

panel and maintains full authority to remove the Independent Counsel. Mr. Starr was not appointed because he was without integrity; he was appointed because he is a fine lawyer, possessed of substantial legal skills and experience, and respected for his character and honesty.

If President Clinton genuinely believes Mr. Starr has acted beyond authority, the Attorney General may remove him for cause and appoint a different Independent Counsel. The power to do so resides in this President.

If the President believes the insults that his spokesmen level at Mr. Starr, then the President should seek removal. If he does not agree with those insults, the President should instruct his defenders to stop their public criticism, criticism that is not designed to learn the truth, but to deflect it and bring contempt on our justice system.

With international challenges facing our country, the public needs reassurance that our highest national leader is truthful, that his representations to us are reliable, that we can trust his word on matters of national security, that he is an honorable representative for all Americans. Under the circumstances, the President's sacred honor is in question. All the criticisms against the Independent Counsel by political operatives of the President do not change that at all. Their criticisms serve not the best interests of the country nor the one standard that Americans support most, the truth.

Mr. Speaker, all Americans need to know that our President is honorable. Seeking the truth should not just be another political campaign. Assaulting our legal system and the officers of the court who administer it, who serve under it, may have temporary political benefit. Public opinion polls ebb and flow, but the long-term damage is more lasting. Public distrust of our legal system, the system in which we want our citizens to have faith, will result from a contradiction of the noble American principle that we are a country of laws, not men. That rule of law and justice is of paramount importance to a civil society. No person, no matter how popular, is above the law.

Mr. Speaker, we should all take a careful look at the phenomenon unfolding before us, the gaming of our justice system, where criticizing legal authority is the defense weapon of choice, where putting a proper spin on the evidence is a substitute for being truthful and honest and accepting the consequences.

□ 2230

Free societies governed by laws fairly administered can prevail over political tyranny only if citizens have faith in and respect for authorities charged with enforcing the laws. Law is the embodiment of the moral sentiment of the people. The laws of our country are the most perfect branch of ethics. Laws should be like death, which spares no one. It has been said that every viola-

tion of truth is a stab at the heart of human society.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, our society, our country, needs the truth in this instance. To people of integrity, there would be no conversation so agreeable as that of a man, be he the President or the independent counsel, who has no intention to deceive. The withholding of truth can be a worse deception than a direct misstatement. Searching for the truth is the noblest occupation of mankind. Obscuring it is a curse on our society that will damage our institutions of government and our national spirit for years to come.

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

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

EXPLAINING THE ATTITUDES, CONCERNS, AND BELIEFS OF OUR CONSTITUENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) is recognized for half of the time until midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BOB SCHAFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, tonight I am joined by some of my colleagues from the freshman Republican class, which includes individuals who were elected in 1996 and were sworn in at the beginning of 1997. This class is one that has come to this microphone often during special orders to talk about the agendas that we have set forward and that we are fighting to promote here in Congress, but more recently, we have had the opportunity to spend a considerable amount of time back at home in our respective districts, holding and conducting a number of town meetings and visiting with constituents and speaking about the issues that are taking place here, and describing our activities to our constituents.

So tonight our focus is primarily to report back to the Congress and to our colleagues about those things we have heard from our constituents, and to in fact explain the attitudes and opinions and beliefs of those constituents to the rest of the House.

With that in mind I am joined tonight by the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and also the gentleman from great State of Minnesota, Mr. ROY BLUNT, is here. We may be joined by another gentleman from the State of Michigan, who has suggested he may join us tonight. I just wanted to have a general discussion with the Members here, and yield time back and forth and talk about the things we have heard.

As for me, conducting several town meetings and visiting throughout the country, throughout the district, rath-

er, the concern for the key issue in the country of the national debt seemed to be first and foremost on people's minds, at about \$5.5 trillion. That debt, when divided by the number of citizens in the country, comes to about \$20,000 per man, woman, and child.

People are quite concerned about providing some real relief with that debt. People are encouraged by the news that we have heard and the reports that the economy has done so well and has allowed the American taxpayers to catch up with the spending of Congress, so we anticipate a budget surplus; that is to suggest that the debt may be eliminated, and that is, again, according to the way the government does its accounting. But the real question is what to do with a surplus if one is found to exist.

What I am hearing for the most part is that people would like to see us find some strategy to retire that debt, either pay it off directly, to try to find a way to relieve the tax burden on the American people in a way that allows them to be more productive, and generate more revenue to the Federal Government through tax relief, and a number of other strategies that have been suggested to me.

People would still like to see us move forward on our goals to provide further tax relief, to rein in the abuses at the IRS, and to begin treating taxpayers as though we are innocent until the IRS proves we might be guilty, rather than the other way around, as the burden is unfairly placed on taxpayers today when there is some question over tax obligation and liability.

Education was the third key issue that I had heard back in my district. We have had a lot of discussion about the government trying to usurp an independent national testing strategy that we have today, with independent operations that provide national benchmarks for our schools. The Clinton administration, as we know, has been trying to establish a national testing procedure through the U.S. Department of Education in a government-owned sort of fashion.

Many people in my district, in fact most people who are familiar with the proposal, have flatly rejected it and believe that we ought to defer authority back to our States and really focus on the freedom to teach and liberty to learn at the most local level. So that is a general sense of the key issues that have been raised in my town meetings.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) to tell us what he has been hearing.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding to me.

I would say that there has been a lot of talk lately about how great the economy is doing, and just yesterday the Congressional Budget Office announced that we actually have an \$8 billion Federal surplus in 1998. I think that is remarkable when we think about where we have come from, starting when our side took a poll of the

Congress back in 1994, and began to govern in 1995, and how progressively each year we have been able to whittle away at the deficit to the point today where the fiscal discipline has actually paid off and we are doing something in terms of talking about operating with a surplus. I think that is a remarkable achievement.

