

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I guess I am just a little bit confused on the basis of initial remarks by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) because the arguments that he just made were exactly the ones he made when we had the welfare debate on the floor of this House, and I know that he would have rather had his position prevail than the one that did, and that is the bill that we passed and sent over to the Senate. And what it sounded like was he wanted to revisit the debate that occurred in the House prior to House passage of our legislation, and what I would urge him to do is, if he wants to have another chance at that debate, would be to vote for this resolution which says it is "the sense of the House of Representatives that the 107th Congress should complete action."

If the House has passed legislation to complete action, we have to get the Senate to pass legislation, and I would hope that that impassioned speech that he just made to us, those of us who debated and already voted on the welfare bill, could be made to his colleagues in the Senate so that they would move a bill off the floor, we could go to conference, and he would then hope that his position would prevail in conference. But to say that he is opposed to urging the Senate to complete action is to basically say that wonderful and impassioned speech he made is not going to go anywhere because we cannot get the conference to try to get his position to prevail. And so moving this resolution hopefully will nudge the other body along so that his position can be presented in conference and the House and the Senate can resolve their differences.

So I do not understand how folks are arguing that they want to be on both sides. One, this is meaningless, and, two, his impassioned plea ought to be heard again; and the only place it can really be heard again by the House is in conference.

Vote for the resolution, and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) I will see in conference.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The Chair would make the following advisory: that as recently as December 19 of 2001 in response to a point of order, Members are reminded to confine their remarks to factual references to the other body and avoid characterizations of Senate action or inaction, remarks urging Senate action or inaction, remarks urging other Members to urge the Senate to take action or inaction, or references to particular Senators.

The Chair would also note that there have been remarks during the course of debate where praise has been heaped upon the other body, and just as criticism is not appropriate, neither is praise as a characterization.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank the Speaker for that clarification.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds just to respond to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. Speaker, it is just regrettable that we did not follow a bipartisan action in this body like some others have done on the other side of the aisle. I think that is regrettable because that has made it much more difficult for us to reach an agreement with so few days left in this session, and I still say this is a meaningless resolution. It does not do one thing, and I think Members can vote any way they want, and they will be surprised to learn that this is not a Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad the chairman of the committee spoke, and I want to respond and also to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON), because I think this resolution is an effort to shift the blame. The bottom line is, okay, the Senate should act. But why are they having trouble acting? It takes 60 votes. A major reason is because the House started this debate on the wrong foot including the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON). They started on a partisan approach. There was no effort to work with those of us who worked on welfare reform in 1995 and 1996, including the ranking member of the subcommittee. Zero effort. And that included the administration. It came forth with a proposal that in the judgment of the administrators, the vast majority of State administrators, was the wrong way to go. They said it was going to create flexibility. Also, there was the problem of poverty, that such a large percentage of the people who were moving off of welfare to work remained in poverty, and the studies show that the average income for people who have moved from welfare to work is something like 2,000 bucks a quarter. So we said let us build on welfare reform and its successes, let us acknowledge where it has had shortcomings and move on from there.

But you said no, you are going to proceed like you did on prescription drugs on a partisan basis, and the administration was part and parcel of that strategy. So now you are reaping not the benefits but the downsides of that approach, and you say to the Senate act after you got this off on the wrong foot, and the administration continues to insist on its bill which cannot receive 60 votes in the Senate.

□ 1230

There was a bipartisan effort within the Finance Committee, very contrasting with the partisan approach that you took.

So now you are saying it is the Senate's fault when the basic fault was the failure to do this in the right way in the first place right here. It was inexcusable for you and for the chairman not to sit down with Democrats, surely those who had worked on welfare reform, who had helped to build child care and day care into it and see if we could find common ground. So you have no common ground in the first place. The vote was 229-197 here. Inexcusable. What do you expect now?

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

The gentleman's recollection of the process of our subcommittee is, in my mind, completely faulty. Remember, one of the primary goals of the other party's approach, the Democrats' approach on that subcommittee, was to include as a major goal of the new welfare reform bill to reduce poverty and, indeed, we did that. Second, They were very interested in more education and training and we do that.

So it was a very good bill. It got through the House with a bipartisan vote. The Senate has not acted. We need to go to conference to get this bill to the President's desk.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES).

Mr. HAYES. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I admire and respect the gentleman from Maryland. I appreciate his point of view, but I have the opposite point of view. We have been working very hard. When welfare reform first came up, there was complete and total resistance on the other side of the aisle. We have gotten together and we have passed a good bill in the House on a bipartisan basis. I would love to have had more votes. That would have been wonderful. But the clear, pure fact remains, article 1, section 7, clause 2 of the Constitution simply requires that the House and the Senate have to pass legislation before it can be signed by the President and become law. The House has done their portion. The remainder is clear. We need compliance with the Constitution. That is what this debate is about. It is very meaningful.

It is very clear that 60-plus pieces of legislation have been passed under article 1, section 7, clause 2 by the House of Representatives. Those pieces of important legislation lie dormant. I thank the gentlewoman for bringing this to the House and I encourage that we support and pass this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, 6 years ago, despite an outcry of criticism, the U.S. Congress passed the most sweeping welfare reform measures ever. Now, 6 years later, no one can argue that this reform has been an overwhelming success. We have worked to end a cycle of dependence and replaced it with a spirit of self-sufficiency. These welfare-to-work success stories are proof positive of what I have always said—a government support check, while helpful, is no substitute for a paycheck.

