

eliminating 174,000 veterans from eligibility in the VA health care systems. Some might say that that is fiscally responsible; but I say it is absolutely dishonorable.

While we are warring in Iraq, this House is engaged in a debate on whether to give Americans who earn more than \$1 million a year a tax cut of almost \$90,000 each, while just two months ago President Bush decided that veterans earning more than \$29,000 a year do not need America's help getting health care.

Where are our priorities? Giving money to the richest of the rich while taking services from the bravest and sometimes the poorest is unacceptable. Giving the wealthiest Americans extra spending money should not be the first priority of this House. But making sure we give every veteran health coverage must be. It seems like the priorities of this Congress are all wrong.

We have forgotten about responsibility, morality, and justice. We have forgotten our commitment to our men and women in uniform. We have forgotten about human dignity. Finding money for veterans programs is not impossible. It is a matter of priorities. We can pay for concurrent receipt, but not if we pass a huge tax cut for the wealthiest of the wealthy.

Families are the glue that make America strong. We cannot forget the sacrifices of those family members who have supported veterans from the homefront. America owes them a debt of gratitude as well. That is why it is so important to fix the survivor benefit plan which ensures that veterans' families have the resources needed to deal with the death of a loved one.

I am proud to co-sponsor H.R. 548, which would fix the problems with our current system and ensure that survivors get the assistance that they deserve. But, Madam Speaker, the Republican budget resolution is also a slap to America's veterans. It cuts over \$14.5 billion from mandatory veterans benefits and another \$14 billion in discretionary programs; \$14.6 billion that veterans could spend on health care, on housing, and feeding their families.

Every American owes veterans a debt of gratitude. We must do more than give speeches on Memorial Day. The rhetoric of patriotism is absolutely not enough. We must ensure that veterans get the services and the resources they have earned and the resources and the services that they deserve. Let us also make sure that disabled veterans receive the retirement pay along with disability compensation. It is an issue of fairness and our veterans deserve better than what we are giving them. This is money that should serve those that have served America. This is money that would go to our soldiers fighting today in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is money that veterans have been promised and that veterans deserve.

Unfortunately, this money is being denied to veterans so that the wealthiest Americans can get an obscenely

large tax cut. If we cut money for veterans, we should be ashamed, all of America should be ashamed. Veterans deserve to be one of this Nation's number one priorities. I urge my Republican colleagues in this House to remember that. Veterans are fighting for us. We must fight for them.

AMERICA MUST NOT ALIENATE ITSELF

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

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, this week we will be working on the \$75 billion supplemental appropriations to pay for the war. Financing the war is not as simple as it appears. It involves more than just passing a piece of legislation labeled as support for the troops.

It has now been fashionable to bash France and Germany and other friends if they are less enthusiastic for the war than we think they should be. Yet foreign corporations provide millions of jobs for American citizens. French companies alone employ over 400,000. There is a practical reason why offending the French and others may backfire on us.

In 2002 we earned \$11.9 billion less from our investments overseas than foreigners did here. This is not a sign of financial strength. A negative balance on the income account contributes to the \$500 billion annual current account deficit. Since 1985 when we became a deficit NATION, we have acquired a foreign debt of approximately \$2.8 trillion, the world's largest. No nation can long sustain a debt that continues to expand at a rate greater than 5 percent of the GDP. This means we borrowed more than \$1.4 billion every day to keep the borrowing binge going. This only can be maintained until foreigners get tired of taking and holding our dollars and buying our debt. Bashing the French and others will only hasten the day that sets off the train of economic events that will please no one.

In thinking about providing funds for the war and overall military expenditures, not only must every dollar be borrowed from overseas, but an additional \$150 billion each year as well. The current account deficit is now 44 percent greater than the military budget and represents the amount we must borrow to balance the accounts. The bottom line is that our international financial condition is dire and being made worse by current international events.

It is true that military might gives a boost to a nation's currency; but this is not permanent if fiscal and monetary policies are abused. Currently, our budget deficits are exploding, as there is no restraint on spending.

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No one can guarantee permanent military superiority.

The dollar has already significantly weakened this past year, and this trend will surely continue. A weaker dollar requires that we pay more for everything we buy overseas. Foreign borrowing will eventually become more difficult, and this will in time cause interest rates to rise. Be assured that domestic price inflation will accelerate. Economic law dictates that these events will cause the recession to linger and deepen.

My humble advice, consider being nicer to our friends and allies. We need them more than we can imagine to finance our war efforts. There is more to it than passing the supplemental appropriation. Besides, we need time to get our financial house in order. Antagonizing our trading partners can only make that task that much more complicated.

The day will come when true monetary reform will be required. Printing money to finance war and welfare can never be a panacea.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET

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

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, we speak of the generation that fought the Second World War as our greatest generation. The men and women now serving our Armed Forces, the soldiers now in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan, are pretty great, too. They are dedicated and courageous, and I am proud of them.

I am not proud of the budget that this House passed less than 2 weeks ago in the dead of night, however. The budget makes severe cuts in benefits for our veterans, benefits that our Nation has seen as simple gratitude for more than a century, as the least that we could do for those Americans who defend our freedom at the risk of their own lives.

The House budget cuts veterans benefits across the board, health care benefits, disability benefits, survivor benefits, pensions, everything, a total of \$28

billion in cuts over the next decade. In my State, in North Carolina, more than 30,000 veterans will be pushed out, forced out of the VA system. Tens of thousands more North Carolina veterans would face sharply higher costs.

The budget cuts benefits when needs are increasing. World War II veterans and Korean War veterans are aging. Their health care needs are pressing, and Vietnam veterans are just behind them. There are already waiting lists, and those lists will only grow longer, if the benefits are available at all.