It has been almost 30 years since that happened, since government was in the black. When we think about 30 years ago, most people now serving in Congress probably were probably closer to studying civics in high school or in the college classroom than they were to voting on the House floor. There are a lot of staffers, interns, and pages now working here in the House that were not even born yet back in 1969, which was the last time that we actually balanced the budget, the last time that it was at that point in time that we sent a man to walk on the Moon for the first time, and he took a giant step forward for mankind, and yet we have been walking backwards in terms of the fiscal path we have been on for this country.

Our booming economy, the budget surplus, are really truly, I think, noteworthy and very positive developments for our Nation. However, I would also say that we still have a long way to go, because as the gentleman mentioned with the unified budget concept, we have reached balance. We are actually operating in the black.

But the fact of the matter is that we continue to borrow from the Social Security trust fund, which masks the true size of the deficit. This year about \$100 billion, and already some \$650 billion, have been borrowed from the Social Security trust fund. That is a very, very serious issue which needs to be addressed.

When I go back to my State of South Dakota, and I spent a long time out there over the President's Day break, and then again last weekend and talked to my constituents, they are not ready quite yet to break out the bubbly and start celebrating the surplus. We may be doing well, but that does not necessarily mean Congress can pat itself on the back and assume that everyone in America is satisfied.

When I travel back to South Dakota, I meet a lot with young families where the husband and wife are trying to juggle jobs and schedules so that they can pay the bills, pay for day care, and still find a way to see their kids and each other at the end of the week.

I meet college students who are taking a full load of classes plus trying to work 40 hours a week on top of it to pay for their school. I meet with retired South Dakotans and senior citizens across my State who are worried about the Medicare program and Social Security program. I meet a lot of young professionals who are just starting out in their careers who, when you ask them if they believe that Social Security is going to be there for them, laugh it off. In fact, a recent survey

found that more people believe in UFOs than believe that Social Security is going to be there when they retire.

So we may have a budget surplus in the unified sense, as we call it, here in Congress, but the people who created that surplus through their hard work and tax dollars are not necessarily seeing the benefits of our booming economy.

The American people are still overtaxed, and we saw some statistics just the other day at USA Today where it talked about the overall tax burden on the average family in this country, and how it has increased in each decade, in the past several decades, to the point today that where the average family of four spends 38.2 percent of all their earnings just to pay taxes at one level, be it the Federal, State or local level. That is an enormous tax burden.

In terms of the overall economy, we heard the President say the other night that we have the smallest government in 35 years. I am not sure which criteria he was using, but I think we would have to look far and wide to find anything that would suggest that.

The fact of the matter again is that we are now, in terms of tax revenues, taxing people of this country at 20.1 percent, by the President's budget, of our total gross domestic product. That is the largest tax burden collectively on our society since the Second World War.

So to make sure that we do not go back to the budget wilderness we have been wandering in for the last 30 years, I believe that we have to do some significant things, which I will talk a little bit about in terms of some of the solutions that I see out there in terms of a long-term fix for the fiscal problems that are facing us as we head down the road with Social Security, as the number of people who are retiring and receiving benefits outnumber those poor who are paying in and working hard to pay into that system, and we look at what we can do in terms of a new tax code for a new century.

Those are some things we had talked about collectively on our side of the aisle that we have established as priorities. I have some suggestions as well in terms of how we go about doing that.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for inviting me, and for letting an old-timer join them this evening. But having been here in 1993 when this President set his priorities, and then seeing his budget that he just submitted to the Committee on the Budget a couple of weeks ago, and having Alan Greenspan testify to the Committee on the Budget today, I cannot help but reinforce how positive is the direction that we are going in.

Alan Greenspan came in and said that what we really need to do is we need to stick to the discretionary

budget caps, because interest rates and the markets and the financial experts really are not taking us at our word. They are really not believing that we can actually hold tough on the discretionary spending.

So he sent us a clear message today, saying hold tight on discretionary spending caps and we will continue to see the benefits in our economy, because what we will do is we will continue to see lower interest rates; holding spending, perhaps cutting taxes.

But what is our President doing? His budget proposed increasing spending, so the 20.1 percent would go up; increasing taxes; and actually takes us back to a deficit. The President's budget proposal as scored by CBO says we will have a couple of years of surplus, low surplus, but by 2000, we are going to go back to deficit.

If we did nothing, if we all went home for the next 5 years and did nothing, we would be better off than doing the President's budget, because he increases taxes, but it is back to the old policies that we saw before from this President: let us increase taxes, let us increase spending. We would be \$43 billion better off in terms of reducing the deficit if we did nothing. This President wants to increase spending and increase taxes, and do it in such a way that government grows and the deficit comes back.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I think people around the country recognize that, when it gets right down to it. People are beginning to get wise to the budget manipulations that they see from the White House.

I know in Missouri, and I apologize, earlier I mentioned that the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was from Minnesota. That is not the case. Let me apologize. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT).

Mr. BLUNT. We have warmer winters in Missouri, and there are lots of other good things about our State.

Mr. Speaker, one of those is, I think it was one of my predecessors in Congress from our State about 100 years ago gave our State the name, the Show-me State. He said, I am from Missouri, you have to show me. And certainly we are skeptical, as many people are in my district are, about really what is happening as we work to balance this budget.

Now clearly, clearly the last two Congresses and the hard work of the American people have gotten us a long way. I think in January of 1995 the projected deficit for last year was \$365 billion. This was after the President's tax increase, this was after 2, 3 years of the Clinton administration, and the projected deficit was \$365 billion.

It turned out to be \$22 billion. We got that announcement yesterday. As the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) mentioned, it looks like now for the first time in 30 years we are running a surplus, but of course what Missourians wonder about is how

we could be running a surplus and still be increasing the national debt. Clearly that does not make sense from the show-me standard that we would want to set for whether you are in a surplus situation or not.

