

I am concerned that proposals for a flat tax or a national sales tax would endanger the mortgage interest deduction.

The mortgage interest deduction is important to Hawaii, where the average cost of a single family home is \$312,000.

It is estimated that eliminating the mortgage interest deduction could cause the value of existing homes to drop between 20–30 percent.

As we in Hawaii face our greatest economic challenge since statehood, elimination of the mortgage interest deduction would be a disaster.

Homeowners would suffer a disastrous loss of equity. Thousands of realtors, construction workers, and employees of financial institutions would lose their livelihoods.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in fighting any attempt to eliminate the home mortgage deduction.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

REGARDING THE PRESIDENT'S TAX PARTY

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, we would like to have gone into recess a few minutes ago, but the staff of the House has convinced me otherwise. But we wanted to go into recess to give time for our Democrat colleagues to go down to the White House so that they could celebrate.

And why are they celebrating? They are celebrating those Members of Congress who voted for the largest tax increase in the history of this country. We want to make sure they all were able to get down to the White House in a timely fashion. Included in that group are several former Members of Congress who lost because of that vote.

I am not kidding. This is not April Fool's Day. This is actually happening down at the White House as we speak. Do not worry, though. There will not be any Republicans invited to the White House tonight because not one Republican voted for the largest tax increase in history and so none of us got an invitation.

But down in my office right now we are having hot dogs and pizza to celebrate the fact that we voted for tax cuts last year. We are going to vote for tax cuts again this year. We are going to vote for tax cuts again next year. We will vote for tax cuts every year we are in the majority.

And we will continue to want to cut taxes for America's working families. Because we understand that over 50 percent of a family's income goes to the Government. If you add up State, local and Federal taxes and the cost of regulation, 50 cents out of every hard-

earned dollar that the American family makes today goes to the government. No wonder our families are in strain. No wonder it takes one parent to work for the Government while the other parent works for the family.

But Democrats, on the other hand, love to raise taxes. One prominent Democrat admitted that Democrats just do not like to cut taxes, they like to raise taxes. They think cutting taxes is irresponsible.

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They think raising taxes is responsible. Can we remember the debates of 1995 and 1996? Everybody said we cannot cut taxes and balance the budget; that is irrelevant, and it is crazy. Well, we did it last year. We cut taxes on the American family. We had the first balanced budget agreement in I do not know how many years.

But this is why they are usually responsible for increasing those taxes. Now, make no mistake about it, the Democrat budget not only increased taxes, it also increased spending and deepened the deficit. Now the Republican budget, the budget we passed in 1995, cut taxes and balanced the budget.

So the lesson here is very simple. If we want higher taxes and more Washington spending and higher deficits, then the American people need to vote for the Democrats. If we want lower taxes and a balanced budget and sensible government spending, then they should vote for the Republicans.

So I hope my friends are enjoying themselves down at the White House tonight. But their party's commitment to higher taxes is no party.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, will my friend the gentleman from Texas yield?

Mr. DELAY. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to argue with the gentleman on the tax increases, but it is misleading to the American people to say that this Congress has passed a balanced budget. They did not.

Mr. DELAY. Well, the gentleman reads a different budget.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. The budget plan that you passed—

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I have the time, and I am reclaiming the time and I am going to answer the gentleman's statement.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. But, please, the American public needs to know we are not there yet.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman from Texas has the time.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman does not know what unified budgeting is. The gentleman obviously does not know. I agree with the gentleman that we have a huge surplus that we are spending on government spending. But if we take all the spending and all the tax revenues, then we are in surplus.

I want, as the gentleman wants, I am sure, I want to make it a true balanced

budget by taking the Social Security surplus and not spend it on government spending. If the gentleman will work with me, I guarantee we will come up with a budget that will accomplish that. I think I have the credibility to do that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

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

(Mrs. MORELLA addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

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

(Ms. CARSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

PUT SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I think it is reasonable to carry on the discussion of what has happened in the last 5 years. I was elected, and my first year in Congress was 1993. In that year we had a deficit under the unified budget of \$322 billion. In the next, that year for the budget for 1994, President Clinton sent us a budget with a deficit of \$265 billion, a deficit in terms of a unified budget.

So it was not only on the \$265 billion that we were short, it was also what we were short borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund and the other trust funds of this country.

I think, number one, we have got to start being very honest with the American people of what has happened. When the Republicans took the majority of this House in 1995, we changed the budget and started rescissions and started cutting down spending, getting rid of one-third of the staff in this Congress, cutting out committees, cutting out up to 200 different agencies and departments and divisions to try to reach a balanced budget.

The Republicans really were demagogued in that election that eventually followed because we were doing all sorts of budget cuts, cutting down on the spending of the Federal Government in order to get a balanced budget.

We ended up winning. We ended up in the spring of 1996 sending a reconciliation bill to the President saying the

operational budget, to keep government open, to keep it operating, is not going to go into effect, Mr. President, unless you send Congress a balanced budget.