On May 16 of this year, this House passed comprehensive welfare reform, the President

is asking for reform, the American people deserve reform and the Senate has not taken up this important legislation. Now is not the time to turn our backs on these successful reforms. We have replaced a cycle of government dependency with families that are proud of the work that they do and that are no longer dependent on a government check. That's the right thing to do to strengthen families, and we need to keep that record of success going.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to respond to the gentlewoman from Connecticut. Current law allows the States to use education and training as part of the core work requirement in welfare. States have used that well and it has worked well. The bill that passed this body takes away that flexibility from the States. That is why the Governors are upset. That is why legislators are upset. That is why administrators are upset. And that is why people are upset. You take away the flexibility of the States on education and training for women trying to get off the welfare system.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, there are 4 scheduled legislative days remaining until the end of this fiscal year. Four days remaining. There are people watching the proceedings here in the gallery and all around the country who may be thinking that what they are watching is the House of Representatives at work, carrying on the business of the people. No, unfortunately they are wrong. We are sitting here chatting about a resolution to express the sense of the House that Congress should complete action on the welfare bill. We are not talking about completing action on anything right now with 4 scheduled legislative days remaining.

We now have eight, count them, eight appropriations bills that have not been passed, with 4 days remaining. We could be working on that legislation right now. So it is really quite amazing that the Republican leadership would squander its opportunity to make real progress on a legislative agenda, real progress on addressing the problems and concerns of the American people by taking up issues that are completely under their control right now.

The Democrats, given our minority position, have limited ability to control the agenda, so we have a discharge petition right now to take up a piece of real legislation that would reduce the cost of prescription drugs, H.R. 5272. This is a bill that would stop the gaming of the system and would allow real competition so that we could find lower prices for prescription drugs in this country. This is something that people really care about. Let us do something real and stop this chitchat.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would remind the preceding speaker that the Senate has not acted on wel-

fare reform and the Senate has not acted on prescription drugs. The House has reauthorized welfare reform and the House has passed a very strong bill providing prescription drugs to seniors as an entitlement. It is very disturbing that 12 days before this bill expires, before the welfare reform bill that has reduced poverty among children more dramatically than any change in public policy in my lifetime, that it could languish unauthorized. The House has acted. The Senate has not. The fact is there are 12 days and that this Congress cannot complete work on welfare reform alone.

Mr. Speaker, welfare reform has helped women and children in America. It has been a good thing in their lives. We need it. For the preceding speaker to have said that we have cut work education and training is simply wrong. It is true we do not allow 12 months of vocational education, but for the first time we not only allow 4 months of any kind of education, whether it is vocational or not, but then 2 full days for 5 years. So we allow ongoing education which not only can help you prepare yourself for a job but through which then you can develop the skills to advance your career and move up the salary and career ladder. It is the most generous inclusion of education and training and opportunities in welfare reform that we have ever passed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority whip.

Mr. DELAY. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, it looks like we are prepared to vote on a resolution that lays out exactly why the country needs and expects to see the 5-year reauthorization of welfare reform law finished sooner rather than later.

Remember, we only have 7 days remaining before the historic reforms will expire on September 30. There are two things we ought to bear in mind. First, the main reason welfare reform needs to be reauthorized and, second, what it takes to get the job done. Welfare reform has been good for America. It is replacing welfare checks with paychecks. It is fostering independence. It is boosting personal incomes. And it is truly improving the lives of millions of children.

We have to reauthorize welfare reform because there is more to be done to help millions of struggling families develop dignity and self-respect. We have been working on reauthorization since January. In February we built the HOPE Action Team. We pulled together committee and subcommittee chairs, administration officials and other Members of Congress. We held weekly meetings to drive both the timetable and the policies to ensure timely passage. We met twice a week. We worked late into the night. We stayed at the table to hammer out our differences so that we could put up a good bill here on this floor. It was a lot of work for a lot of people.

At the same time, I urged our Members to learn more about welfare reform by visiting former welfare offices that are now job placement centers. I urged our Members to meet with folks that are involved in the system. Many of us did sit down with both folks who are still on welfare and people who have left welfare for the world of work. We wanted their perspective on the changes that we made 6 years ago and the improvements that still needed to be made. We learned a lot.

Back in April, I visited the Texas Workforce Center in Houston. A man told me that welfare reform had changed his life and the changes he made offered his children a powerful lesson in doing things the right way. He said, "They saw me getting up with them each morning," because it was time to go get a job. "I could see in their eyes that they were happy about that." I think that is what it is all about.

In closing, I would like to remind the Congress that it takes work to pass a good bill. It takes time and effort to bring everyone together. It takes time to get a bill out of committee. And when you are dealing with several committees of jurisdiction, it takes even more work. Securing final passage of the bill is an even tougher assignment. But the House completed its work. We put in the time and we got the job done for the American people. Our work in the House will pay off for the American people, but it will all be for nothing unless and until Congress finishes welfare reauthorization.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, normally as the ranking member of the subcommittee that has jurisdiction over welfare, I would make a recommendation to my colleagues as to how they should vote on legislation affecting welfare and TANF reauthorization. I do not really have a recommendation to my colleagues on this resolution because I do not think it does anything. I really do think we are wasting time today.

I would like to see TANF reauthorization done this year. We should get it done. It is extremely important. The gentlewoman is right. We need to reauthorize the program. But I have a recommendation to the Republican leadership. Use this time to pass the appropriation bills we have not passed yet. We have not even taken up appropriation bills for the first time here. We normally spend a day or two on the important appropriation bills. With 4 legislative days left, you are not going to schedule them, are you? But, instead, you are going to schedule a resolution that does nothing. We should be talking about what we are going to do with seniors on prescription medicines within the Medicare system, not rely upon private insurance which has already left my constituents in Maryland. But, no, instead we have a resolution before us that really does nothing.