The men and women in uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan must see this budget and wonder if our praise for them today is simply hollow rhetoric intended to score political points, not a sincere appreciation for their service. The House budget walks away from our debt to veterans so we can cut taxes.

I know that I am not the first today to point out on this floor how lopsided that tax cut favors the richest Americans. I know that I am not the first to point out that Americans making more than a million dollars a year get a tax cut of \$90,000, but ordinary Americans fare much less well. Half of North Carolina families get less than \$100 a year. One-third of North Carolina families get nothing at all.

Madam Speaker, the Americans who would benefit the most from proposed tax cuts owe the most to our veterans, and the veterans who need their veterans benefits the most would benefit least from the proposed tax cut.

The majority party is now saying that they did not really mean it, they had their fingers crossed behind their backs the whole time. They knew the Senate would put veterans benefits back into the budget and that they would go along. Just minutes ago, the majority party voted to repudiate the very budget that they adopted less than 2 weeks ago.

Veterans deserve better than that kind of political double talk. There should not be bargaining chips and back-room budget deals between the House and Senate. They have earned better than that.

Madam Speaker, I do not believe that the House budget adopted less than 2 weeks ago reflects our Nation's values. I do not believe that we have become a Nation of ingrates.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to consider and to just picture something with me, and that is, picture a life in rural Arizona, a life that is in the one of the most bucolic settings one can possibly imagine, the beautiful desert, a life where a family has been operating a ranch for generations, as a matter of fact, six generations.

Imagine waking up every morning to that kind of an environment and going

out to do what is necessary to keep that ranch going, as it has been going and has been running for someone's parents, grandparents, and generations on back. It is a beautiful life, as they say, and as the movie title goes.

Then one day, picture this. One day a person gets up, but their whole life is completely turned around because of something that has happened, a change in the environment I guess one might say. Imagine finding that across the land people are coming, and people are coming in very large numbers. People are coming by the hundreds, by the thousands. People are cutting the fences in order to get on the land. People, once they get on to the land, are defecating in the water supply and/or breaking the water valves. This is, remember, the middle of the desert, and the water there is the most precious commodity imaginable.

Imagine them strewing trash all over the ranch so that the cattle begin eating some of this trash and eventually die.

Imagine being threatened by these people who are crossing the land. Land, remember again, land on which you have been for six generations, but your children all of a sudden are afraid to go to their grandmother's house because of the danger that exists in moving just a few miles across the land.

This is the situation that Steven and Tammy Sue Smith are facing. The Smiths own and operate a cattle ranch located only 30 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border. This is their family. There are, as I say, six generations of owners of this particular property. Like many other ranch families in Arizona, their family has been there longer than Arizona has been a State.

The Smiths have three children: two sons, Chance, 17, and Will, 15, and one daughter, Shaye, Shaye Lynn, that is to say, 14. All three children live and work on the ranch while attending school.

Over the past several years, the Smith family has had to deal with an invasion of thousands of illegal aliens trespassing over their ranchland. Not surprising when we consider that in one month alone the Tucson sector, which is the area in which this particular ranch exists, reported that they had, in fact, stopped or identified or collected 23,000 illegal aliens. That was in the month of November, last.

Also, remember that they even admit that they get one in five. So, in the Tucson sector, where this ranch exists, 100,000 people came across that border from Mexico and into the United States illegally, and many of them came across this ranch.

Since September 11, as security at ports of entry in and around cities has stepped up, the flow of illegal aliens has shifted to the public and private rangeland where countless miles of border are marked by barbed-wire fences and little else. There this open rangeland is rapidly becoming one of America's most dangerous doorsteps.

Steven and Tammy Sue Smith have concern for their property and for their children and for the safety of their family. This concern is not misplaced nor is it exaggerated.

I will cite a few examples of the very direct and dangerous encounters that the Smiths and their children have had on their own land. Remember, that this has only really happened to them in the last several years.

The Smith ranch is a popular travel route for people smuggling and drug smuggling because of the very mountainous terrain. The hilly and rocky terrain makes it harder to track the trespassers and harder to see them and apprehend them. Thus, the Smith family finds itself a major thoroughfare for hundreds of illegal aliens and drug smugglers every month.

Shaye Lynn, when she was 12 years old, was driving with her grandmother across their own ranch to feed some cattle. They were confronted on the road by a car with two illegal aliens who subjected them to threats of violence. Fortunately, they were able to essentially outrun the pursuers. Their vehicle made it to safety.

Steven, the dad, almost died 2 years after he contracted a very serious illness after coming in contact with a cadaver on his land, and the doctors asked him if he had, in fact, done that, if he had come across something like that, because they told him that they were encountering many strange diseases for which they did not have any sort of treatment, and they did not know essentially what to do.

Their son Will rolled his pickup truck in avoiding hitting two illegal aliens who tried to hijack him by placing large boulders in the middle of the road. I have seen this out there. They, in fact, will use either boulders on the road or sometimes they will cut down a tree, cut down a large saguaro cactus laid across the road, and then when people stopped, they are hijacked. This is on a little, tiny, dirt road in the middle of nowhere.

Will and Shaye were able to identify a man on America's Most Wanted one night based on the appearance on their property a few weeks earlier. He had demanded food and then tried to steal two horses. America's Most Wanted described this man as one of Mexico's most dangerous coyotes, the thugs who smuggle people across the border for money.

On another occasion, the Smith family observed a group of 32 aliens crossing their lands very near their house. They tracked them and were able to stop 27 of them and were able to detain them until the Border Patrol arrived. One, who appeared to be of Middle Eastern descent, was later found to have been from Guatemala. This is also very typical.

These people are homeland heroes, and we should not forget them, and we should hold them up in high regard because they truly are on the front line of an invasion.