Finally, the President did send Congress a balanced budget, and now we have moved ahead. We have reframed the debate in Washington, D.C. so both sides of the aisle are now saying, great, we need a balanced budget. Let us be more frugal in our spending.

We have come a long ways, but we have still got a long ways to go. We have got a long ways to go because we are still borrowing the money that is coming in surplus from the Social Security Trust Fund to use for other government spending, and that has got to stop.

Here is my proposal of how we stop it. I introduced the only Social Security bill that has been introduced in the last session of Congress three years ago and again this session that has been scored by the Social Security Administration to keep Social Security solvent. So if we really want to put Social Security first, let us stop talking about it and start doing it.

Now that we are looking at a surplus in terms of the unified budget that is coming in this year, and the estimates are as high now as a \$40 to \$50 billion surplus. Let us start taking that surplus money and allowing workers in this country to have their own personal retirement savings account that will partially offset their fixed benefits and Social Security eventually when they are ready to retire.

But giving these workers some of this surplus money that is coming in, which is, after all, overtaxation, allowing them to see the creation of wealth, allowing them to see the magic of compounding interest where our money can double every 4 or 6, 8 years; and when we are ready for retirement at age 65, we are going to see much more money in those funds.

So with even a partial offset, in my bill that I call for using these surplus monies to beef up Social Security, to start down the road of solvency, I am suggesting that for each \$2 these people earn in the investment market of limited investments, of so-called safe investments, for every \$2 they earn there be a \$1 offset in their Social Security benefits, so there is really a safety net.

But what we have got to do is make sure that existing retirees continue to have the benefits that have been promised to them, but at the same time we make provisions that our kids and our grandkids and our kids' grandkids and great-grandkids can have an opportunity to have even more revenue returns in their retirement years.

Look, we have got a demographic situation where there are fewer workers paying in their FICA taxes to more and more retirees. When we started out in 1935 we had an average age life-span of 62 years old. That meant most people that paid into Social Security all their working life never received any benefits.

Now the average age of mortality, the life-span today at birth is 74 years old for a male, 76 years old for a female. But if we live to be 65 years old, then on the average we are going to live another 20 years. Let us get at it. Let us really put Social Security first.

TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Take Our Daughters to Work Day. The Capitol Hill activities for Take Our Daughters to Work Day have been rescheduled for next Thursday because of the D.C. schools having academic testing today.

Today many fathers and mothers took their daughters to work. Take Our Daughters to Work Day was created in 1993 to help maintain that essential feeling of self-worth and enhance their understanding of what is possible and what they can accomplish if they put forth the effort.

This is an important day for the millions of girls who are provided with the rare and much-needed opportunity to meet successful professional women and envision the immense possibilities that stand before them.

Numerous studies have shown how many girls exhibit a strong and distinct sense of self-confidence until they reach the age of 11. Then there is a sudden drop in self-esteem, a lowered sense of self-worth, and intense feelings of insecurity about their own judgments and emotions. Take Our Daughters to Work Day is an effective way of maintaining their self-esteem.

Last year, 48.3 million adults said that their company and their spouse's company participated in this special day. In addition, three in ten adults said that they or their spouse personally participated by taking a girl to their workplace, which equals 15.4 million people.

Clearly, this is a day not only for this Nation's daughters but for parents, employers, and people who understand the value of investing in and training the younger generation to become better, stronger, and more effective members of the labor force in the years ahead.

As we approach the new millennium, Take Our Daughters to Work Day and similar activities which promote reaching out to young girls and women will become even more essential. By the turn of the century, 8 out of every 10 women between the ages of 25 and 54 will be on the job because they want and, in most cases, need to work. For the first time in history, most new jobs will require education or training beyond high school.

I hope that Members will participate in the Take Our Daughters to Work

Day activities we have organized for our colleagues on Capitol Hill next week.

Our Nation's daughters need to know who they are and what they can be, which will exceed far beyond any societal limitations that were placed on their foremothers and to some degree continue to this day.

This knowledge and self-confidence help them develop more ambitious dreams, strive to take on more challenges, and become valuable leaders in America's future. We look forward to next week, Take Our Daughters to Work Day.

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

(Mr. ROHRABACHER 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 Iowa (Mr. LATHAM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS RIGHTS WEEK

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

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, this week is a special time in our country. It is designated as National Crime Victims Rights Week. It is an opportunity to try to begin to balance the scales of justice that are weighted so heavily in favor of the accused and so lightly weighted in favor of the victims of violent crime.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of a constitutional amendment proposed by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), Congressman and Chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary, that attempts to restore and provide really for the first time in this country solid, irreversible rights for victims of violent crime.

What this constitutional amendment does is that it provides that victims have the right to be given notice, to know when there are public hearings related to the crime in which they have been victimized, to be heard if they are present, and if they are not, to submit a written statement at all public proceedings where a sentencing occurs or a plea bargain is agreed to or there is a prospect that the criminal will be released from custody.

It provides the right under this constitutional amendment to be notified if that convict is released or escapes from custody, and because justice needs to be sure and swift, to seek relief as victims from these unreasonable delays related to the crime; the right to have