I have heard some of my Republican colleagues say that the other body has

not done anything. I know we are not supposed to characterize, you are using that as a fact, and you are wrong. The relevant committee in the other body has in fact brought out a bipartisan bill. We should embrace it. But instead, no, our Republican friends in this body are still hanging on to what we did earlier that has no chance of being enacted. We do need to talk and work out a bipartisan bill. But that is not what is happening here today.

Let me just, if I might, quote from some traditionally Republican sources. A Republican State legislator speaking on behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures talking about H.R. 4737 said, "What troubles State legislators is not that the House bill focused on work but that it will to force States to establish community work programs at the expense of those who have left or never been on the rolls."

Business groups have testified before our committee, "Under these requirements, many States would have to reduce or abandon their current efforts to place welfare recipients in jobs and prepare them for employment in favor of workfare programs that generate 'work' hours, however unproductive."

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree that we need to reauthorize TANF in the 107th Congress. The only way that can be done to help our States is if it is done in a bipartisan way.

□ 1245

Unfortunately, the majority, the Republicans, have refused to include the Democrats in this process. They have refused to really follow the recommendations of our States, the people who manage our welfare system. As a result, we are now faced with a situation where the other body in fact has acted in a responsible, bipartisan way, and still we pretend that we cannot get together. We are going to play hard ball, to the effect that nothing is going to get done. Well, I regret that, because a lot is at stake, the people in this Nation who depend upon these programs to take care of their children, to prepare themselves for work.

Yes, we should be moving people out of poverty in this Nation; we should be building upon the successes. I supported welfare reform 5 years ago. I support reauthorization of welfare this year. It is an important program, and we need to get it done.

I urge my colleagues to vote any way that they want to on this resolution, because I do not think it will do anything. It does express some sentiments that are important, and I think some of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle may feel that way. But I know I am expressing the majority sentiment when I wish this time would have been used to bring forward the appropriations bills so we could have our debate on issues we have not acted upon in this body.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Before recognizing the

gentlewoman from Connecticut, there has been some discussion at the dais about potentially the gentlewoman using her time at the conclusion of the Committee on Education and Workforce time. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) still had 30 seconds remaining at this time.

Is the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) inclined to close out her portion of the debate now or reserve it to the conclusion of the Committee on Education and Workforce debate?

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield my remaining 30 seconds to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) to control.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield my remaining 30 seconds to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), who is managing the time for the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would note that terms like "bipartisan" and "responsible" are just as much characterizations as "irresponsible" and "partisan," and are inappropriate references to the Senate.

It is now in order during the course of the resolution to consume the time allotted to the Committee on Education and the Workforce. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) will be recognized for 15½ minutes and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) will be recognized for 15½ minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in May, my colleagues and I passed important legislation to reauthorize the 1996 welfare reform law, one of the most successful social policies ever enacted by Congress. It has transformed the lives of millions of families and helped them achieve self-sufficiency. The 1996 welfare law has done its job, and now it is Congress' job and unique opportunity to improve upon that 1996 act.

The key reason why many former welfare recipients are leading independent lives today is clear: we require individuals to work for their benefits. Under the old system, welfare families could expect a lifetime of cash assistance without engaging in constructive activities of any kind.

When Republicans gained control in 1994 of this Congress, we vowed to change our Nation's welfare system. It took awhile. The debate was spirited. But by 1996, after vetoing the bill twice, a reluctant President Clinton finally signed the landmark Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act into law.

The success of those reforms has been extraordinary. Welfare caseloads have fallen over 50 percent, nearly 3 million children have escaped poverty, and the black child poverty rate is now at its lowest point ever.

Between 1996 and 1999, overall spending on cash assistance in my home State of Ohio declined by \$19 million a month, enabling the State to increase funding for job training, child care, literacy and transportation programs that further assist families in moving toward self-sufficiency.

The legislation the Committee on Education and the Workforce committee passed in early May builds on that success. Based on President Bush's reform blueprint and introduced by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from California (Chairman MCKEON), the Working Toward Independence Act strengthens the work requirements in current law, which will ensure that even more welfare families are able to move into productive lives. This measure was incorporated into the comprehensive welfare reform bill that passed the House in May.

The bill increases child care funding by over \$2 billion and places an increased emphasis on improving the quality of care for our young children. With welfare caseloads cut in half since the welfare reform law was enacted, States will be able to devote significantly more money to expand access to quality child care.

We know that State and local leaders have been on the front lines of welfare reform. The flexibility in the 1996 law is one of the reasons it has worked so well. That is why this bill would give States and localities even more flexibility. With broadened waiver authority, they will be able to continue the kind of innovation that has proven so successful over the last 5 years.

Welfare reform is a top priority for this Congress. President Bush deserves a chance to sign this important piece of legislation into law this year. For the good of millions of Americans moving from welfare to work, this reauthorization must be completed by the conclusion of the 107th Congress. I urge my colleagues to approve the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, many would take issue with some of the broad terminology in the so-called "whereas clauses" in this resolution, but I do not really think that is quite the issue here. I do not think there are too many who would argue with the desire, mutually felt by everyone in this Chamber, and I assume in the other Chamber, for completion of the conference's work.

The real fact of the matter is it seems a little disingenuous to be standing here talking about a rather meaningless resolution, as we have here today, filling up time that could be used to get the business of the House done. I would think that the Republican majority should be more than a little bit embarrassed that this is the best that they can do at this particular time of the year.

