlier that can be used for E-85.

We probably are in a situation now where we need to look at the situation with oil as a security issue. It is an issue that digs deeply into the pocketbooks of most Americans, but in addition, it is a security issue, and it is a security issue because the people of the United States, I am sure, do not want to owe this kind of money to China or OPEC or any of the other countries, for that matter, and so we need to think about this issue.

Gasoline is an international commodity, and I think with the increased use of gasoline by China and India it is going to drive the demand up, and so the price of gasoline, in all probability, is going to rise.

However, the Congress of the United States ought to get serious about trying to address this problem in the long run. I introduced a bill today that would require all Members of Congress when their lease expires on an MRA, the Members Representation Account, the money we get to run our offices, that when the lease expires on their automobiles, that they would have to lease or could lease only automobiles that are energy efficient as defined by the GSA.

Now, the reason I have done this is because people are poking fun at Congress. The numbers in terms of our approval rating is always down, and one of the reasons is they think we are hypocrites. I mean, we talk about energy on the floor. We talk about it when we go home with press conferences, but then they look at us and see us driving big SUVs and it does not click. It is the thing that troubles us.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, only to clarify who the hypocrites are, because if you separate where the Democrats' voting record is on energy and making sure that we focus on alternative energy like in our Innovation Agenda we rolled out in November, which includes an ironclad commitment that when we take control of this Chamber that we will within 10 years wean ourselves off of foreign oil and become energy independent. So the hypocrisy exists on the other side of the aisle. So I just want to make sure whose hypocrisy we are talking about.

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I think that the whole energy issue is quite convoluted because we are never able to address the issues that we want the American public to benefit from because there are always little tricks.

For example, LIHEAP was placed in the energy bill last year, which is money for low-income individuals to get assistance in their heating costs, and so that is placed in there. So that, if you vote against it, it means that you are against poor people, and of course I voted against it because at some point I came to the conclusion that I had to be faithful to who I am. I am not voting for any of those things anymore, where they do what we call the "got you" legislation, and I am not voting for that anymore because the American public ends up suffering every time we do that.

But the question that I think is going to be raised here is will Congress make the decision to allow legislation to surface that would require that they give up gas guzzlers when they use government money to do the lease. Now, this is not private vehicles, but what the public may not know is many Members of Congress legitimately will lease automobiles. They can only lease them

for 2 years because we are only here for 2 years, and then we must go up for re-election. So we are saying that when the lease expires, if you really believe in energy efficiency, then let us make sure that the public can see us as ones who are embracing what we are preaching. It is a horrible, horrible thing to advocate in a commercial that people should drink Coca-Cola and then people visit your home and you have Pepsi.

So I think one of the things Congress must do, it is a moral thing I believe to stand up and say we are going to drive energy efficient cars. It gives us the right then to begin to talk to the public about some legitimate sacrifices that all of us are going to have to make.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about energy supplies and the cost of a tank of gas and how difficult it has been for Americans to deal with those increases, and another equally important issue is how people are going to continue to be able to educate their children from their youngest age all the way through higher education.

One of the things I think it is important for us to highlight tonight is the devastating budget cuts that this Republican budget puts forward in terms of the public education needs that we have.

Literally, the Republican House budget resolution would make the biggest cut, and I think I am right, correct me if I am wrong, the biggest cuts to the Department of Education in 23 years. I guess the only thing that would be worse would be when they proposed to completely eliminate the Department of Education, but they are not doing that. They simply have the biggest cut in 23 years.

The budget resolution cuts next year's Department of Education budget by \$2.2 billion, with a B, below this year's funding level. It matches the President's budget cuts in his budget proposal dollar for dollar. Rather than increase education funding, both of the budgets, the Republican leadership's budget and the President's, grossly underfund education, social services and training programs. They cut those programs \$4.6 billion below the amount needed to maintain current services. They eliminate completely 42 different education programs, not ones that people would think are not necessary anymore, but things like vocational education, safe and drug free school State grants, a college readiness program for low income students and both parts of the Federal Perkins loan program. It is just really unbelievable. You talked about priorities. This is where the Republicans priorities are compared to where we are as Democrats.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman makes an important point, and I think one of the ways to help Americans understand what this really means to them because these numbers are very big, it is sort of hard to say, well, you cut \$1 billion here, \$1 billion there, how does

that matter in the lives of our constituents?

