

families and have subjected some of them to torture.

Despite government statements that, "The Maldives respects all religion", reports suggest the contrary.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government of Maldives to protect the religious liberty of all of its citizens and release the individuals who have been arrested for their religious beliefs. Religious liberty should be a fundamental human right of all peoples of the world.

PROTESTING THE EXCLUSION OF DEMOCRAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FROM MEETING WITH COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT

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

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House an event which I think is unwise and unprecedented.

Today, the new President of Colombia is visiting. But unlike previous visits of heads of state, only Republican Members have been invited to meet with him. In my 16 years in the House, I cannot remember a previous time when Members were excluded from such meetings based on party affiliation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for our foreign policy to become so partisan that only one party is invited to meet with a visiting head of State.

We have always had an "American" foreign policy, and to indicate that this is starting to change to foreign leaders is certainly unwise and unwarranted and very, very unfortunate.

The issues to be discussed affect the interest of all Americans, not just Republican Americans. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that not allowing Democrats into the meeting today with President Pastrana makes the House look foolish in the eyes of our visitors and foreign leaders and diminishes our ability to be effective as policymakers.

Mr. Speaker, are we for the first time today going to change our policy and make foreign dignitaries choose between meeting with Democrats or Republicans, or having to come back and meet with all of us twice? It is an insult to us as Americans, as Democrats, and as representatives of the people.

AS ELECTION DAY DRAWS NEARER, TAX CUT RHETORIC GROWS

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, as we can tell from the tone of the remarks and the date on the calendar, the rhetoric grows more and more pointedly partisan in this Chamber, and I guess that is a function again of time and of what transpires.

I have listened with interest this morning to my friends on the left con-

tinue to talk as if they are the saviors of Social Security. A couple of historic points might be in order.

First of all, for purposes of full disclosure, we should point out that our friends on the liberal side of the aisle over the 40 years of time when they were in control never set aside one penny to save Social Security. Zero point zero. Zilch. Nada.

On the other hand, the new majority embraces a plan that would take in excess of \$1.4 trillion and use it to save Social Security and use a relatively meager \$80 billion to allow the people of the United States to keep more of their hard-earned money.

What the left really tells us, Mr. Speaker, is: No tax cuts, no time, no how.

IN TRIBUTE TO VIC FAZIO

(Ms. HARMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, representing the other tough-to-hold seat in California, I know how hard the gentleman from California (Mr. FAZIO) has worked for his constituents.

I know his courage in fighting for responsible gun control; a woman's right to choose; equal treatment for all Californians, regardless of sexual orientation; and responsible campaign finance reform. And I know his incredible personal courage in returning here after the untimely death 2 years ago of his daughter, Anne.

Losing an election, which VIC never did, is hard. Losing a child is infinitely harder. Yet VIC and Judy have rebounded, and I think the perfect tribute this institution could pay to him after 20 years is to behave in a sober, bipartisan and fair fashion as we consider the very difficult matter of the President which is before us.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in commending VIC for his distinguished public career and proud to call him a friend.

VIC, best wishes to you, Judy and your family.

DEMOCRATS ATTEMPT TO SCARE SENIORS

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the liberals are making false and misleading arguments in their opposition to the Republican tax cut proposal. Every time we hear the other side accuse Republicans of raiding the Social Security Trust Fund or stealing from the Social Security Trust Fund, they are deliberately misrepresenting the truth in order to oppose tax cuts.

Just consider this. The liberals never accuse anyone of raiding the Social Security Trust Fund whenever it comes to spending. In fact, they have pro-

posed billions and billions of new spending without a single thought about Social Security.

It is only when Republicans want to pass tax cuts that they use a bogus argument about Social Security in order to scare seniors, just like they did for 2 years about Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is, liberals simply oppose tax cuts. The American people should know the truth. Under their definition, all spending is a raid on the Social Security Trust Fund: education, welfare, the big bureaucracy here in Washington.

But now we do have a surplus and I think, yes, we do need to save Social Security with 90 percent of the surplus. But any surplus over that should go to hard-working Americans in the form of tax relief.

THANK YOU, VIC

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I speak today in tribute to Congressman VIC FAZIO, one of the finest individuals I have ever known, a public servant who truly exemplifies the idea of "citizen representative," a close friend and political mentor of mine and of my husband Walter.

Mr. Speaker, I will never forget the support and assistance he gave me and my family and staff after Walter's death. He is successful as a Congressman because, although a proud Democrat, he has the ability to work in a bipartisan manner. He is a wonderful Caucus Chair, because, again, he is a voice for unity and consensus within our party.

Mr. Speaker, he will be missed by his constituents and by us all, and he will always be my friend. I say to the gentleman, "Thank you, VIC."

FAST TRACK SHOULD BE PASSED

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

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, American farmers are facing a huge challenge of low commodity prices and unfair competition from foreign governments. Tomorrow, Congress will take up the issue of fast track authority for this administration. Even though I have serious questions about giving this administration any authority on trade issues, considering its record, I do support fast track authority because of the very important part of the bill that assures agriculture full participation in trade negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, by this provision, trade agreements reached will be agriculture-sensitive. An agriculture representative, a trade representative, will monitor and report back to Congress whether such agreements and negotiation will help or hurt agriculture.