We have, what, eight more spending bills to finish before this year that apparently the leadership on the other side cannot muster and move the agenda on, so we sit here talking about a resolution that everybody is well intentioned to get the conferees' work done. You can say that in about one-half a minute.

But we will be out of here in a little while today. We are not staying to complete the work of the House. We were out of here yesterday by about 3:00 or 3:30. We did not come in Monday. We are not going to be here Friday. We are not coming in next Monday. So you talk about the time left to pass this particular bill out of the other House. Well, perhaps it is better than spending all of our time instructing the other House how to do their business, we could talk about how this House might do its business.

After all, we could do a lot that would change people's lives better for their welfare. We could bring forward the health and human services and education bill. Would that not be a marvelous factor. If we want to talk about things that would help people's lives and really matter, we could bring up that bill.

But the problem is that the majority knows that their budget of last year does not allow for that. This administration put out a budget and went around the country with my colleague from Ohio as part of the group doing a real ceremonious occasion talking about the Leave No Child Behind Act.

Well, the fact of the matter is their budget leaves many children behind, because if they brought up the education spending bill, on that budget they would be about \$7 billion short. We have November 5 coming up; and between now and November 5, there are not too many people on the other side of the aisle who want to make it clear to the American people that they are coming up short on their promises.

So instead of bringing forward the spending bills before the end of the fiscal year and before November 5, we are sitting here banging back and forth on a resolution that has no import and no meaning except for great intentions, which we all share.

We could do a lot for people. We could do something about education; we could do something about Head Start. People that are on welfare and people that are not on welfare need to have their children get an education and get a start in school and be ready for school at an early age. We could bring forward bills that would allow us to put more resources into that program, which has proven to be successful.

We could do more for child care. Certainly the welfare bill that passed the House does not do enough. That is one of the reasons I perceive why it is a bit tied up on the other side, because people want to try to reach some non-partisan or bipartisan resolve as to how that bill might improve its edu-

cation piece and its job training piece and in fact its child care piece.

But this is a very partisan group that we see bringing forward things, and that is why the House bill does not do it, and that is why there is difficulty getting it done in the other body.

Mr. Speaker, we can bring forward matters that talk about school programs and after-school programs that would help many families in this country. But the House does not do that. They are busy talking about this inane legislation before us now.

Mr. Speaker, last year when the House passed its budget, it was the administration's budget, and they had a \$1.7 trillion tax cut, there were many like myself and others who argued that that tax cut was way too big and it did not distribute any tax breaks fairly across a broad spectrum.

But whatever that debate is, that debate is by the board. Things have happened since then: September 11, a change in the economy, many more reasons to spend. The CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, is telling us that that tax cut is probably responsible for almost half of the decline in our surplus. We are no longer in a surplus; we are going into a deficit for some unforeseeable future period of time.

All of these things have changed, and what we need to do as the House, Mr. Speaker, is come back and revisit that budget. I understand why the other side is embarrassed to come forward and tell the American public they cannot deal with the health and human services and education spending bill because their budget would be \$7 billion short.

So let us deal with that. Let us have a conference and sit down in a bipartisan or nonpartisan way and try to work through that to find out how we can help American families, how we can provide for public schools, where 90 percent of our children go, and give them the kind of investments they need and not leave them \$7 billion short of the President's promise.

Let us talk about what we can do for Head Start and Early Head Start and child care programs so the people can get to work. Let us talk about job training programs that this administration intends to cut and talk about filling them properly when people are in fact being unemployed at higher rates than was anticipated, and let us talk about doing something for those in terms of unemployment compensation, and healthcare for those unemployed, matters which, for some reason, are not being brought up in front of this House now with the small amount of remaining time that we have.

There are many, many things that we could do that would better fill our time than taking up a resolution that is going to have no impact and has no business telling the other side on this Hill what to be doing.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that in mind, I would just say that I am going to re-

serve the balance of my time and let some other speakers go, but I think this time could be much better spent doing the real business of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the sponsor of this resolution, the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP).

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, it is instructive to note that sometimes it is important to stay focused and that when the House passes repeated resolutions, sometimes that helps us get focused and get a bill to the President's desk. I would point to the stimulus bill that finally, after the House passed a stimulus bill four times, actually got to the President's desk and helped keep Americans on the job and stimulate our economy.

So today we are here to talk about staying focused on welfare reform and to advance it the next step. We all know that in 12 days the welfare reform authorization bill will run out, and families all around this country deserve to know what the program will be in the coming years if it affects their families, and States need to know that too for their budgets.

The fact is in our country freedom and opportunity depend on being able to get on the first rung of the ladder and begin a climb up that rung of the ladder, out of poverty into independence. The only way that is possible is to have a job and to build your skills and build on that job and begin to grow into independence. Our welfare reform bill helps families do that.

I want to mention the way that I think it is most important, and that is the increase in child care. As I move around my community and talk to families, talk to people that are part of the support system, talk to people that are running the day-care centers in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods, what I hear over and over is that more dollars are needed for child care.

□ 1300

Many families and many moms, as they expand their work opportunities, need to know that their children are in a good, safe childcare facility. They need to have that reassurance that their children are well cared for and that they can afford the childcare.

So we help families that are in this transition period going from dependence and government control of their life to independence, opportunity, having choices they have never had before, by making sure the resources they need to make that transition are there.

I am thankful that the House has passed the bill, and I want to thank the committees for passing this resolution. It will help us stay focused and make sure that we get this to the President's desk.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I just wonder how many times Members of this side of the aisle are going to have to be bringing up issues like education

and money for prescription drugs to get the other side focused on the business of this House, and not the other body, so that they can be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong unity with my colleagues in urging passage of the welfare reauthorization bill some time this year. We do have a responsibility to provide meaningful job training, job training that will work with our community colleges, our vocational schools; work that fits into training programs that are not eligible under the House bill. We need to get families back to work. We need to provide quality child care that will allow our children to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment.