We need to continue to work to be sure that we quit, that we stop this process of borrowing from the trust funds, that we really do run a surplus, before we even think about how to spend that surplus. That does not mean we cannot do some tax relief, that does not mean we cannot take advantage of these good economic times, but it certainly does mean that we should not be committing the government to new programs based on some surplus, when we are still borrowing this year \$100-plus billion from the Social Security trust fund, from the Highway Trust Fund.

We want to see that surplus in our State become a real surplus. We would like to say that this unified budget is actually treating the trust funds like they were trust funds, and is actually paying all the bills that the government has coming in, and beginning to pay down the national debt, not continuing to increase the national debt.

It would be pretty hard to convince any Missourians, particularly southwest Missourians, where I am from, that you have a surplus, and you are continuing to borrow and you are continuing to increase your debt by around \$150 billion. That does not sound like a surplus to us. The Washington standard is not a good enough standard for hard-working taxpayers who want to see us have a real surplus.

But again, I do not want to say that in a way that takes away from what has already happened, because we have gone from a projected deficit of \$365 billion to, today, a surplus under the same standards, the same rules, the same guidelines, of about \$8 billion. That is a pretty big turnaround. We just need to turn that corner a little bit more before we feel like we are totally in the kind of situation where we are starting to paying off the debt instead of increasing the debt.

I think the hard work of the American people and the vitality of our economy, and frankly, the hard work of this Congress to set those budget caps that our friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) has talked about, and to stay within those caps and see the interest rates go down and the economic vitality that produces and the additional tax dollars that that produces, the additional tax dollars that the tax cuts that we were able to do last year have produced, have made a real change in America.

□ 2245

But we have to be careful that we do not follow the lead of the President just a month ago, 6 weeks ago in this Chamber where in 75 minutes, in a 75-minute State of the Union message, he proposed about \$75 billion in new spending. That sounds like the era of

big government is definitely back. And certainly a \$75 billion, \$1-billion-per-minute record is probably the record for anybody's State of the Union address ever in the history of the country, and this Congress and the taxpayers of America really cannot let that happen. I do not think they want that to happen.

Frankly, I think that is why we have not heard much about the President's spending proposals since he walked out of here at the State of the Union message and nobody responded to an America that goes right back into deep, deep debt the first time we think we may be able to make our payments in one month. That is not going to happen. I think we are all hearing that as we have had time to go back home.

Mr. BOB SCHÄFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, let me issue a word of encouragement to conservatives and Republicans across the country based on what I heard back home. I want to share some statistics briefly. It was not too long ago in Colorado that we had runaway spending at the State level and high taxes. The voters in Colorado through a series of initiatives and ballot proposals capped spending of our State budget and spending of all of our local governments. They additionally placed pretty severe tax limitations on State government and local government.

I remember at the time when I was serving back in the State Senate, that the liberals in Colorado were just whining and crying about these limitations on spending and tax increases as though it was somehow going to crush the State. And those of us on the conservative side and the Republican party back in Colorado stood our ground and maintained that, no, we believe very firmly in these conservative economic principles that if we lower taxes, we increase revenue to the State because of economic growth and prosperity. And when we lower spending, we move more authority out of the halls of government and into the homes of free people throughout the State.

Back in Colorado during the town meetings I just returned from, things are pretty good economically when it comes down to it. Colorado is almost an oasis in the west when it comes to economics. And here is the real impact of tax reduction and spending reductions in my State for those who doubt that these principles work and that the Republicans and conservatives here in Congress are on the right track.

This is a report I am going to refer to from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a very liberal organization in its goals and objectives. But here is what they found in one of the lowest tax States in the union: The poorest one-fifth of our population in my State since the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s realized the greatest amount of economic growth and income growth in poor households. This is the poorest fifth. Their incomes over that 10-year period grew 39 percent.

The second fifth of income categories, their income grew 21 percent. The middle fifth saw income growth of 12 percent. The fourth group there, which is almost to the richest category, had a 6 percent growth and the richest fifth of Colorado citizens saw 16 percent growth. All income categories saw a remarkable growth over a 10-year period.

Mr. Speaker, that is very impressive. What is most impressive is that low taxes, smaller spending has resulted in a 39 percent growth rate for the poorest one-fifth of the residents of my district in my State.

I would suggest when we talk about spending and taxes within the context of compassionate and humanitarian approaches to serving our people, the proof is right here. That it is far more humanitarian, it is far more compassionate to take cash out of Washington, D.C., not even bring it here but to leave it back into the hands of the people who earned that wealth, who are able to turn income into jobs or are willing to take the risks as entrepreneurs and create wealth on a local level and at the State level in a way that honest to goodness has helped the poorest fifth of my State.

That means that there is more dollars to spend not on welfare, not on various entitlement programs and handout programs in my State, although we continue to do that, but more dollars are going to classrooms, for example. More dollars are going to the important priorities that when I travel around the State people tell me they want to see us invest in.

So we are doing it on a State level. These are accomplishments that Congress does not deserve a whole lot of credit for and should not try to take that. But what it does show is that if we can find strategies to turn more of the authority of Washington, D.C. back to our States, we can find strategies to shrink the size of the Federal Government and empower our people locally, that we can expect more of this. We can expect to see more of the poorest families in the country begin to become self-sufficient and move toward higher income categories and achieve real success. That is a Republican vision and a strategy that we all stand for and one that I am proud to say that it is working and it ought to be a point of encouragement for this Congress and the rest of the States of the Union.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the gentleman from Colorado might be reluctant to yield to the gentleman from Michigan only because we have talked about the oasis in the west, but Michigan in many respects is the oasis of the Midwest.

