

One in four children has healthcare coverage through SCHIP. More than half of all children whose family income is \$32,180 received healthcare coverage through SCHIP.

CHILDREN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

SCHIP is significantly important to children living in our country's rural areas. In rural areas: One in three children has healthcare coverage through SCHIP or more than half of all children whose family income is under \$32,180 received healthcare coverage through Medicaid or SCHIP. Seventeen percent of children continue to be of the 50 counties with the highest rates of uninsured children, 44 are rural counties, with many located in the most remote and isolated parts of the country. Because the goal is to reduce the number of uninsured children, reauthorizing and increasing support for SCHIP will be crucial to helping the uninsured in these counties and reducing the 17 percent of uninsured.

Mr. Speaker, I would much rather we extend the deadline for reauthorization of SCHIP, while we diligently and reasonably consider the unsettled issues in this debate so that millions of the most vulnerable population, including many African American and other minority children can receive the health care coverage they need to remain healthy and develop into productive citizens of this great country. It is not as important to reauthorize an inferior bill under pressure of fast-approaching deadlines as it is to ensure that we provide health care to those children who remain vulnerable to health disparities. I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring health care coverage for millions of children and reducing health disparities among the most vulnerable populations.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND OUR TAX DOLLARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor now for the next 60 minutes to address an issue that is of utmost importance to all Americans, and it is a very simple one: Where do my tax dollars go and why do I pay so much in taxes? We will see over the course of the next hour where some of the dollars go, and we will also see the fact that, quite honestly, it is hard to determine where some of those dollars go and what the Republican conference has tried to do to address that issue, to try to nail down some of what the facts are. I am referring, of course, to earmarks and transparency in the budget process because, as we all know for all too long, it has been a difficult issue to try just to figure out, when you send your taxes every April 15 to Washington, DC, where some of those hard-earned dollars go to.

These are important issues, as I said at the very beginning, to the American family because, as I have always said, I believe, as Members of Congress, that our focus should be on the family budget as opposed to focusing on the Federal budget, because when we focus on

the family budget, the American family from the east coast to the west, the fact that they have to spend day after day working hard for their money, for their income, to pay for their expenses, when we focus on those facts and when we focus on the fact that the American family has to pay for their housing, their rent or their mortgage, the education of their children, their food and their clothing and other expenses and health care and the like, if we keep our mind focused on that, maybe we in this Congress and the administration will not be amiss as to where those dollars go in the long term.

□ 2045

If you may recall, it was just a week ago this Monday that we celebrated the 220th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. The Founding Fathers, brilliant men all, had wisdom probably beyond their years and beyond their ages when they crafted, in 1787, that document that lives with us today. It is our job, as Members of Congress, to read that document, to understand that document from an original intent point of view, and by that, I mean to understand what the Founders intended at that time for generations to come.

One of the hallmarks of that document was to understand a federalist system of government. And within that, the States were sovereign in the sense that they were to take care of many factors; people were supposed to have utmost responsibility for themselves and their family, and the Federal Government was to have very limited powers. And in that Constitution it specifically set out, article I, section 8 sets out much of the limitations on the powers that Congress has.

Just shortly after the enactment of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights was created and added a portion of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. And the 10th Amendment to the Constitution says something that I think is important to our fiscal spending, and that is, "All rights not specifically delegated to the Federal Government are retained by the States and the people, respectively." Those powers that are retained by the people, all other ones are by the people and the States.

So the Constitution, if you would look at it, basically just lists what the Federal Government is supposed to do. Everything else is in the hands of the people or the States. Now, over the generations, unfortunately, especially in the last 40 or 50-some-odd years, the Federal Government has grown expansively. And because of that, so, too, has the budget, and so, too, has the burden on the American family.

We come tonight to point out that the budget we have seen crafted by the other side of the aisle continues to grow out of control without constraint and, therefore, puts an additional burden in the form of higher taxes. Here we stand 9 months into this 110th Congress, and what have we seen as far as the budget is concerned? What has this

110th Democrat-controlled Congress wrought? Most specifically, the largest tax increase in U.S. history. Let me repeat that, and I will probably say that later on, the largest tax increase in U.S. history. And why is that? Well, for a couple of reasons.

One, you have continued to see excesses in spending out of the budget coming from the other side of the aisle. That, in and of itself, is bad for the American economy and for the American taxpayer. And secondly, those higher taxes are part and parcel of the Democrat plan. Why do I say that? Well, because part of their plan when they came in here, and this is something that they championed and they said was to be good, was something called PAYGO, pay-as-you-go. Now, in the heart of things you would think that that is not a bad idea to pay as you go. When you think about it, that's how every family in America really should be operating on their budget each week or each month when they pay their bills, figure out how much is in the checkbook, and before they can go on any further they have to make sure they have enough income.