The House bill fails to do that. In Minnesota right now, I have waiting lists. I have waiting lists with thousands of children. The House welfare reform bill will increase, increase in Minnesota the number of children on the waiting list.

I have heard from my county, I have heard from the State of Minnesota, I have heard from welfare reform recipients. Child care is critical, child care is needed, and child care is lacking in the House bill.

Passing welfare reform during this Congress is not the only responsibility we must take. Families and seniors and all Americans are deeply concerned about skyrocketing health costs. Today's health care spending continues to consume too large a portion of all families' incomes and causes too many children to live in poverty. And, oftentimes, it is the reason why families end up in welfare.

The average price paid for brand name prescription drugs is often three times, three times the same medicine in generic form. The residents in Minnesota's 4th District should not have to pay significantly more for the same medicine simply because it has a brand name attached to it.

These are lifesaving medicines. We are dealing with lifesaving medicines, not designer jeans. Now is the time to close the loophole that allows some drug companies to continue their stranglehold on the market. We have arrived at a point where people throughout this country are literally breaking their prescription pills in two, scrimping and saving every dime to pay for their lifesaving medication. We cannot allow this to continue.

We have an historic opportunity to pass legislation that restores fair competition and stops the continued rise in drug prices. This legislation has already passed the other body and we must act now. We cannot continue to keep affordable drugs out of the reach of people who need them the most. To do that would be unconscionable. To do that puts families in poverty. To do that can indirectly add to our welfare rolls.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. McKEON), the chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of House Resolution 525.

In May, the House of Representatives passed a welfare reform bill that builds on the success of the 1996 law which has been nothing short of remarkable and has hushed the naysayers who said requiring welfare recipients to work for benefits would further bind poor families to a life of poverty. But the Senate has not acted on welfare legislation.

In May, the House passed a welfare reform bill that will continue to dismantle the shackles of welfare that chain millions of American families to a life of poverty. Yet, the Senate has not acted on welfare legislation.

In May, the House passed a welfare reform bill that includes significant funding increases for child care, boosting discretionary funding for the Child Care Development and Block Grant to \$1 billion over 5 years. Still, the Senate has not acted on welfare legislation.

The simple truth is that welfare reform based on work helped to lift 3 million children out of poverty. Employment of single mothers is at an all-time high at more than 70 percent, and 700,000 fewer single mothers are living in poverty today than in the 1990s.

The bill passed by the House in May provides for 16 hours per week of education, training, and other constructive activities as defined by the State. The education opportunities, balanced with the 24-hour per week work requirements, are more than sufficient to help welfare recipients find fulfilling work that will help lead them and keep them out of a life of poverty.

In my district in southern California, over the course of 5 years, going to school part-time, 16 hours a week, a student can earn an associate's degree and, in some cases, a bachelor's degree. With an associate's degree, a student can begin a fulfilling career at a number of well-paying jobs. The average annual salary of a mechanic in my State is \$31,250; a registered nurse, \$56,140; computer specialist, \$45,380. Associates' degrees are offered in each of these professions.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution and I believe that the House welfare reform passed by the House achieves the balance between the work requirements and additional education and training which will help pull millions of families from poverty.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the end of September is approaching. The House has passed only 5 of 13 appropriations bills, and yet here we are tak-

ing precious time to debate a meaningless resolution urging the Senate to pass a welfare reform bill. Do I want the Senate to pass a welfare reform bill? Of course I do. I want them to pass a good welfare reform bill, a bill that gives welfare recipients access to the education and training they need to get jobs that pay a livable wage; a welfare bill that ensures that there will be safe and affordable child care for children while their moms are away from home, and a welfare bill that holds States accountable for helping families move towards self-sufficiency.

Rather than taking time here on the House Floor to debate the Senate's schedule, I urge the House leadership to attend to the important business of the House, such as the generic drug bill that has already passed the Senate. If the leadership here in the House really wants to do something to help families, passing the Greater Access to Affordable Pharmaceuticals Act, the GAAP Act, would do the trick.

In the year 2001, for the fourth year in a row, Americans increased their spending on prescription drugs by more than 17 percent, and it is known that the longer a big drug company can keep a generic drug off the market, the more it costs consumers. The GAAP Act would get generic drugs to the market faster, helping American families save money. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the GAAP Act would save consumers over \$60 billion over the next 10 years; \$60 billion.

So let us help all families, both those on welfare and those who are not. Let us stop wasting precious floor time on the business of the Senate and instead get on with the legitimate business of the House, such as passing the rest of the appropriations bills and the important bills that are before us like the GAAP Act.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 525. This resolution keeps our commitment to America's kids and to America's great promise of welfare reform. Our welfare reform bill adds an additional \$2 billion in extra funding for childcare and developmental block grants. This makes a very good bill become even better with more child care. Why is that? Well, more funding means more kids covered. More kids covered means more parents working, and that is our ultimate objective, to give every American the opportunity to work and to gain the dignity and self respect that comes with providing for your own family.

The past 6 years of welfare reform have shown us what works and what does not work. When I meet with former welfare recipients throughout my congressional district, each and every one of them tells me that their

success simply would not have been possible without childcare assistance. The House has passed an outstanding bill that builds upon the welfare successes of the past 6 years. Let us get it to the President's desk and into law as quickly as possible.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time. I rise along with many others on this side and really both sides that have encouraged the passage of this resolution and our encouragement to see to it that we make the reauthorization of welfare reform and welfare to work a reality.

