

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PORK-BARREL SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, we come tonight to speak about the subject of pork barrel spending at a time when hardworking, middle-income American families are having to cut back on their spending. They're having to cut back on their spending because their paychecks are shrinking; they're shrinking with the high cost of energy; they're shrinking because of the high cost of food.

Since the Democrat majority took control of the economic policies of our Nation almost 18 months ago, gasoline has now approached \$4 a gallon. Milk is already over \$4 a gallon. And all over America people are driving to their convenience stores or driving to their grocery stores, making a decision about gasoline and milk.

It's tough times for hardworking, struggling, middle-income families. And yet, the Democrat majority, in their Budget Resolution, the conference report—which, of course, is the agreement between the Senate and the House—their budget today was passed that included a tax increase on these very same families of \$3,000 for the average family of four to be phased in over the next 3 years, Madam Speaker. Again, while they're struggling to send their kids to college, struggling to make their mortgage payments, struggling to fill up their cars, this is what's happened.

Well, what is fueling the tax increase that the Democrat majority has imposed upon middle-income families throughout our Nation? Well, there's a culture of spending. They presented a budget that represents the highest amount spent in the history of America. There is a culture of spending, and it is fueled by irresponsible pork barrel spending, also known as "earmarks."

Now, when the Democrat majority was in the minority, they made a number of promises. They said earmarks were out of control under the Republican majority. And Madam Speaker, you know, to some extent they were right. But this is a Republican Conference that has learned its lesson. But commitments were made by the Democrat majority that have not been kept.

First of all, the Speaker of the House said we're going to come and we're going to cut earmarks in half. But instead, Madam Speaker, what did we get? Last year, 11,610 items of pork barrel spending put into spending bills by the Democrat majority, the second highest level ever in American history, totaling approximately \$17 billion. Now, some people say, well, \$17 billion isn't a whole lot of money. Well, Madam Speaker, I hope I'm never in Washington so long that I think \$17 billion is not a lot of money. Millions of Americans could pay their annual gasoline bills with the money that's being spent on the pork barrel spending in Washington, DC. That's enough money to preserve the child tax credit, which under the Budget Resolution passed by the Democrat majority is going to disappear. And so I think that is a lot of money. And not only is it a lot of money, it represents waste.

And too often what we see in this pork barrel spending promulgated by the Democrat majority is that we see a triumph of secrecy over transparency, and we see a triumph of the special interests over the national interests, and we see a triumph of seniority and privilege over merit. Now, again, the Democrat majority said they were going to do things differently. Madam Speaker, then minority leader, now Speaker NANCY PELOSI said in USA Today that there has to be transparency. "I would just as soon do away with all the earmarks," right here, USA Today, late 2006. And instead, if we read the spending bills, what we find out is, out of 435 Members of Congress, she's in the top 20, top 20 of pork barrel spending.

Then, chairman of the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee, RAHM EMANUEL, said, "Well, for far too long business as usual has involved individual Members doling out favors in appropriations and other bills through earmarks. The American people deserve to know more than who sponsored special interest legislation. They deserve earmark reform that puts an end to special interest earmarking and prevents the practice of earmark abuse."

Now, Madam Speaker, that's what they said before they became the majority party here. But what do we see now? And don't just take my word for it, but let's look at what just happened today. Today, as the farm bill was passed, what do we have in there? We have, again, pork barrel spending that apparently appears out of nowhere. We have slush funds for ski slopes. We had the language slipped by the Democrat majority into the farm bill that would benefit a Democrat Senator in Vermont. It would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service to sell portions of the Green Mountain National Forest exclusively to the Bromley Ski Resort. And the ski resort advertises, "Bromley's grooming and snowmaking are second to none, and with our 44 trails of varied terrain, from treed glades & true New England

cruisers to sun soft expert mogul fields, everyone in your family will be smiling all day long." Well, Madam Speaker, I'm not sure the American people, who have to put up with this kind of earmark abuse, I don't think they're smiling. Now, maybe the people who own the Bromley Ski Resort in Vermont, they're smiling, you know, they got a nice little deal in the agricultural bill.

Then we had a quarter of a billion dollars slipped in for the Senate Finance Committee Chairman, MAX BAUCUS, to help the Plum Creek Timber Company in Montana sell a parcel of land to the environmental group called The Nature Conservancy. Now, technically, they get to claim a \$250 million tax refund even though they're a non-profit institution and they don't actually pay taxes.

Now, the language was quite careful, Madam Speaker. It was very careful and clever. They wrote this language, they didn't name this particular earmark, but they wrote it in such a way that it only applies to one parcel of land in the entire United States of America, and that is that belonging to the Plum Creek Timber Company in Montana.

And then, Madam Speaker, we have \$170 million for the salmon earmark requested apparently by our own Speaker, NANCY PELOSI. Clearly, there is something fishy in the farm bill.

Now, we were told again that we wouldn't have these earmarks, this pork barrel spending that just kind of drops down from the heavens in these conference reports. We never had a chance to vote on this in the House, Madam Speaker, it just kind of drops down. And so for a Speaker who is supposed to lead by example, who tells the American people that she would just as soon do without earmarks, that she wants an open and ethical and transparent process to slip a \$170 million fishy earmark into the farm bill, this is something the American people need to know.

Why are their taxes being raised by \$3,000 per family of four over the next 3 years? Well, part of the reason is, Madam Speaker, to pay \$170 million for the salmon earmark in the farm bill, to help subsidize the Plum Creek Timber Company, to help the Bromley Ski Resort. So much for cleaning up the earmark process.

You know, we were also told that there certainly wouldn't be any more secrecy in this earmark process.

You know, the former chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee told us that. Yet, that's not the case. Let me quote from the New York Times, not exactly a bastion of conservative thought, on one of the bills that came to this floor last year. "Despite promises by Congress to end the secrecy of earmarks and other pet projects, the House of Representatives has quietly funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to specific hospitals and health care providers." "Instead of naming the hospitals, the bill describes