But when the American family needs additional income to pay for additional expenses, where do they get it from? Well, they have to earn it through additional work, or that American family has another alternative, just don't spend the money in the first place. Unfortunately, the other side of the aisle doesn't ever seem to want to choose that second option of decreasing spending or holding spending flat, and that's why we see spending continuing to grow out of control. And as that spending continues to grow out of control, how do they make up for it? Well, they, unlike the American family, are not out there earning those dollars for those PAYGOs. They do it the old-fashioned way; they tax it. And they take it out of my pocket and out of your pocket, out of the American taxpayers' pocket.

So we're here to discuss those dilemmas that are facing the American family. And I'm pleased to be joined this evening by a gentleman who has been fighting on this floor those very issues, fighting on the floor for the American family to make sure that the American family can retain as much of their hard-earned dollars as possible, and to address these issues that we've begun to address so far as far as spending and trying to constrain it. So right now I would like to yield the floor to the good gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, I thank my friend very much.

And as you've been pointing out, we deal with these issues within our own families. My wife and I have been married 29 years this summer, and we have three fantastic daughters. But over the years, including this weekend, I've had to tell my girls, you know, gee, I'd like to help, but money doesn't grow on trees. We're not going to be able to do it right now; perhaps in the next month

or two we can go to that and we will have the money to go forward and do that. But they've also learned that, and we don't get the arguments we did when they were younger because now they have begun to understand the value of money and the value of a dollar and how, if you don't have it, you can't spend it. That's never seemed to have stopped the Federal Government. And it appears that some Members of Congress are having a harder time these days grasping that concept than I might have imagined.

And maybe I'm a little naive. Maybe, Mr. Speaker, since this is only my second term in Congress, I have been a little naive. But in the last Congress, when our friends, Democrats across the aisle, stand up and say, you know, we've got to get this spending under control, we've got to stop this wasteful spending, we've got to quit spending more than we've got coming in, I commented to some of my Republican colleagues, you know, they're really right, we have got to do that. And some of us, including my friend, Mr. GARRETT, had come together and demanded reform in certain areas, demanded that we get some of this spending under control. And, you know, when the Republicans lost the majority in November, I thought, well, you know, one of the silver linings may be that these folks, the Democratic majority that's about to take over in January, they wouldn't have gone out on a limb over and over and over the way they did unless they really intended to control spending. Maybe that was naive. But anyway, as we've seen with every spending bill that's come before the House, it's draining American pockets with excessive tax hikes, with more spending than is necessary.

You know, I was shocked, also, that the usually bipartisan farm bill ended up being shoved over into a partisan issue, that was so extremely unusual, with a \$4 billion partisan gimmick at the expense of many taxpayers. I didn't realize until we actually took this farm bill up since I've been in Congress, apparently it comes up every 5 years and it had not come up since I'd been here, but brought the bill up, and I didn't realize 66, 67 percent of the farm bill had nothing to do with agriculture, that it had to do with entitlements, and that those were running away. Some of us began to raise the issue, wait a minute, this is going to be providing food stamps to illegal aliens, and yet we were told, well, it doesn't actually do that. It doesn't provide food stamps to illegal aliens. And that sounded good, except when you don't require documentation to prove legal status, then there is no way to determine whether someone is legally getting food stamps or not getting legal food stamps. So that seemed to fall on deaf ears as well.

When the majority was going to promise and did promise energy reform, we got an energy package that will raise taxes by potentially \$16 billion over the next 10 years. Now, also,

as the House bill on SCHIP, and we've heard a good deal of discussion before we got in here to start with this hour, but the SCHIP bill, you know, helping kids have health care, we're all for that. That's a good thing. But then when you started looking at this House version, the Democrat's version on this, to brutalize seniors on Medicare and saying we're going to take from the seniors and give to the young people, and then it turns out the bill expanded the age so it wasn't just young people, it was also adults were included. I think in the final bill, maybe that will be taken out, but even there we're not sure what is going to end up being in there; we haven't gotten to see that. But then, again, adding subsidies, and basically food stamps is what they amount to, to people in foreign countries instead of taking care of folks here? The way it takes care of folks here is folks here get to pay a whole lot more in taxes than they would otherwise if we weren't trying to take on people that illegally were getting food stamps or weren't sending such money to other countries.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOHMERT. I will certainly yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Because I think that's an important one.

Someone in my district, years ago when I first went into politics, said to me, SCOTT, when you deal with all these complicated issues that you will deal with, at that time on the State level, or now that I'm here in Washington, you have to translate it into, well, how does this impact upon me? And I remember that and try to bring it back home.

The point that you're raising here with regard to these Federal programs, SCHIP and what have you, providing benefits to illegal aliens, people coming into this country, breaking the law, and now looking to the American taxpayer to pay for their services I think is a critically important one. I think we're all too aware of the fact that there are a number of services that we would like to provide for our constituents at home, especially the low-income individuals, especially when it's something as critical as food, and many times, I'm sure you hear in your district that there's just not enough program to go around for your constituents as you would like to have them.

