

do this without breaking the caps, without finding offsets, and without spending the surplus. We can do this without even going to a flat tax or consumption tax. We can do this by breaking up the electricity monopoly.

The time has come to allow greater competition in the electricity industry. Giving consumers the power, the power to choose their electric company, will lead to a more efficient and cheaper electric industry. When we deregulated trucking and the airline industry and the telephone monopoly, the average savings to the American consumer was 30 percent. We can do the same with the electricity industry.

Let us give America's consumers the power to choose, and let us do it this year.

#### WOMEN FORCIBLY STERILIZED

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a tragic story of an outrageous misuse of U.S. taxpayer dollars believed to go to foreign aid.

Recently a government campaign in the country of Peru revealed how USAID taxpayer dollars have been used over the past 2 years. What were these dollars used for, you ask: Community buildup, economic development, money to buy clean, sanitary medical conditions? No. Our taxpayer dollars have been put to use under the USAID banner for forced, mandatory, and coerced sterilization of poor Peruvian women.

Have these women chosen such paths for their reproductive futures? Have they been able to discuss options with their families and husbands? No. Without notification and without consent, U.S.-funded operatives perform these sterilizations in filthy, primitive conditions just to meet a mandated quota.

Women have been degraded. Indeed, women have died because of this policy in the name of population control, and under the guise of family planning America has exported horror to women abroad.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should end taxpayer funding of such atrocities, once and for all.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF MARK ZALKIN

(Mr. RUSH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the life, work, soul, and spirit of a dear friend, Mark Zalkin. Mark's life was tragically cut short on Monday as he passed at the age of 49 due to complications from multiple sclerosis.

During the seventies Mark's vision for justice translated into him building and leading the 46th Ward Community Service Center, and later the Uptown

Community Service Center. He worked tirelessly to create services to Chicago's uptown neighborhood.

One of Mark's unique qualities was his steadfast belief in the wisdom and power of people. As editor of *Keep Strong Magazine* and *All Chicago City News*, and as press strategist for the late Harold Washington, the mayor of the city of Chicago, Mark always went first to people for information and to find out what was really happening. The disabled coal miner fighting for black lung benefits or the family displaced by suspected arson for profit, these were the people who Mark went to for information.

When Mark was stricken with MS, he faced life with the same quiet strength and determination he radiated all his life. My prayers go out to Mark's family, and especially to his son Brendan, who carries on his tradition and legacy as editor of Chicago's *Streetwise* newspaper.

#### TAX CUTS AND DEBT RELIEF, THE BEST CHOICES FOR USE OF THE BUDGET SURPLUS

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, after nearly three decades of Washington living beyond its means, the Federal budget is projected to have a surplus next year of several billions of dollars.

So Congress has a choice. Actually, we have three choices. We can spend the surplus, we can use the surplus to start paying down the debt, or we can continue with the tax relief started last year. Guess what the liberals want to do with the surplus? You got it, they want to spend it. They want to increase the size and power of the Federal Government.

I think that is about the last thing that Washington should do with the surplus. The way I look at it, if Congress uses the surplus for tax relief, that would be great. If the surplus goes towards reducing the debt, that would be great, too. Both would represent a radical change from the way Congress has been operating in recent decades, when the other side was in the majority.

Maybe we should take tax cuts and debt relief and go 50/50. The Americans want a debate on this. They do not want us to spend the money.

#### REFORM THE IRS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, unbelievable, the IRS admits it is wrong and vows to fix it. That is right, they said no more taking of property by individual agents, only district directors of the IRS can seize your property.

How nice of those computer bullies. Think about it. Instead of getting shafted by a little guy at the IRS, you will now get shafted by a big shot at the IRS. Beam me up.

I say it is time to tell the IRS to seize this, my bill, that requires judicial consent before those backstabbing, bric-a-bracken, Constitution-bending thieves destroy any more lives in our country, and that bill should be added to the conference report of the reform bill for the IRS.

#### IN SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

(Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 856, a bill that provides the process of self-determination for Puerto Rico. Since we are talking about U.S. citizens, why should this bill be necessary? This bill is essential in order to validate American democratic values. It is essential because the 3,800,000 U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico have been disenfranchised and this Congress has a moral obligation to address this inequity.

In Puerto Rico, we cannot vote to elect the President of our Nation, nor do we have any voting representation in the House or the Senate. We have no control over political decisions affecting our daily lives. We cannot vote as citizens, but we are called upon to fight and die for our country as soldiers.

The U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico have been partners in war with our fellow citizens, having fought hand in hand to defend American values and democratic ideals throughout the world in every armed conflict since 1917.

Puerto Ricans have earned with their blood the right to self-determination. As the United States preaches to the world on human rights and democracy, it has forgotten 3.8 million of its own citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to support H.R. 856. It is our moral obligation and responsibility. Let the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico choose whether they want to be independent, stay as they are, or become a State. Vote in support of H.R. 856.

#### IRS REFORM

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Americans who take an increasingly cynical view of politics and politicians often claim that "politicians are all the same," and those who do not vote justify their passivity saying "it does not matter."

I respectfully disagree. Consider the proposals to reform the IRS. The Democratic Party controlled Congress for a period of 40 years, ending in 1995.