The key to agriculture's success is to open foreign markets so we can sell our commodities overseas. The fast track bill provides agriculture a seat at the tariff reduction table, all subject to final congressional approval. It should be passed.

SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

(Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, the House is considering a Republican tax bill which spends the entire anticipated budget surplus on tax cuts instead of saving it for Social Security. It is a tax bill that violates the budget rules. That is bad public policy.

Mr. Speaker, I have sponsored and voted for specific tax cut proposals in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 and capital gains tax reduction. I will support the Democratic alternative for tax cuts that take effect only when there is a budget surplus that does not include counting Social Security Trust Funds.

Save Social Security first, then offer tax cuts to hard-working people of America.

MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED FOR AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

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

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, America is in danger of losing its number one industry, agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, 1998 has been a disastrous year for farmers all across this great country of ours. And after months of pressure from Congress, the answer of the current administration to this problem was to support a \$500 million disaster package that originated across the way in the other body.

The Republican response to this has been much more meaningful and much more sensible. It is a plan that puts money in the pockets of farmers immediately to provide short-term relief. There is also a package to provide long-term relief in the form of tax incentives and tax relief to farmers. This is a meaningful solution to the current problem in ag country.

Now, the administration has come back with a plan that puts farmers and this country deeper in debt and will depress prices for the long-term.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the administration to cut out the political rhetoric and provide real, meaningful leadership in the arena of agriculture.

SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST

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

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, over 500,000 retired Arkansans depend on their Social Security monthly check as a necessary source to supplement their retirement income. In fact, the First Congressional District of Arkansas has the largest number of seniors for whom Social Security is their only source of income.

Right now, millions of working Americans are paying into the Social Security system and are counting on it for when they retire. This year, some have suggested that we have a budget surplus. That just simply is not so.

Of course, there is an enormous temptation to use the so-called surplus or the Social Security Trust Fund to cut taxes. I am all for tax cuts, but not on the backs of our children and grandchildren, not on the backs of our retirees who depend on Social Security as their only source of income.

Mr. Speaker, it must be there when we need it. Congress must save Social Security and not rob the Social Security Trust Fund.

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DECEPTION

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, when the other side repeated over and over again during the 1996 campaign that the Republicans wanted to cut Medicare, it was a lie. Many people believed it and so they continued to say it.

When the other side repeated over and over again in 1995 that the Republicans wanted to cut the school lunch program, that was a lie. Yet that worked, too, to some degree. Now it is 1998. The other side has already started on another deception that lowering taxes on farmers and ranchers and families would threaten Social Security. That, too, is a lie.

How ironic that the party that did nothing, nothing for 40 years to fix a system they knew was going broke, is now attacking our commitment to use 90 percent of the surplus to fix Social Security while giving the remaining 10 percent back to the American people. How is it that billions of dollars in liberal spending do not threaten Social Security but lower taxes for farmers and ranchers somehow would?

America's farmers and ranchers need a break, and it is time to give them much-needed tax relief.

ON THE BUDGET SURPLUS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this year we have a great opportunity, a once-in-a-generation chance to really save Social Security. We can take our

budget surplus and begin to pay back the IOUs into our Social Security system. Unfortunately, though, Republicans are putting politics first and Social Security second. They want to raid the surplus to fund their political agenda. They put fiscal irresponsibility first and Social Security second.

No piggy bank money should be used, Mr. Speaker, for election year giveaways. Instead let us bank all of the surplus to shore up Social Security today.

TAX CUTS

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, the House this week is going to be considering an \$80 billion tax cut. As far as tax cuts are concerned, the provisions contained in it would receive wide bipartisan support in this body. Perhaps it is not as pro-growth oriented as much as I would like to see, but as far as tax cuts, it is not bad.

The problem is, it is going to be relying on the so-called surplus to pay for it. The fact is, there is no surplus unless we are willing to borrow and steal from the Social Security trust fund.

I commend the leadership for being up front and honest about it, that they are intending to take the money from that trust fund to pay for this tax cut, but it is the wrong policy. It is the wrong thing to do for our seniors and children, and we should not engage in that election year tax cut in order to satisfy a certain constituency.

Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, was on the hill yesterday and when asked what would be the best use of the so-called surplus, he said, I will tell you what not to do. Do not use it for a permanent new spending program and do not use it for tax cuts when the surplus may never materialize in this very volatile international financial crisis which may have a devastating impact on the U.S. economy.

I encourage my colleagues to oppose the tax cut.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, over the past 6 years Democrats have worked extremely hard and pretty much on their own, I might add, to get our fiscal house in order. We have balanced the budget, created a better economy, and we have, in fact, generated the potential, the potential of a surplus to help pay back the debt that we owe to Social Security.

Let me tell my colleagues now about how that is being jeopardized. The Republican leadership in this House wants to take the surplus in the Social