So when the Republican Conference said, as you suggested, that we should simply limit this program and limit American taxpayers' dollars to go to American citizens and not to illegals, that, to me, hits home as, how does that impact upon me? It means that those dollars will be going to Americans and to those who are most needy. Is that your understanding as well?

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Yes, that is my understanding. And I yield back.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. And if the gentleman could just refresh my

memory, how did that vote come down when we tried, and I know you were one of the leaders on the floor at that time, to make sure that that limitation would take place? If you recall how that vote actually came down.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding back. I remember very well. The amendment to prevent illegal aliens from getting such incredible amounts of Federal taxpayer dollars passed by 215-213. We've seen the video of the replay, so it's not just my recollection; it's there in the video. We passed the amendment with the Republican leadership, and as Mr. GARRETT will recall, he was a big part of that, and it was 215-213. It sat on the board for a good while, the vote was closed, the gavel came down. And then as we saw on the video, there were two people that came forward. They weren't in the well. They came forward later and changed their vote after the vote was all declared, after everything was done. The vote was final. And somehow, when the smoke cleared, it was 212-216, I believe. So a vote that would have eliminated illegal aliens from receiving benefits under this provision, it passed, and then the rules were violated and it was taken away all so that people illegally here could get the hard-earned tax dollars from legal folks that are here.

And if I could remind my gentleman friend from New Jersey, you know, we talked a great deal. And some of us put our conservative rears on the line last year by demanding earmark reform within our own Republican Party. And, in fact, there were probably 30 or so of us that told our leadership we're not voting for another major bill unless we get some type of earmark reform. So we were thrilled, I know Mr. GARRETT recalls, we were thrilled, Mr. Speaker, when we got an agreement from the Speaker and we passed the amended rule here in the House that there could not be any air-dropped earmarks, which were the biggest problem, no air-dropped earmarks into conference reports without us having the ability to make a point of order objection and get a vote on those bills. That was a big deal.

And I just saw the current Speaker out in the Capitol in Statuary Hall. She was incredibly gracious. She met some young people that are here in the District of Columbia, was very gracious to them. She didn't have to stop, she was very kind. But I recall in September of last year the current Speaker said, quote, "if you're going to have earmarks and you're going to have transparency, you have to do it in the appropriations bill and in the tax bill and in the authorization bill."

□ 2100

She said, "I would put it in writing." Democratic Chairman DAVID OBEY admitted that "the public wants us to pass significant House reform." He also said, "To deal with the problem of earmarks by only going after appropriations earmarks constituted basically

consumer fraud masquerading as lobbying reform." He said, "To not do something about authorizing committee earmarks in the process is a joke." That was his quote. So that sounds good. But that is not what is being done this year. Americans are kind of fed up with having empty pockets while the government has spending sprees behind closed doors.

Now, I am not for eliminating all earmarks. I think some of them are good. Where we, as the most accountable elected officials in the country, in some cases, can tell bureaucrats that are locked up in a cubicle somewhere that this is how this money should be spent, but the important thing is sunshine. It brings about great disinfecting. That is where we are having the problem. That is why so many of our colleagues have signed a discharge petition that is designed to force the House majority leadership to allow a vote on House Resolution 479 that would ensure all taxpayer-funded earmarks are publicly disclosed and subject to challenge and open debate on the House floor.

I appreciate my friend from New Jersey yielding, as he has, and I would just offer a couple more observations. Then I will yield back the time. In January, frankly, when the Democratic majority said, "We are going to have even better earmark reform than what the Republican conservatives got done last year," I was pretty happy about that. I thought, that is a good thing. How could we object to that? That is great. But under the new rules, we were told that they did not allow any earmarks. Like I say, there are some earmarks where you have full disclosure. Let them see light of day so people know at whose request and what it is for. That can work out and still be a good thing. But no earmarks is better than having too many secret earmarks. So many of us were pleased.

Then, when the bill came out that was chockfull of earmarks, we objected, which is allowed for in the new rules, only to be told that there was a provision in the rules that said you could either have no earmarks whatsoever, or in the bill in question you could have a statement that there were no earmarks in the bill. And the bill in question before the floor, even though it had lots of earmarks, there was the statement in there that there were no earmarks; therefore, it didn't violate the rule. Now, that was quite a shock. You know, Mr. Speaker, the country wanted spending reform, not regression, not reneging, not redoubling or retripling. They want true spending reform. So we need to clean up the wasteful pork in legislation so that American households can continue to bring home their own bacon and not send it somewhere else.

I appreciate the time that has been yielded to me by my friend from New Jersey. I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, our friend from New Jersey's battling and agreeing to take this time and concentrate on these issues.