Under our governor, the State I believe since 1990 has had 24 tax cuts. We have moved from a point where our structural unemployment was higher than the national average for a number of years. It was structural. It was said

that Michigan's unemployment rate cannot get below the national average. I think now for the last 2 or 3 years our unemployment rate has been below the national average. Surprisingly, but not really because we have implemented the same strategies, tax cuts, aggressive business promotion, Michigan last year led the Nation in terms of job creation.

So, again, by returning power at the State level, we have returned it back to families, to businesses to grow jobs. That helps everybody. That benefits everybody.

The governor across the lake from us in Wisconsin I believe announced that he was recently signing the last welfare checks because now in Wisconsin they are going to restore the dignity that anybody receiving State assistance is going to be receiving a paycheck. They are going to be working for their benefits. So the kinds of strategies that the gentleman was talking about in Colorado are taking place and being successful all around the country. Lowering taxes, cutting spending and returning power back to the local level.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting we find Republican governors or Republican legislators leading the way at the State level. It is a clear distinction that is exhibited here between what our party represents and what our liberal colleagues on the other side of the aisle represent.

They define compassion by how much money government can give away to the charity of politicians' choices. We believe we define compassion by how much money we leave in the hands of those who earn it and encourage more to earn higher wages. The experiences in Michigan and Colorado are great examples.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, not to be outdone here, since we have heard from Michigan and Colorado, but let me just say as well that in South Dakota we are leading the way in many respects. We are one of the few States which does not have a personal corporate income tax. For that reason we have attracted a lot of economic development to a State where certainly the climate is not always conducive to attracting people.

We have businesses coming into our State because we are very attractive and have a great work ethic. And we have in a systematic way in the last few years as well lowered taxes. On property taxes, our legislature went 5 percent farther. They lowered those taxes by 20 percent a couple of years back. Cumulatively, over the past 3 or 4 years, a 25 percent rollback in property taxes in our State. I think that is significant.

What it tells us that it is consistent with our philosophy and I think it is something that should apply here at the Federal level too. That is that we want to make the Federal Government

smaller and the family budget bigger. I think that is a principle that is shared by a lot of our governors, our State legislatures around this country. Frankly, we want to see Washington do less so that the American family can do more.

Mr. Speaker, when we in a systematic way work to that end, I think we give the opportunity to our people, our families, the hard-working Americans in all of our States and congressional districts to do what they do best.

So I would still say, and I think in having this discussion tonight it is important to remember that one of our first priorities and it has been mentioned earlier and I think we would all agree with it, is that we have to preserve Social Security. We have to do something about this enormous debt that we have accumulated.

Washington has not had the fiscal discipline up until recently for a very long time. And inasmuch as our States are doing well, the Federal Government is not doing so well when it comes to the debt that we have racked up on the next generation. I think that we need to put a systematic plan in place to address that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am cosponsoring legislation offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. NEUMANN) which would do that. I think perhaps some of my colleagues in the Chamber this evening are as well. That bill basically says that if there is a surplus, and there is some debate about that, but to the extent that there is a surplus, two-thirds of that should go to paying down the debt and restoring our trust funds, Social Security, transportation, environmental et cetera, and the last third should be used for lowering our tax burden on the people in America.

Furthermore, it puts a plan in place, a discipline over time that says the Federal Government cannot spend more than 99 percent of what it takes in in revenue. Each year we set aside 1 percent and apply that toward the debt. And having done that based on economic assumptions that I think are fairly modest in a period of 30 years, we would have actually eliminated in its entirety the \$5.5 trillion debt that we have accumulated.

This is very significant because as we pare down that debt, we also pare down the interest payment which is chewing up a good part of the Federal budget. This year about \$250 billion in interest. I use the illustration because it is something in my part of the country people will understand. But every personal income tax dollar raised west of the Mississippi River and then some is applied just toward the interest on the debt. That is something that when the Committee on Appropriations does the budget here in Congress that they do before anything else. They have to write the check to pay the interest on the debt.

That is tax dollars from hard-working Americans that do not go to any important governmental or public pur-

pose. We are not paving any roads with that or doing anything to advance education or improve the quality of our kids' education in this country. We are simply saying that that is a product of the 30 or 40 years of fiscal neglect.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is high time we do something to address that. I would certainly encourage my colleagues here this evening to work with us as cosponsors of that legislation and move us in a direction that will address the long-term issue, and that is the irresponsible spending patterns that we have had here which have led us to this point.

Mr. Speaker, I notice we have the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) here in the Chamber. I am wondering if he might have something to add to the discussion. We have been talking about what most of us have heard over the course of listening and town meetings back in our home districts.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. I wanted to share my perspective of the President's message that we heard here in this hall a few weeks ago. It was a pretty smooth message. But in the first two paragraphs, he talked about Social Security first. That is pretty basic. That has been applauded throughout the country.

But when he went on in the hour-long speech, he spent the money that could have put Social Security first. I guess it is pretty basic fundamentals. My colleagues have already chatted about it a bit. But we are balancing the budget by borrowing \$100 billion in his proposed budget from Social Security. And when we add up all of the trust funds, we really will increase the debt if we pass the President's budget by about \$140 billion to \$150 billion. That is increasing the debt.

We may not be spending more general fund revenues than we are taking in, but we are spending more money than we are taking in. To me that is basically fundamental. So I think the President in his smooth talk, as I call it, talked about Social Security first and then put it last.

The other issue about his overall proposal that bothered me in basic budgeting, this is only my second Federal budget but I have dealt with 19 State budgets. In the State, whenever we got a one-time funding source where we had a windfall of a few million dollars, in the State it was millions, here it is billions, but he was going to use the supposed talked-about tobacco settlement to build a budget. And when we take one-time revenues, and we may get them 2 or 3 years, I am not sure what the settlement will be or how soon it is going to pay out, but it is not forever revenue. It is temporary revenue.

