

enroll in Medicare part D. Enrollment continues through May 15, 2006, and coverage begins January 1, 2006.

Finally, seniors in our communities will have better access to the medication they need to stay well. Seniors can sign up today by calling 1-800-MEDICARE or by visiting the Web site www.medicare.gov. Seniors who want to sign up should have several pieces of information on hand: a list of the medications they are currently taking; information about any prescription drug coverage they may currently have, be it employer, union or a Medigap policy; the name and address of a local pharmacy they will use to fill prescriptions; the out-of-pocket amount they spend on prescription drugs each year; finally, seniors should have their Medicare enrollment information readily available.

As a physician, I know that providing our seniors with prescription drug coverage will be beneficial to their health and to their wallets. I am glad Medicare now works to prevent disease as well as treat it.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

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

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, as we move towards the vote on budget reconciliation, I trust that the majority does not come back with the same old soup warmed over or the same old lemon with a new twist.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will come back with something that really meets the needs of the people, not tax breaks for the wealthiest 1 percent and nothing for the truly needy and those who are poor. I hope that we get it right this time, Mr. Speaker, and have a reconciliation plan that reconciles not only the budget but meets the needs of the American people.

MEDICARE

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

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, this week, seniors across the country can take the first steps towards much-needed prescription drug benefits when they enroll in the Medicare prescription drug plan. The plan gives seniors the power of choice. Seniors will select from multiple plans and choose the option best suited to their needs. With the cost of prescription drugs increasing every year, the ability to choose a plan tailored to that senior's specific health needs is invaluable.

Not only that, but choice encourages competition. Private companies will be making their prices available for seniors to compare. This, in turn, will lower prices in an effort to secure those seniors' business. By giving the seniors choice, we give them lower prices.

Mr. Speaker, the Medicare prescription drug coverage card is long over-

due. I am proud of Republicans for providing a viable solution to America's seniors, and I encourage seniors all across the country to take advantage of these added benefits.

REMEMBERING THE 1989 MURDERS OF SIX JESUIT PRIESTS IN EL SALVADOR

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, 16 years ago today, in the dead of night, the Salvadoran Army's U.S.-trained Atalacatl Battalion entered the grounds of the University of Central America in San Salvador, pulled six Jesuit priests from their beds, marched them out onto the lawn behind their residence, put high-powered rifles to their heads and shot them dead in cold blood. A few minutes later, these same soldiers discovered the Jesuits' housekeeper and her teenager daughter hiding in the house and murdered them as well.

A bipartisan commission appointed by the Speaker of the House and chaired by our former colleague, Congressman Joe Moakley, investigated this heinous crime, identified the killers, and the Commission's report became critical evidence in the prosecution and conviction of the priests' killers and, I believe, in creating support for the U.N.-brokered negotiations that ended El Salvador's 12-year civil war.

Mr. Speaker, I knew these priests. I was proud to call them my friends. Let us take a moment to remember their courage and to remember the bipartisan work of this House under the leadership of Joe Moakley that helped El Salvador forge a pathway to peace.

Let us never forget the names of those who were murdered on November 16, 1989: Father Ignacio Ellacuria, Father Ignacio Martin-Baro, Father Segundo Montes, Father Armando Lopez, Father Joaquin Lopez y Lopez, Father Juan Ramon Moreno, Celina Maricet Ramos and Elba Julia Ramos.

PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR LOUISIANA FOLLOWING RECENT HURRICANES

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

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the private support that has been delivered to my home State of Louisiana following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Ford and Dodge motor companies donated dozens of vehicles to first responders in my State.

In addition, one of the greatest examples of support, though not the only example, came from Wal-Mart. I want to take a moment to tell you about it. It is easy to tell you of their generosity. Wal-Mart donated over \$17 million to

the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross. They donated \$3.5 million worth of merchandise to shelters and command centers throughout the Gulf Coast region. They provided \$20,000 in cash donations to animal shelters across the region. They provided 150 Internet-ready computers to shelters across the region to help loved ones stay in contact. They donated use of 25 vacant facilities for use by relief agencies. Their customers have donated more than \$8.5 million in stores across the country.

The best thing I can do is share a brief story that was told to me by the men and women on the ground. Wal-Mart told officials and first responders, We don't have staff on the ground, they have all evacuated, but come in, take what you need, just shut the door after you leave.

It took our government days to provide what Wal-Mart and other private companies did in those first few hours.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S INTELLIGENCE WAS NOT A "SLAM DUNK"

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, President Bush's latest attacks on those who have questioned whether his administration manipulated the intelligence to justify a war against Iraq is based on flawed arguments and falsehoods.

First, the President said Congress had access to the same intelligence as the White House prior to the war. This is false. The Washington Post writes, and I quote, Bush and his aides had access to much more voluminous intelligence information than did lawmakers who were dependent on the administration to provide the material.

Second, President Bush claimed the bipartisan Senate investigation found that he did not misrepresent prewar intelligence. Again, the President's statements are wrong. The Senate Intelligence Committee is not expected to complete this phase of their investigation until next year.

Third, the President said intelligence agencies around the world agreed with the Bush administration's assessment of the Iraqi threat. Once again, this statement is false. Many of our international friends concluded that Iraq's threat did not rise to the level of justifying immediate military force.

Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration refuses to live in reality. It has no plans in Iraq other than, stay the course. This administration makes decisions with no understanding of the consequences of those decisions. The reality is, we lost six more servicemen in Iraq in the last 24 hours.