The other day I met with some of the school superintendents in my district, and they told me, I will say all things are really new, but they were pleading with me because they said we want to be held accountable. We want our teachers, our schools to perform at the highest levels possible. So the concept of No Child Left Behind, in fact, we support it, as do I, but the fact that they are not getting the funding for that that the government promised to them, again it is about meeting our promises, about meeting our obligations to our children.

If we said we will not leave any child behind, but then walk away, then we have, in fact, left them behind, and this is what is happening. For Americans who have children in schools, they know what that means. They are being challenged without additional resources, and it also means to all of us that our local and State taxes are likely to go up to make up for the difference.

What we have done is pass along the burden to our State and local governments, and in fact Americans are going to have to pay for it one way or the other.

I will just mention two other areas because I know I hear this a lot, and I am sure you do as well in education, and that is special education. I know when I served in the State Senate, I was the Democratic Chair of the Education Committee for a number of years. I served on the State Board of Education. We heard over and over again that there were remarkable new ways to educate children with many different needs.

□ 2215

More children are being identified with early childhood learning disabilities. In fact, early intervention is making an enormous difference in their being successful in school. Then, of course, there are some of the very seriously challenged students. When we passed the original legislation, not we, we weren't there then, we freshmen, but when the original legislation was passed, it was called IDEA, but when the special education legislation was passed, the Federal Government said, You know what, we want you to educate every child regardless of what their needs are and to challenge them to be the best they can be. And we are going to pick up 40 percent of the cost. Regardless of what it costs, we will pick up 40 percent. Well, they never have.

So what does that mean? Right now the Federal Government is paying about 17 percent of that cost, not even half of what was promised years ago. So what that means is that local school districts are picking up the tab. States are picking up the tab. What we ought to be doing is meeting our commitments, meeting our obligations and being honest and straightforward with

the American people, that this is what we promised to do, it is what you want us to do, it is what we should be doing.

Last, you point out a college education. We talked about families already being stretched, but we are at a time when we know our young people and increasingly older people who also are being retrained or reeducated need to go to college. Sometimes it is a community college, sometimes it is a postsecondary technical college, sometimes it is a 4-year university. But the fact is that we need to be sure that the best and brightest in this country have access to higher education. And we know we are competing not just with our neighboring States or our neighboring communities or even countries who used to be our trading partners, we are just a global economy, a global marketplace, and our young people have to be prepared.

Yet what this budget does is, in fact, cut the Federal grants that so many people relied on to do their college education. So we are saying it is going to even be harder at a time when our young people should be going to college, for you to be able to go to college, be successful and to be able to not be in so much debt when you come out of college.

So, yes, could we do these things? That is what I get asked. Could we do these? The answer is, of course we could, if in fact we recognize that it is our priority, that we were honest about what kind of dollars we needed and we made it a priority in our budget instead of something else. Again, the Democratic alternative that will be available tomorrow does that.

So, again, I hope that my constituents, your constituents understand that we come again as first-term Members with a real interest, maybe that is not strong enough, but a demand for us to do it better, to do it right, to meet these obligations and to do it this year as a beginning because we can't wait any longer. Whether it is on education, on higher education, whether it is on energy, whether it is on paying down the debt. These are things we have to start working on, on security, health care. We could go on for hours. Fortunately we are limited, from our viewers' point of view, to an hour. But the fact is that we have so many opportunities for us to be building that future for Americans, American children, American families. This budget simply doesn't do it. It is why we should reject it.

Mr. CLEAVER. If the gentlewoman would yield, I found some money and I want to announce it right now to the world. If we rescind the tax cuts for individuals with an adjusted gross income in excess of \$200,000, the revenue effect of that would be \$24.5 billion in fiscal year 2007 and over 5 years it would be \$137 billion. The tax cuts that this Congress gave in 2001 and 2003 disproportionately benefited the wealthiest people of the Nation. At the same time we have been unable to increase

the minimum wage from \$5.15. And we are giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country. The tax cuts that were given would allow the wealthiest Americans with 46.8 percent of the tax benefits proposed in the President's fiscal 2007 budget and extended from 2001 and 2003, it would benefit 4.1 percent of the taxpayers of this country. People who are going to get up early in the morning to drive to their job and most of the money they earn that day is to buy gasoline are not going to be thinking kindly of what is happening to them.