When we build a budget with temporary revenue, down the road we are either going to cut that spending or raise taxes to replace that spending. That is bad budgeting. That is basic,

fundamental poor budgeting. That is part of the President's proposal.

□ 2300

I think if we really want to put Social Security first, I think we have a very short window. I think in the next 2 to 3 years, we have some unusual revenue growth, if we do not somehow screw up the economy in this country, if we do not take this opportunity to back out of borrowing from Social Security and actually start a trust fund, leave that 100 million, make that 100 billion. In a 3-year period if we could stop borrowing at all, we would already have accumulated 200 billion actual money in the bank to be invested wisely and could be building for those who are worried about Social Security in the future.

If it was my choice, if I were king, I would take the tobacco settlement and whatever payments are part of it. I know we have farmers to take care of. There is a lot of things to solve with the tobacco settlement because there are people that are going to be displaced out there. I have sensitivity to that. But whatever money is not allocated in that settlement, I would put in the Medicare Trust Fund. Now we have started to help extend the Medicare program for more than 10 years out because that is all that it is solvent today. Those are two things that would send the right message to especially the seniors in this country.

A couple other things that I wanted to mention was the sunseting the IRS. I see the President has taken us on for sunseting the IRS in the Tax Code as if that is irresponsible. I think the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT) did an outstanding job the other day of his theory that it should be a national debate in the next Presidential election. And if we sunset it and give ourselves the time to go through the next election, when we are electing the next President, we can elect a President that tells the American people what kind of a simplified Tax Code they want and that he is going to give them. I think it would be an absolute time to debate that nationwide.

Those are just a few of the things that I think are very important.

Mr. BLUNT. Let me say in that regard, the President, I think yesterday, started right down the path that we all should anticipate in the fight to sunset the Tax Code. The President said, if we sunset the Tax Code, we would not have mortgage deductions anymore. Who says we would not have mortgage deductions anymore? The President takes a couple of hundred words, a couple thousand words, maybe, out of a 5.5 million word Tax Code and holds those up to the American people and says, now, to save this, we have to have all of this.

The pressure to maintain the Tax Code is going to be right here in Washington. There is not a single thing in the Tax Code that somebody did not want in there. There is not a single

thing in the Tax Code that some special interest did not want in there.

The Tax Code is out of control. It is not a creature of the IRS. It is a creature of the Congress. But I think yesterday we saw exactly the reason that we need to go ahead and commit to slay the dragon of the Tax Code and then have the debate about a new system, because we saw the President get some response by just taking one appealing thing in a Tax Code that largely does not appeal to anybody and saying, you do not want to lose this. And if you slay the Tax Code without a new plan, you are going to lose this.

The truth is that the folks who are really out there to protect the 5.5 million word Tax Code, and by the way, the Declaration of Independence had 1,300 words in it, the entire Old and New Testament has 773,000 words in it. The Tax Code is eight times as big as the Old and New Testament. I think it is 42,000 pages of Tax Code and 20,000 pages of the IRS interpretations of what the 42,000 pages mean, and nobody understands that Tax Code.

But if we do not commit ourselves to eliminate the code first, the debate on what to replace it with will be used as the way to ensure that we never eliminate the code, because you will see the greatest efforts at class warfare. You will see the greatest efforts at generational warfare, all waged by people who want to save some sliver of that Tax Code that they worked so hard to get in there that does not help anybody in America but them.

The commitment that we would make as a Congress to eliminate the Tax Code at a future date, and I believe the bill that many of us, I am certainly cosponsoring the legislation, the date on our legislation is December 31, 2001, with the commitment to have a new system in place by Independence Day 2001, 6 months in advance of when it would necessarily have to go into effect, to slay that Tax Code and then have this national debate that has to meet the framework of being fairer, being simpler, producing no more revenue than the current Tax Code produces and to really truly eliminate the IRS as we know it, because the IRS is only the IRS because of a Tax Code that nobody fully understands. And that is what allows the IRS in its worst cases to be the IRS.

One of the most frustrating things in the world would have to be a well-intentioned IRS employee with a Tax Code that can mean anything somebody at the IRS decides it may mean in any given instance. We need to commit to eliminate that code, and I think the President is just as wrong on this as he was last spring when he told us the IRS does not need to be reformed. And then, again, 6 weeks ago here he turned to the Senate and says, and why do you not pass those IRS reforms that the House passed last year. Remember, he was opposed to those IRS reforms and said the IRS was running better than it ever had in any time certainly than it

was 5 years ago when he took office. That is just not true. He admitted as much in the State of the Union message.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, it was so ironic when the President made this speech about characterizing our efforts to rein in the IRS as somehow irresponsible, it is important to note where he made the speech. I do not want to malign the group he was before and speaking in front of, but it was a special interest group of a particular group of individuals who are involved in a certain aspect of financial institutions.

But that really illustrates what is sick about tax policy in Washington in the first place. You stand in front of the interest group that happens to be in town for one week or another, tell them what they want to hear about their little part of the Tax Code, and that, over time, if you look at it in reverse, is how the Tax Code was created to be the way it is now, why it is so ridiculous.

I think what brings us all here together as Republicans tonight is that we want to put the average American taxpayer first. We have spent a considerable amount of time traveling around our districts listening to real people who do not care about this loophole or that loophole or that advantage or this disadvantage in the Tax Code. They want the entire program reined in. They want us to exercise our authority and provide the oversight and demand the accountability that we ought to do, and they want us to focus on liberating the American public so that this Tax Code, which now represents about 20 percent of the burden just in Federal income tax to the average American family, is reduced.