They had countless opportunities to do something about a government agency that clearly had major problems, problems which offended the American ideals of due process, of innocence until proven guilty, and basic fairness before the law.

When we have a country in which honest citizens fear a tax audit as much as tax cheats do, that is a situation that demands action. However, when one party seeks to expand the size and power of Washington and the IRS is the source of its power to do so, well, it is not surprising that nothing was done in 40 years to improve the situation.

Our party intends to reduce the size and power of Washington, so it is only natural that our party seeks to reform the IRS, and that makes all the difference.

#### MANAGED CARE REFORM SHOULD OCCUR NOW, NOT NEXT YEAR

(Mr. GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, the need for managed health care reform is growing every day. We hear numerous complaints from our constituents and concerns about managed care and how it limits their ability to make medical decisions on their own.

This coming Monday, March 2, is a special day. One, it is also Texas Independence Day, but also we are holding a town hall meeting in Houston, Texas, to talk about managed care reform and to hear from the constituents in my home district. It will be at Houston Community College Southeast from 1:00 to 4:00.

We need to take action now after hearing from our constituents on solving the problems of managed care. A patient deserves a managed care plan that meets their needs, but also provides quality health care at an affordable rate. A patient's bill of rights will ensure that providers, not insurance companies, make medical decisions for patients.

We also need to ensure that patients receive high quality health care by guaranteeing their access to specialists, guaranteeing their ability to go to the emergency room without preclearance, and participation in medical decisions about their conditions.

We need patients to have these options now, not wait until next year.

#### AMERICANS DESERVE A TAX CUT

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the average American is now faced with a tax burden that is over 38 percent. I emphasize "burden" because that is exactly what it is.

I am one who believes that Americans should be rewarded for their hard

work. To the contrary of that belief, however, people in our Nation today face a system that is penalizing their efforts to earn and save money by slapping them in the face with more and more taxes.

Last session, the Congress provided American families with the first tax relief they have seen in 16 long years. I hope that we will be able to continue that trend this year with further tax cuts and ultimately with a fairer and simpler tax system.

Let us once again reward the American people for their hard work and savings by giving them the tax relief they so rightly deserve.

#### BILL OF RIGHTS FOR HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for managed care reform, sometimes known as the Patient's Bill of Rights.

The President is correct, we need to protect the consumers of health care services. Today, millions of Americans have moved into managed care. It is fundamentally a good system, but there are problems. A recent California study showed that 42 percent of the people who have managed care have encountered problems with their service.

How can we correct this with a bill of rights? It would ensure that patients are informed of their health care options. It would ensure that they get the right doctor for the right type of care. It would ensure that they get access to emergency rooms when they need it. It would ensure that they are presented with all of their health care options, regardless of cost. It would ensure that doctors make decisions, not medical care bureaucrats. And it would keep patients' medical records confidential.

Mr. Speaker, these are official rights for every health care consumer. We ought to pass this law. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership is attempting to block our Health Care Consumers Bill of Rights. That is not fair. We need to move toward an intelligent bill of rights for health care consumers.

#### AMERICA'S BACKBONE DESERVES A TAX CUT

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, there are some who think that Americans generally are undertaxed. There are those who think that the current tax burden is just about right. And then there are those who think Americans send too much money to Washington and are just flat not getting their money's worth. I fall into that category, as do, I suspect, most of my Republican colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, Americans do not mind paying their fair share. Americans truly are a people that want to see others get ahead, especially those who face greater obstacles in life than most of us face. But Americans do not like to see their money wasted. They are not happy about a Federal Government in Washington, D.C. that just keeps getting bigger and bigger while at the same time becoming less and less accountable to the people.

Simply put, Washington has gotten too big, too powerful and Washington should not be taking between one-third and one-half of a middle-class family's income.

Mr. Speaker, I do not care what the temporary polls show. I think the middle-class, the backbone of America, could use a break. The Tax Code is aggressive. It raises our taxes without a law change. We need a tax cut to make sure that middle America does not have a tax increase that just happens automatically because of the aggressiveness of the code.

#### DEBATE ON HEALTH CARE REFORM SHOULD BE SCHEDULED

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, you have been quoted in the paper as saying that until you have a vision, you will not allow a bill to come out here to guarantee patients a bill of rights in the health care industry.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest you go see the movie "As Good as it Gets." When that pediatrician talks to that waitress about the asthma which her kid has, the whole audience claps because they are furious with the way they are being treated by HMOs.

As a physician, I have had the experience in Seattle of seeing a patient and having to get on the phone and call some health care bureaucrat in Omaha, Nebraska, and argue about whether my patient can stay another day in the hospital. Now that is not in the best interest of the patient nor of the physician. And this is the almost universal experience by physicians in this country.

Mr. Speaker, that is why they are so upset and why the bill offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), though not a perfect bill, is certainly a bill that ought to be scheduled for floor debate so that we can bring this issue that the President has called for before the American people.

There is no excuse for us never being in session and allowing this issue to sit unresolved. Schedule a debate, Mr. Speaker.

#### CLINTON'S BUDGET AND THE AMERICAN FAMILY

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)