While I have listened to some of the reasons to somewhat diminish any enthusiasm for this resolution, I thought to myself, facts are stubborn things. We have legitimate differences between bodies of the Congress and between individuals on the potential of war, on certain appropriations, certain legal questions, the Patients' Bill of Rights, and some are legitimate, some are political, some are not. But facts are stubborn things. Nobody disagrees that we have changed lives in America, this Congress did, for 3 million Americans. Nobody disagrees that there are 2 million more Americans out there who we can help. Nobody disagrees with that. Some may disagree with the degree of help, but no one disagrees that what many feared would put people on the streets has changed their lives. It would be sad and tragic for those among us that need the most help from this Congress to suffer because this Congress got in so many differences during meaningful debates where there were issues of differences that it forgot those who have been forgotten the most. We have a bill that improves child care, we have a bill that improves the flexibility on TANF. We have a bill that takes the stated goal of putting those 2 million Americans still on welfare and giving them meaningful training, meaningful child care, transportation and work and independence, and yet the clock is running.

So I concur with the chairman and many Members on both sides that we urge those in this Congress to move forward and send welfare-to-work reauthorization to the President's desk for his signature to benefit those 2 million Americans.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this is a big day for me. It was just 9 months ago today that I had the privilege of being sworn in as one of the newest Members of Congress. It was right about this time of the day, and I am cherishing that memory at

this time. I particularly appreciate that I had people who were helping me from the beginning, like the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER). And one of the very first things that I found out upon being elected was the extraordinary leadership in the House of Representatives. Also I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

As I was attending conference meetings, I found out that we would be having the ability to work on welfare reform reauthorization, and I was just so excited because I had the privilege and opportunity in the South Carolina State Senate to be the chairman of the conference committee for the Family Independence Act which was the State equivalent of welfare reform. It was just an exciting time. It was the first time, one of the first times that a Republican had the opportunity to serve as chairman of a conference committee.

As we were working on welfare reform in South Carolina, we were told we were wasting time. We were told that it would not work. I was told that we need to have more hearings, and I offered. I said, well, fine, let us have a hearing every day. Let us meet every day until it passes.

So it did pass in South Carolina, and it did pass here in Washington. It has been a phenomenal success, as my colleagues can see from this chart.

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There has been since 1994 a reduction in the number of people on welfare by caseload from 14 million to 5 million. It has been one of the most extraordinary successes of social policy in the history of the United States.

So I think it is very important. The House has passed this, and the Senate needs to bring it up. This is so important for the people to have the opportunity of independence.

I have had the opportunity to visit the department of social services offices all over the district I represent, from Beaufort to Richmond and Lexington, from Hampton and Allendale. I have met the social workers who have made the program work, who have helped people get jobs. It has been exciting to see the number of people who now have opportunities that they did not have before.

I am just really appalled that the Senate has not acted. I hope they will.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Members are reminded to avoid improper references to the Senate.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, my friend, the gentleman from Georgia, was talking about facts being stubborn. I think he is right, but the one stubborn fact that we cannot avoid here this afternoon is that this bill does nothing. It is a very stubborn fact that this is a resolution

of the House attempting somehow to tell the other body when and how they should act. I think it is probably inappropriate to do that, but it is also a waste of our time and effort, because it is, obviously, going to go on its own schedule.

Another fact that is very stubborn that will not go away is the fact that this is filler. We are standing here doing this on this resolution because the majority in this House will not go forward with the rest of the business that needs to get done before the end of this fiscal year: eight spending bills that they are failing to move forward.

I know my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), has done the work in his committee. The bill which is the subject matter of this particular resolution before us now was passed through his committee and passed through the House and is gone. But the stubborn fact of the matter is there are eight spending bills that have not gone through the appropriations process and gone through the House and been passed along. We could be dealing with that instead of talking about this resolution that is essentially meaningless.

Another stubborn fact is we could be dealing in particular with the education spending bill, because American families want to know how we are going to improve their school and education system for their children.

We could be talking about smaller classroom sizes.

We could be talking about well-prepared teachers with good, professional development.

We could be talking about after-school programs to help families deal with the situation that they are working and their children have a need for a place to go, and further structures to help them pass the rigid exams that are now given as part of the accountability aspect.

All of these the President's budget underfunds, despite his high rhetoric on the Leave No Child Behind Act. In fact, it is all part of the \$7 billion they are coming up short on their budget for their promises during that authorization bill.

We could be talking about prescription drugs for our seniors and doing something about the price for all Americans; but apparently the majority does not have a way to get that matter before us, or chooses not to, because they will not be telling the story that the American people want to hear.

We could be talking about small businesses, which their budget proposes to cut by billions of dollars, in fact taking away the very popular 7(a) loan program, which helps many businesses start up and expand and stay in business. There is a lot of rhetoric about how we all ought to support small business, but nothing coming forward in this House where we have the opportunity to do it.

We could be talking about health for the unemployed, because the economy has turned around since this administration has taken over. It is going

straight downhill. We have gone from a surplus situation to a deficit matter.

We have families in my district and other districts who are out of work occasioned by September 11 circumstances. The economy turned down before and after that. They have exhausted their unemployment benefits.

We have had to have a discharge petition, signed by virtually everyone on this side of the aisle, trying to get that matter before the House's attention so we can do something about extending people's unemployment benefits, so we can do something about helping them maintain health care for their family at this trying time. We have seen nothing coming forward at this opportune time.

We could be doing something about job training, to get people back to work. We need that, but this administration and the majority only wants to talk about taking away resources.