Is that what you are hearing in your part of the State?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I hear, listening to our colleague from Missouri. What we are finding is at the State level Governors are aggressively slaying the dragons of big State government, whether it is South Dakota, whether it is Colorado or Michigan. They are trimming back on bureaucracy. They are lowering taxes. They are doing all the things that the other side said you cannot do it.

The people need this. Government has to deliver these services. And what we are seeing at the State level is kind of like, we can slay those dragons, and when we do, the average person benefits because they keep more of their own money.

We create more jobs which increases wages, and we have to learn that same lesson here in Washington, that we can go out and slay those dragons. We can slay the Tax Code and develop a better Tax Code than what has developed over the last 30 years because of special interests.

We can change the education bureaucracy here in Washington so that we are focusing on kids again. The education bureaucracy here in Washington

focuses on special interests. It focuses on everything but kids learning. The study that came out last week, the Timms international study, devastating for America. I think in science and math we scored 19, 20 out of 21 countries. That is an improvement because in some of the other studies that have been done internationally, we scored about 38 or 39. These were high school seniors. The only reason we moved up is we are not compared to as many countries as we were in the other studies.

But it is devastating that we are not turning out the kinds of kids out of our education system that we need to be turning out. We have gone around the country listening, and we will be in your State in a couple weeks. We have been, I think, in 14 different States. You have to focus on parents, local control, basic academics in the classroom and safe and drug-free schools. That is the message.

What we have learned is Washington programs are focused on bureaucracy and paperwork. We have 760 programs and, you say, hallelujah, now I know why we have an Education Department to coordinate all these 760 programs. Wrong. They go through 39 different agencies. We have got to slay that dragon, get the education bureaucracy in Washington out of here and get it focused on kids, parents and local control, and helping those children learn, not bureaucracy, bureaucrats or paperwork in Washington.

Mr. THUNE. Let me just pick up on what the gentleman from Michigan said there, because I think the underlying theme that we are hearing in all these discussions this evening is the whole issue of personal freedom, taking the bureaucracy out of Washington, D.C., and allowing families and State and local governments to do what they do best.

And really I think that seems to me, the gentleman from Missouri talked about the Tax Code, 34½ pounds, we put it on a scale. It is an atrocity. And you think about the captivity that that puts people in this country in. They are so dependent and need to be released and unburdened from the shackles of big government.

If we can come up with a way that simplifies that process, I did mine a couple weeks ago. I speak firsthand from this. It is a remarkable, remarkable experience to try and go through and sort through all those forms and try and come up with, get your tax return prepared and completed in a way that satisfies all those regulations. But I think the same thing is true in education.

We are not viewed, I do not believe, out there as people who want to do anything to undermine the education of our children. We want a higher quality system, a better value to the taxpayers which puts more of the choice and freedom back home in living rooms with the men and women of this country.

I happen to believe, as I think everybody in the Chamber this evening does, that fundamentally we are a lot better served, my children are infinitely better off and your children and grandchildren, if we have that focus, that point of control back home as opposed to here in Washington.

I think the underlying theme in everything we are talking about is liberating people from big government programs, from an education bureaucracy, from a tax bureaucracy, a revenue collecting bureaucracy, and putting more control and power in their hands. As the gentleman from Missouri mentioned earlier, there has been a lot of foot-dragging along the way.

IRS reform was an issue which was very popular with us, and the President basically pooh-poohed it until he found it was also popular with the American public. Then all of a sudden he was back at the table saying this is a great idea. You look at, along the way, welfare reform. Nobody said that could happen. A balanced budget, nobody said those things could happen. Now we are talking about scrapping the Tax Code. He is saying that is irresponsible.

The only thing that is irresponsible is defending the status quo. We have an opportunity here over the next couple of years to do something that is significant and historic, which builds upon the progress of welfare reform, balanced budget, lower taxes, Medicare reform, and that is to reform this Tax Code, to scrap the old one and start from the ground up with something that makes sense because the one that we have today does not.

If we have to bring everybody kicking and screaming at the White House along on this journey, so be it, because I think the American public supports us. They are going to be leading the way when we give them some opportunities to look at the alternatives that are out there. I think it is all about more personal freedoms, smaller government, lower taxes and putting more control and more decisionmaking authority in the hands of individuals as opposed to government.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. The Tax Code keeps cash out of the hands of families who might want to put their kids into a higher education setting or some other academic setting that would make them more marketable and more profitable in the job market, and these regulations that we talk about with respect to education drive up effectively the cost of education for all of our children throughout the country.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) is a former college president.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. One of the things that we all worked for and voted for last year right here on the House floor was a resolution that did exactly what you and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) and others want to do and the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was mentioning with edu-

cation. I know the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) was an advocate of this. That was, let us get what money we spend where it does the most good. Let us be focused on education, not focused on bureaucrats. This is the right kind of solution that we need.

I think 310 Members of the House, which means that lots of Democrats joined virtually all the Republicans, and we passed a resolution that said that 90 cents out of every dollar in every Federal elementary and secondary program needed to get to the classroom, the Dollars to the Classroom Act. And suddenly we are reducing all that money that is used up by bureaucrats, all that money that is used up by people figuring out new forms to fill out and by people that have to fill out those forms and by people that monitor those forms. We are saying, let us get that money to where it will do some good.

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Let us be sure that we do not waste \$1,800 for every classroom in America every year, like we are doing now when we are getting about 65 cents out of every dollar in the classroom. Let us get 90 cents out of every dollar in the classroom. Let us let parents be involved in that decision. Let us let local building administrators be involved in spending that money. But mostly let us let teachers and kids get together. Let us put that money not in the hands of some bureaucrats in Washington, or even in all of our State capitals, let us put that money in the hands of a teacher who knows every child's name in that class. That can make a difference.

Mr. THUNE. The gentleman presiding, it is his legislation we are talking about.