AMT REFORM

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Middle Class Fairness Act and the AMT, the alternative minimum tax. This tax was put in place years ago to basically cover a small group of wealthy taxpayers who were avoiding paying their taxes. Unfortunately, now it extends far beyond its initial intent in recent years. Now the AMT is actually punishing families and homeowners and the very credits that are in the current tax law, those credits that encourage savings, education, marriage, homeownership; they are all under attack by the AMT.

I am from the State of New Jersey. Our State has the highest percentage of people who are paying the AMT. Yet our State is the State with some of the highest taxes in the country. The solution to this problem? Well, it is relatively simple, two things: All we have to do is index the AMT, and, secondly, allow for the deductibility of taxes for those people who have to pay it. Reform is long overdue. The middle class deserves this reform in order to not any longer fall under the AMT.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Last night, the Ways and Means Committee pulled aside the curtain to show us what the direct link is between tax cuts for the wealthy and cutting programs for students and struggling families.

Dividend tax cuts for wealthy investors so they will have to pay taxes at a rate lower than a teacher or a supermarket checkout clerk. The trade-off is, well, student loans, \$14 billion in cuts. But, hey, those rich coupon clippers need the money.

Then we have food security, school lunch. Those little kids are just eating too much. We get something called look-through treatment of payments between related CFCs under foreign personal holding company income rules for the same price. Nice trade-off on the Republican side of the aisle.

Then, of course, extending further tax cuts to those who don't work for a living but live on capital gains. The small trade-off for that is depriving millions of Americans under the Medicaid program of needed essential medical care and dumping those costs onto the States and those of us who buy insurance because a lot of it will be unreimbursed care.

Great work, you guys. You're helping out your patrons and sticking it to the rest of America.

□ 1030

REVISIONIST HISTORY

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, here is a quote: Others have talked about this threat that is posed by Saddam Hussein. Yes, he has chemical weapons. He has biological weapons, and he is trying to get nuclear weapons.

That is not President Bush. That is Democrat Leader Nancy Pelosi. But now what we are seeing is some revisionist history, and this Monday morning quarterbacking is a disservice to all of America.

Remember Secretary Colin Powell's testimony in front of the U.N. on February 5, 2003? One of the things that was never questioned was a tape that he played. It was between an Iraqi colonel and an Iraqi general. The colonel says, About this committee that is coming, and he is talking about the U.N. nuclear weapons committee. And the general says, Yeah, I am worried that you have got something left. And the colonel says, We have evacuated everything. We don't have anything left.

Now, what were they talking about, Mr. Speaker? What were they talking about?

It is no wonder that both Republicans and Democrats both voted to go to war. Both had the same intelligence and both saw the writing on the wall. Disagreeing about current policy is one thing, but changing historical fact is the tired, old, petty, partisan politics of the past.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about International Education Week this week sponsored by the Departments of State and Education.

International Education Week marks the importance of teaching our children and the people of our country foreign languages, traditions, cultures. This is not simply a feel-good effort of cultural enrichment. Whether it is a matter of competitiveness, economics, national security, in this era we must understand other cultures, their languages, their traditions, as quite literally now anyone on this planet could be our collaborators, our colleagues, our competitors, our customers.

Certainly this event should reaffirm our value of a strong foreign language education in which culture and traditions are taught alongside the structure and vocabulary. The acquisition of foreign languages beginning in the elementary years is found to create neuroconnections and boost various thinking processes. Those who study foreign language can pursue careers that benefit all of us here in America.

These students are gaining experiences which will serve them well in a variety of careers and serve the Nation through a better understanding of the world in which we live and compete.

MRS. RABINOWITZ

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

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, 42 million seniors can now sign up for the new voluntary Medicare drug benefit.

Yesterday I was with a senior in my district, Shirley Rabinowitz, who takes 17 different prescription drugs. Let me say that again: 17 different prescription drugs. She takes drugs for diabetes. She takes drugs for her heart condition. She lives with a number of chronic illnesses, and so she takes 17 different prescriptions. But like so many seniors, she has no retiree coverage, no Medicaid coverage, no State plan assistance, in fact, no prescription drug coverage at all. And her out of pocket expenses are huge.

So she wondered if the new Medicare plan would help her, and she went to an adviser with the Triple Area Agency on Aging and she learned in 30 short minutes that she can save \$4,000 a year. Let me say that again: \$4,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, this new drug program is a huge benefit to our seniors. Do not discourage them from getting the advice they need that is readily available to save them lots of money.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the Republican misguided and irresponsible plan to pass mandatory spending cuts and a companion tax cut package.

The Republican budget reconciliation bill cuts \$50 billion in vital programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, and student loans which are important to low-income and working-class families in this country.

The Republicans claim that these spending cuts will be used to offset the cost of hurricane relief efforts, and that is simply not the case. In recent years, Republicans have not offset the supplemental funding for the war and rebuilding in Iraq.

The reality is that Republicans are cutting vital services for the most vulnerable in our country in order to finance \$70 billion in tax cuts to the wealthy few. The budget reconciliation bill, when combined with the tax cut, increases the Federal deficit by \$20 billion.

Do not be fooled. The Republican reconciliation plan is a plan to increase the deficit and the national debt. Republicans clearly have the wrong priorities for America's working families. The budget is wrong. I urge my colleagues to protect the health and well-being of our citizens and not support this plan.