Mr. Speaker, there is business to be done in this House. That business is not telling the other body what to do with their time; the business of this House is to take up an agenda of items that by law we should be dealing with before the end of this fiscal year.

We should be dealing with America's issues, with the people's problems, the ones they want to deal with and that they want to hear us talk about: how we are going to educate their children and give them assistance to do that; how we are going to make sure we are not taking money out of the Pell grant program, or increasing the cost of loans for college students at a time when they are really pressed; how we are going to give those displaced people the tools to get back to work; how we are going to make sure that people have health care; what are we going to do about prescription drug benefits, and the high cost in an industry that makes outrageous profits, but fails to acknowledge the fact that the taxpayers' money assists them with research and development, so the prices should be fairer.

Those are the issues that we should be dealing with in these ending days of this session. This should be a shameful matter, for our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring forward this resolution that does absolutely nothing; that may express good intentions that we all want a welfare bill to pass through; but the fact of the matter is, this body has finished its work.

We have much more work to do in other areas, and it is a disgrace that that is not what is before this House at this particular time. I would hope and think that the leadership on the other side of the aisle might understand that that is what America wants, and get down to that business, and get down to it soon.

We do not mind working; they may. We can be in on Mondays and Fridays. We can be in all day Tuesdays and Thursdays. We do not need to be ending at 3 o'clock on Wednesday and Thursday.

Let us get to the business of this House, Mr. Speaker. Let us do that so we can let America know that we want to deal with the issues that they are confronted with every day. They take the responsibility to get up. People go to work. People do all they can do to support their families, all they can do to give them an opportunity. We have the obligation to make sure that the government does its part.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), rattled off a number of bills that he thought should become law. The fact is, many of these bills have been passed by this House. As a matter of fact, there are some 50 bills that have been passed by the House, but yet the Senate has not acted.

One of those bills would be the prescription drug bill, passed by the House, but yet the Senate has not acted. Another one of those bills is the welfare reform bill that we are dealing with here today.

In 1996, when we passed welfare reform, all the naysayers said that it will push people into poverty, it will push them onto the streets; we should not do this. I recall the gentleman from Massachusetts making remarks to that effect.

The fact is, since 1996, we have reduced welfare caseloads in America by some 60 percent. Three million children in America today are no longer in poverty because we helped move people from welfare to work. We can make an awful lot of additional changes and help more people in welfare if we are willing to move the reauthorization of that bill.

Now, it just so happens that the welfare bill that we passed in 1996 expires next week. The gentleman wants to get our work done? So do we. That is why we have this resolution on the floor today, to urge us to complete action on this bill so that we can in fact get it to the President's desk.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield for a clarification?

The gentleman has a great memory, but I do not think he can remember that I was here in 1996 when I was not.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, welfare reform is working. The 1996 welfare reform law has been a huge success in promoting work and giving thousands of needy families a chance to share in the American dream.

Just take a look at some of the yardsticks which measure the success of the welfare reform law:

Child poverty has fallen sharply. Since 1996, nearly 3 million children have been lifted from poverty; the African-American child poverty rate is now at a record low.

More parents are working. Employment by mothers most likely to go on welfare rose by 40 percent between 1995 and 2000.

Dependence fell by unprecedented levels. Welfare caseloads fell by 9 million—from 14 million recipients in 1994 to just 5 million today.

As positive as that good news is, we also recognize that there is still more work left to

do. We need to help the 58 percent of recipients who are not working or training for a job. We need to end the cycle of family break-up and encourage families to form. We need to continue to assist the 2 million families who remain dependent on welfare.

I was pleased to vote with large bipartisan majorities of the House and the Senate to pass the 1996 law. I again voted just this past May with a majority in the House for H.R. 4737, the Personal Responsibility, Work and Family Promotion Act of 2002, to strengthen and extend the 1996 reforms for 5 years.

H.R. 4737 is on the Senate calendar. The President is waiting to sign this legislation to continue the progress we have made to support low-income families' efforts to go to work and give children a chance to succeed in life. Before the 107th Congress adjourns, we can and should have a final vote on this measure. It's the right thing to do for the 2 million families who remain dependent on welfare.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on H. Res. 525, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should pass a welfare bill before September 30th.

The Welfare Reform bill is among the most significant and important pieces of legislation that this Congress will consider. While there is a sense of urgency to adopt legislation on Welfare Reform this year, September 30th is less than 2 weeks away and Congress should not rush to pass such an important bill. We should take as much time as is necessary to work on the bill.

The Republican base bill which did not allow for amendments, would increase poverty instead of reducing it, as it purports to do. The bill, in its present form, imposes massive new mandates and additional costs on States at a time when States are struggling financially and cannot absorb not one penny more of new costs. In my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, our Department of Health and Human Services is under threat of strict penalties for lack of job placements. Jobs are simply not as available as they were when the original Welfare Reform bill was passed. And let's not forget that our economy is still recovering from the aftermath of September 11th and that Congress has not passed any economic stimulus legislation, except for the Airline bailout bill. This country's offshore areas, would be particularly negatively impacted, because of even less resources, and poor economic conditions with fewer jobs within geographical limitations.

Mr. Speaker, the Welfare Reform bill passed by the House is a set back for this country. If the reactionary political climate of an election year is pressuring us to pass a bill, let's simply extend the current authorization into the beginning of 2003 so that we can do this right. Let's think of the people who are most affected by our actions. Let's give our states and territories flexibility and let's give our people hope.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of H. Res. 525, urging House and Senate conferees to approve a final welfare bill.