Mr. BLUNT. That is exactly right.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PITTS). The Chair would advise the gentlemen that there being no designee of the minority leader, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) may proceed for up to 15 minutes more.

The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, you are in the chair and cannot join us in the discussion, but also a Member of the freshman class the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) has led the way in urging this Congress and our Federal Government to put more cash into the classrooms and basically starve the bureaucracy back in Washington and put children first. And it is a project that we are all very happy to be a part of and be supporting and we commend him for his leadership.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) also has worked on similar efforts back in his home State, and he may have a little more to add to that.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. The gentleman used the words "starve the bureaucracy." As I look at the Washington bureaucracy, I do not think there is anybody starving.

The President, in his message, also talked about that government was smaller, I forget by what percentage than when he came here. When we add back the million people who have been taken out of the military, our government bureaucracy has grown immensely under the administration of the present President. I am told there are departments that have doubled. I think EPA has doubled in numbers of employees. There are other departments that are 50 percent bigger. While we were cutting the military immensely, the rest of this government, as far as personnel is concerned, has exploded.

There is a line item in the budget called general government. And I am going on memory here tonight because I have not looked it up recently, but if my memory is correct it was a \$10 billion line item that in his budget was going to increase to 17 billion. It was general government. That is personnel. That is bureaucracy. So he was asking for a 42 percent increase in that line item in this year's budget.

That is an area we need to take a look at it. I know I am personally having an audit done on how many employees there are in each department and how many there have been for the recent years. And if we want to waste money, build a huge bureaucracy. The Federal Government should not have these huge bureaucracies.

I know my communities cannot deal with EPA, my businesses cannot effectively deal with EPA, but they can effectively deal with their State environmental agencies, who should be implementing the programs that we designate or that we prioritize. So I think we can take a huge look at cutting back.

Pennsylvania had a Governor a few years ago by the name of Dick Thornberg. I think my colleagues know him or know of him. He cut the size of government from about 105,000 to 92,000. Now, at that time I was a State legislator and then ran for the Senate about that same period of time, but I was serving in government. As he cut the bureaucracy and improved the management, our casework in our offices, helping people deal with government, went down measurably because he made those departments much more efficient, more professionally run, with less people, so our workload of helping communities and people deal with government became much less.

As soon as we got a new Governor who did not pay attention to that and started adding more people to the payroll, our workload in our offices went up because of the inefficiency of the bureaucracy that was not well managed.

That is another point I wanted to make in my concluding comments. We measure Governors and Presidents on what they propose, not on what they do. We really should be taking a look at this administration and why did we have \$23 billion in wrongful spending in

Medicare; why do we have 21 percent error rate in the tax credits? We could go on and on with the long list. That is poor management.

That is the job of an administrator, is to run government. But we only talk about what they propose, what they promise, and what they are going to do for us, when the first job of a CEO is to manage a company. The first job of a President or a Governor is to manage their government. And we should be measuring our leaders on how they manage the resources that we give them and the programs we give them.

I think if we did that, things would change a lot because they would stop talking about new programs and they would start paying attention to managing government. And I think we need to change our whole focus.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. I have a question I would like to pose to my four colleagues, and that is with respect to this issue of reining in government and the success we have seen at the State level, what the President is criticizing, trying to rein in the IRS through sunset provisions is not new throughout the country. I am curious how many of my colleagues' States have sunset provisions that we deal with at the State regulatory level. Are any of my colleagues' States involved in those back home?

There are several States that do. I will give an example out in Colorado. Pennsylvania does. In Colorado, if we look at every regulatory agency in our State laws, at the end of the statute there is a termination date. The Public Utilities Commission, by way of an example. Eight billion dollars worth of commerce and industry is regulated by that agency in my State. At the end of the act, if we open up the law books, it says this agency expires and terminates, goes away effectively on, and it will say June 31 in some year out in the future, 5 or 10 years out in the future.

What these sunset dates do, and many people do not understand this, this does not mean the agency goes away, but what it does do is it shifts the burden away from the government and it takes the advantage away from the bureaucracy, away from the status quo, and gives all of the advantages for reform to the taxpayers and the people.

That is what would happen if we sunsetted the IRS, and the reason we are pushing so hard for it. Getting any incremental change in that act is so difficult here because we have to get 218 majority votes here, another majority vote in the Senate, we have to compromise it, too, and somehow find a way to get the President to sign it. That is a tall order. But if we shift the burden and say we must come up with majority agreement in all three, the House, Senate and the President, or else the whole agency expires, well, I think people will start negotiating a lot more seriously. They start putting the taxpayers ahead of the bureaucrats, they start putting real reform ahead of status quos.

And that is why sunset dates are so effective. They are responsible. They are done in several States and done so quite effectively. And I think we ought to take a lesson from the playbook from many States and employ sunset dates, not just on the IRS, although that is the best place to start, but in several regulatory agencies.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. If the gentleman will yield there, I would like to ask this question of the gentleman from Michigan, who is our education expert; if we had a sunset provision in all 700-some programs in the Department of Education, the gentleman's committee would be pretty busy, would it not, reviewing all those as their times came due?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank the gentleman for asking the question. Absolutely. Because if there is another agency in a department that needs to be sunsetted, not that we need to get rid of it but that we need to reevaluate its purpose, because we know we are not getting the kind of results that we want so we know we have to do something; then we have to go through and we ought to be evaluating those 760 programs. We know that out of those dollars, 30 to 35 cents never gets to the classroom, which is where the leverage point is.

So then we should come back, and I have a list here of what does the Federal education program do or what does the President want it to do. The President wants the Federal education program to build our schools and hire our teachers. Are those Federal responsibilities? I do not know. We really should have a good debate about that. I am not sure. I do not think so.