There is a tsunami of frustration rolling across America. People are frustrated with what they see going on here. It is revealed in the polling data that is coming in from every polling source. It is bipartisan. Newspapers, whether they are the conservative Washington Post or the progressive New York Times are coming up with the same numbers, and that is the people of this country are frustrated. Incivility continues. We don't attack issues. We attack people. We don't try to come together and sit down and try to figure out ways in which we can help this country. We lock the doors. We lock people out of meetings. We won't allow a discussion or a debate on issues that are critically important to this Nation.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. CLEAVER, they do those things. It is the Republicans that do those things. I just want to point that out. When you are using "we," that includes us and we don't do that.

Mr. CLEAVER. That is absolutely correct. The reason that I used "we" and it is a dangerous use of the word "we," is that what many people see coming out of this body, they attribute to all of us when the truth of the matter is we don't have, we, those of us on this side, don't have the capacity because we are the minority, to effect the kinds of changes that I think we need to effect.

And so the tsunami of frustration continues to roll across America. Something needs to be done. If not, I think that we are headed dangerously toward a number of crises, some of which this Nation has never ever experienced before.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Your comments, I think, do speak to the frustrations we hear from Americans. But I hope that as we end this evening's discussion, we can also leave with the understanding that Americans, I hope, will feel hopeful. Because, in fact, you point out that if we use common sense, if we use our political will, if we sit down to work out these issues, we could do that. I think that is what the American people expect of us and it is also something that I think as freshmen we are offering back, that we want to be able to say we can do this, we want to do it, we want to be able to tackle these problems and we want all of the best ideas, and there are so many out there, to be able to offer the

American people the secure Nation that they want, the opportunities for their children economically and educationally and the kind of hope for the future that they all want.

MEDICARE PART D

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take this hour designated by the Speaker, by the leadership, we refer to it as the leadership hour, and to take an opportunity to talk about things that are important to this majority, are important, indeed, to the American people and that is what we are going to do during this hour.

We are going to talk about the Medicare part D prescription drug benefit. But I want to digress for just a minute, Mr. Speaker. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle just spent the better part of an hour talking about the budget. During the course of that colloquy, we heard the word "hypocrisy" used a number of times. I want to address this just for a moment, because the hypocrisy, of course, is to suggest that the tax cuts that this administration and this Republican majority have enacted and just today continued those tax cuts, refused to let the other side of the aisle in this body raise taxes on the American people.

They spent a good deal of time talking about the fact that the rich get the biggest tax break. Well, the hypocrisy of that argument, Mr. Speaker, is that the rich, if you call someone with an adjusted gross income of \$75,000 a year rich, then so be it. But these are the people that are paying most of the taxes. These are the people that are paying at the 39.6 marginal rate, the highest rate. So for them in any across-the-board tax cut, and indeed that is exactly what this is, every taxpayer saves money. But those that are paying the most in taxes with an across-the-board cut, Mr. Speaker, are quite naturally on a dollar amount, not a percentage amount but on a dollar amount, are going to get the biggest tax break. Of course they are.

But what is that enabling them to do, the small business men and women in this country who create probably 75 percent of the jobs? It is to grow their businesses, because of the opportunity to rapidly depreciate for capital improvements and bricks and mortar and putting in a new product line in their business, to hire some of these people who today because of their unemployment are not paying any taxes.

It is really hard, I think, and I think my colleagues understand this, the American people understand it, it is really pretty hard to get a tax refund when you are not paying any taxes. But indeed we do that, too. The child

tax credit, increasing them from \$600 to \$1,000. Those are refundable tax credits that are going to people who indeed are not paying any taxes.