It is vital that Congress reach agreement on welfare so that vulnerable families have the help and assistance they need to become self-sufficient. But, House Republicans are putting politics ahead of people. They are offering this resolution to taunt Senate Democrats for not rolling over and rubberstamping their draconian welfare bill.

I applaud Senate Democrats for taking a careful look at the challenges facing Americans struggling in poverty. We need to pass legislation that fixes many of the flaws in welfare reform. I am glad Senate Democrats are there to protect these families against Republicans that are little more than foxes guarding the hen house.

House Republicans are declaring that the 1996 welfare reform bill is already a success. They tout the welfare bill they passed this year as an even better improvement. Yet, there are still too many families struggling to get out of poverty. There are too many families without safe and adequate child care. And Republicans have largely ignored the vast number of people who face insurmountable barriers in moving from welfare to work.

The bill passed by House Republicans ignores the last six years of careful study in applying the same old ideological prescriptions to very real flaws in welfare reform. They are focused on kicking people off welfare without any concern for whether or not these Americans have jobs that pay a living wage. Their bill fails to expand access to job training, education or rehabilitative services needed for them to maintain stable employment.

The American people want results, not political gamesmanship. Vulnerable families struggling on welfare deserve meaningful help and a fighting chance to succeed. Let's not give Republicans an opportunity to score political points at their expense. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against this resolution.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the House rules.

All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 527, the resolution is considered as read for amendment, and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SENSE OF HOUSE THAT CONGRESS SHOULD COMPLETE ACTION ON PERMANENT DEATH TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2002

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 527, I call up the resolution (H. Res. 524) expressing the sense of the House that Congress should complete action on the Permanent Death Tax Repeal Act of 2002.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 524

Whereas the death tax has been a leading cause of the dissolution of family-run busi-

nesses and a burden on families which save and invest;

Whereas a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives passed the Permanent Death Tax Repeal Act of 2002 on June 6, 2002, by a vote of 256 to 171;

Whereas failure to enact that Act will reimpose the death tax after 2010 on families, farms and small businesses throughout the Nation;

Whereas the death tax will continue to prevent families from creating, expanding, and retaining farms and businesses if the death tax is resurrected;

Whereas the threat of a resurrected death tax will cause American families, including farmers and small business owners, to waste vast amounts of their time and other resources on efforts to plan to comply with the tax;—

Whereas permanent repeal of the death tax will promote job creation and economic growth by allowing farm and small business families to invest in productive, job-creating assets those resources they will otherwise spend on planning for and paying death taxes; and

Whereas the Senate has not passed that Act or equivalent legislation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the Congress should complete action on the Permanent Death Tax Repeal Act of 2002, and the Congress should present to the President prior to adjournment the Permanent Death Tax Repeal Act of 2002.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 527, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE).

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the House has done its work on so many issues this session, including passing a budget. In fact, we have passed our budget twice in the House of Representatives, standing shoulder to shoulder with the President at this very important time in America's history.

We have done our work. Among our accomplishments, the House has passed the Permanent Death Tax Repeal Act of 2002, H.R. 2143, by a very healthy, bipartisan margin back in June. The Senate has not yet taken action on this legislation.

A temporary repeal of the death tax makes absolutely no sense. It does not make any sense, and it is not fair. Unless this very subtle quirk in the law is not repealed, thousands of Americans will lose tax relief that they deserve and that they expect.

Let us call this what it really is. If we do not permanently bury the death tax, small business owners and family farmers will face a massive tax increase in 2011. The 2001 tax relief law phases out the death tax entirely by 2010; but without action to ensure permanency, it reappears in its full fury on January 1, 2011. This creates a ridiculous situation where one minute, one moment, one tick of the clock means the difference between no death tax and a full hit, depending on when someone passes away.

Mr. Speaker, the death tax is fundamentally unjust because it results in double taxation. Our Nation's laws prevent double jeopardy in court; we should also wipe out double taxation in the law.

Iowa's family farmers and small business owners pay taxes throughout their lifetimes. After they pass away, the Federal Government taxes the value of their property yet again. More than 1,500 families in Iowa and thousands across this Nation filed death tax returns last year alone. The IRS imposes rates of up to 60 percent on the value of a family farm or business when the owner passes away.

To pay these very enormous tax bills, many people, many kids, are asked to visit the IRS and the undertaker on the very same day, forced to sell their farms or businesses in order to pay for those taxes. These are family businesses and family farms that in some instances have been in their family for generations.

Mr. Speaker, sound planning cannot be made without stability in our Tax Code. The President recently spoke about this need for permanent tax relief in Iowa this week. He is ready to sign a bill.

The current uncertainty surrounding the death tax makes it extremely difficult for owners of Iowa's family farms and businesses and America's family farms and businesses to make wise decisions. The legal and administrative costs of compliance inhibits the economic growth and expansion that our economy so sorely needs at this time.

The House has done its work. It has passed permanent death tax repeal. The Senate has failed to act. We need action, and America needs action.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution before us today. This resolution is nothing more than a press release; and I believe that the appropriate arena for press releases is in the press gallery, not here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I always thought that the floor was where we debated legislation, not press releases.

The amount of unfinished business currently pending is extremely large. Not one of the 13 mandatory appropriation bills has become law, even though the next fiscal year is only about a week away. In fact, this House has only passed five of those 13 appropriation bills.

The Republican leadership has refused to schedule desperately needed bipartisan school construction legislation. The Republican leadership has also failed to schedule legislation to help all Americans with escalating prescription drug costs. Now the Republican leadership has a new strategy: pass resolutions praising old, irresponsible tax bills and then blame the Senate.

The resolution before us today is not only a press release, but it is a very