We want it to develop our curriculum, test our kids, feed them breakfast, feed them lunch, teach them about sex, teach them about drugs, do after-school programs. But other than that, it is our local schools. Now, are those, are all of those decisions best driven from Washington?

This is where the education department has evolved from since 1979. And if we go back through the debate, in the debate in 1979, the people who participated in support of the education department said we do not want to move control from parents and the local and the State level to Washington. We just want to facilitate. Well, in reality if we take a look at where that bureaucracy has gone, it has moved well beyond its original mandate. It should have been sunsetted so we could have reevaluated the direction and the impact and the performance on an ongoing regular basis, rather than creating an agency where bureaucrats are just feeding themselves and getting bigger and bigger and bigger and losing focus of their real job.

Mr. THUNE. If the gentleman will yield on that point, because it is an important point. The fact we do not have sunset provisions in Federal programs is what I think makes the President's budget so dangerous.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania made the point earlier about the fact that there is all this new spending: 39 new entitlement programs. We cannot create a program in this city and ever hope, even though its purpose ceases to exist, to get rid of it if the time ever comes.

So I think before we embark on this road of new Federal spending, new government, new Washington programs, which is clearly the direction that the President wanted to go when he came out with his budget, and I did not count it up, but a billion dollars a minute is a pretty astonishing rate of government growth, but that is what the State of the Union address was all about, creating new Washington bureaucracy and new Washington spending.

And I think that is a very dangerous road to start down, given the fact that any time we create entitlement programs in this city, they are there to stay.

I think that he is assuming a whole lot of things about the performance of this economy that we really do not know about. I think we would be much better served to the extent that we have addressed long-term issues like Social Security, like Medicare, having done that, that any dollars that are left, we ought to give them back to the taxpayers whose dollars they are in the first place and really ought to have first claim.

So I think you make an important point when you talk about all the various programs over time that have been created, never been evaluated. Before we head down that road again, I think the American public would be better served if we talk in a very fundamental way about ensuring that we do not create new Washington spending. I think that is an important point that we probably all agree on.

Mr. BLUNT. If the gentleman will yield, I think that is exactly right. I think what happens is, if you do have sunset provisions, every agency not only is aware that it is going to have to come up for review, but every assignment it is given is going to have to come up for review, and that just does not happen now.

We have lots of programs on the books that are not funded, are underfunded, or just out there waiting for that moment when they can come back in and grab some more money. Nobody ever challenges those things. I think that one of the great reviews we could do would be to do that.

I think one of our freshman colleagues, the gentleman from Texas (KEVIN BRADY) has legislation he is working on that would really put sunset provisions in as an automatic part of any new program that goes into effect, any new agency that goes into effect. Then of course we ought to go back and attach those same provisions to old agencies.

I think what happens in Colorado and other States that have this is the de-

partments themselves pretty quickly come back to the legislature and say, when they see something that is going to be a problem for them, when it comes time to defend it, when it comes time for them to be reauthorized, they say in advance, you know, we think this is really not working out like we thought it would. We think you ought to eliminate this, because we do not want to come back 2 years from now and explain why we have not been able to make it work. I think that is one of the things we could do to begin to get this government under control.

Also the other thing that has been mentioned so often tonight that we have taken great advantage of over the last 3 years has been the States themselves. How many times tonight in our discussion have we talked about, whether it is welfare programs or education programs, how much benefit we are getting by letting the 50 States be 50 laboratories for change?

There are great results happening in State after State after State where we have allowed them leeway in areas like welfare that they have not had before. The Governor of Wisconsin just the other day, as was pointed out, wrote the last welfare check. There are not going to be any more of those checks issued in that State. It has made a dramatic difference in the way they approach this problem.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I guess a concluding remark for me is one of the first things I said tonight. I think we really have 3 years to back out of the trust funds. If we do not stop borrowing from the trust funds the next 3 years, we probably will not have an economy that will allow us to do that. I think we have a limited time to stop borrowing from them. I think the pressure ought to be on.

I do not think we have to whack and cut with a cleaver. I think we just have to be a little bit frugal like we are with our own money, just a little bit frugal here in Washington. We can stop borrowing from the trust funds, and we can make sure Social Security and Medicare are strong and that our children do not have the debt that we are going to leave them if we do not do it.

Mr. SCHAFFER of Colorado. Our time has expired this evening. I appreciate the Speaker and his indulgence and for presiding tonight. By the way, Republican freshmen have an hour scheduled again next week on Wednesday, so I hope everybody will join us here again. We will continue our discussions about how we can move authority out of Washington back to the States and back to the policymakers and leaders who are closest to the people and know most about how to lead this great country.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. LUTHER of Minnesota (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today, March 4, on account of family illness.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for after 3 p.m. today and the balance of the week on account of a family emergency.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. MINGE, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. NETHERCUTT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. NETHERCUTT, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. CAMPBELL, for 5 minutes, on March 5.
Mrs. MORELLA, for 5 minutes, on March 5.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. HAMILTON.
Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
Mr. PALLONE.
Mr. DINGELL.
Mr. JOHN.
Mr. STARK.
Mr. FORD.
Mr. BENTSEN.
Mr. WISE.
Mr. PASCRELL.
Mr. SANDLIN.
Ms. NORTON.
Mr. KIND.
Ms. DELAURO.
Mrs. LOWEY.
Mr. FROST.
Mr. TOWNS.
Mr. VISCLOSKY.
Mr. SCHUMER.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. NETHERCUTT) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mrs. MORELLA.
Mr. FORBES.
Mr. KING.
Mr. DAVIS of Virginia.
Mr. WOLF.
Mr. PACKARD.
Mr. GILMAN.
Mr. GALLEGLY.
Mr. ROHRBACHER.
Mr. PORTER.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. RANGEL.
Mr. MCGOVERN.
Mr. CLYBURN.