Mr. Speaker, again, as I said at the outset, what we are talking about tonight has got to be one of the most important things that we have done for the American people since Medicare was first passed when I was a freshman medical student in 1965, where there was a part A, the hospital part; a part B, the doctor part; but no part D, the drug part. For many years, I am going to say probably within 5 years of the passage of that bill, people were starting to wonder why we didn't have that benefit of prescription drugs when more and more of these wonder drugs, whether we are talking about pharmaceuticals or antibiotics or whether we are talking about beta blockers for heart disease and high blood pressure and irregular heart rhythms, whether we are talking about oral, by-mouth chemotherapy. And we realized, of course, it wasn't just surgery, cutting something out, a diseased organ, that we really need to put our emphasis on, it is preventive health care and allowing people to be able to afford to get prescription drugs to lower the blood sugar, to prevent the ravages of diabetes, such as losing your limb or having your kidneys fail and going on renal dialysis and maybe eventually needing a kidney transplant. Or to treat high blood pressure, a condition which for a long time has no symptoms, absolutely no symptoms. It is incipient. We use that word. A person could end up in the emergency room having already had a stroke before anybody knew that they had high blood pressure. Or talk about coronary artery disease which most people have in adult life. And until we realized that elevated cholesterol and certain type lipids in the blood stream is what caused those plaques to form in those coronary arteries that supply blood, and oxygen, of course, to the heart muscle, when we finally realized that if we could lower cholesterol and lipids in the body, that we could prevent heart disease, coronary artery disease, heart attacks, and not have to resort to what we know, of course, today as bypass surgery. It is such a compassionate thing to prevent these diseases rather than to treat them when people are really, really in danger of sudden death or a stroke.

That is what this is all about. That is what this Republican leadership, President Bush, has delivered to the American people, a promise that other Congresses have made.

□ 2230

I can assure you that work was done on this in the past, but former Presidents, former administrations, former Congresses just failed to deliver.

And so we are very proud to stand here tonight and talk about this wonderful addition to Medicare, the part D prescription drug part. It is optional. It is just like part B, Mr. Speaker; a person doesn't have to sign up for it.

Yes, it is premium based. There is a monthly premium often deducted from the Social Security check of those who can afford it. And those who cannot afford it, it is not going to cost them anything.

The low-income seniors who qualify for the Medicare supplement on this wonderful program, for them, they pay no deductible, they pay no monthly premium. There is no gap in the coverage. They have catastrophic coverage, and the only cost may be \$1 for a month's supply of a generic drug, or up to \$5 for a month's supply of a brand name drug.

There are approximately 42.7 current Medicare beneficiaries in this country today. And, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I want to draw your attention to my first slide because this really shows you the success that we have had in this 6-month opportunity, starting November 15 through upcoming, in 6 days, May 15. Of those almost 43 million Medicare beneficiaries, most of them, because of age 65, possibly 5 or 6 million because of a disability at a younger age—look at this, Mr. Speaker—37 million seniors now have prescription drug coverage under Medicare part D, 37 million.

Now, we want to get this up to 40 million in the next 6 days. And that is really why I am here tonight, to get this message out to let those few stragglers, if you will, in regard to signing up, to do everything we can. And we will do that back in our districts. We have been doing it. In fact, I have been working on that, talking about trying to get that message out for over 2 years, when we first passed this Medicare Modernization Prescription Drug Act in November of 2003, a very proud moment for this physician-Member, by the way, to support such a wonderful program.

But now we have got the latest count, 37 million, and that is, I think, a fantastic achievement in this first sign -p period.

Why is it so important? Well, seniors, if you can see on this next slide, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, seniors are saving an average of \$1,100 a year with Medicare prescription drug coverage. Maybe more importantly, though, that is average for the 37 million that are signed up. But maybe more importantly, the low-income seniors are saving an average of \$3,700 a year. \$3,700 a year, that is a lot of money.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to that number that I just shared with my colleagues, \$3,700 a year for those low-income seniors, and that is why we are pushing so hard in these next 6 days.

Of the 6 million, I said 37 million have signed up out of almost 43 million. Of those 6 million that haven't, we are estimating, pretty accurately, that close to 3 million of those are low income. They qualify for this subsidy, and some of them, as I say, their only cost of these lifesaving prescriptions would be a \$1 copay. And so it is very important, most important that we get