Mr. GARRETT. More importantly, I thank the gentleman from Texas for your work in taking part in this battle. I know that you do not simply come to the floor in these matters, but you are out there in committee process and you are on part of the team to make sure that the system is run the appropriate way and also to make the battle continuous as far as making sure the American tax dollar is spent as wisely as possible. Although in this climate, I must admit it is a difficult battle to be engaged in. Thank you for your efforts.

You raised a couple of good points. Let me just touch upon these to reiterate them. One is that we all do want the same thing, as least on this side of the aisle, and that is more transparency, more openness and an understanding of where the dollars are going to.

I know from the gentleman from Texas and myself, this is not something new that we just came to the game at the last minute and are saying these things. I am now in my third term in office, my fifth year in Congress. I have had the privilege and the honor of serving on the House Budget Committee during that time. In that committee, many times I would raise the battle and raise the questions as to where our tax dollars are going, regardless of which agency we are talking about or whether we are fighting the administration. Even though it is our own administration on these issues, I voted against a budget that has come before this House, even though it is one of our own budgets, because I thought we were spending too much. So I believe I come to the well here with a track record to stand on, as does the gentleman from Texas, as well, when it comes to saying we want to be fiscally responsible.

Likewise, to the issue of earmarks, let's spend a couple more minutes on that. Likewise in this area, I think the gentleman from Texas and myself come from the same place. And that is that even when we were in the majority, there were a number of us from this side of the aisle who were battling for, and eventually achieved what we were battling for at the end of the 109th Congress, and that was the issue of earmark reform and transparency. Unfortunately, that was lost at the beginning of the 110th Congress. You may recall the history. We had to come to the floor again and literally almost shut things down on this floor in order to compel the Democrat leadership to do what they had promised in their election of November of last year.

This may be one of the biggest ironies of the day, and we continue to see it go out on this floor night after night. I think it was just last week when the Democrat conference Chair was on the floor just in the podium to the right of me making basically the same campaign speech, if you will, that was made back prior to the November election. And what was that? Well, The Republicans are the party of big spend-

ers, they were saying. They were saying that this administration was spending too much, signing on to all these budgets and signing on to all the appropriation bills that were passed out of both the House and Senate. Of course, at that time, it was under Republican control, and so all the accusations were against the Republic Party. Of course, what was being said was that Republicans were spending too much. You would think that the next line then out of the chairman's mouth would have been, and out of the other side of the aisle's comments would be, at that time, And we are going to do something about it. We are going to reduce spending. Or at the very least, as Republicans had in past years, freeze spending at the same level as last year.

But they did nothing of the sort. They did not freeze spending. They did not reduce spending. But they drastically increased spending over and over again in line item, after line item, after line item, appropriation bill, after appropriation bill. There is not a single appropriation bill that has come to the floor that you haven't seen what I am talking about: increasing in spending.

But when we bring it back to the issue of the earmarks, the same irony goes here. All during the last cycle, the 109th Congress, when the Democrats were in the minority, clamoring, saying that we were doing things wrong, saying that if they were in leadership or they were in power that they would do what? They would give us the transparency. They would give you openness. What happens once they came into power? What have we seen? What has this last 9 months wrought under Democrat leadership? Well, as the gentleman from Texas pointed out, we had to compel basically closing down the floor for a day at a time to compel them to give us some of that transparency when it comes to earmark reform. We thought we got some of that transparency, but it is really not there completely as of yet.

There was an editorial in the Las Vegas Review Journal saying: "Democratic earmark reforms lasted just 100 days. The anti-earmark reforms are just for show. Mere window dressing." That was an editorial in the early part of the summer. They point out in there that these are just some examples of earmarks that would have been subject to an up-or-down vote on the House floor had the Republican earmark reform that we had talked about and that we had suggested and done in the last 109th Congress been in effect for the 110th Congress.

They go on to point out the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Representative MURTHA. A drug intelligence center was included in the intel authorization bill. Cost to taxpayers: \$39 million a year.

Now, we hear still to this day so much talk about the infamous, and I agree it is infamous, not famous but infamous, "Bridge to Nowhere," a project

that some of us continue to rail against and say it was wrong. I am glad that Members on the Republican side on the Senate did all they could to see to it that those funds would not go there on a cause that truly was not worthwhile. But, you know, you hear about that in the news for around \$267 million, I believe, the price tag was there. But here is a \$400 million disaster, I think one of the papers called it. But you don't hear much about that. That, again, comes from the same gentleman, same program.

Quoting now from U.S. News and World Report, they criticized this program, the NDIC as a "drug war boondoggle." A former official with the office of National Drug Control Policy said, None of us wanted it in Johnstown. That is from the gentleman from Pennsylvania's district. "We viewed it as a jobs program Murtha wanted for his district," from U.S. News and World Report. The Washington Examiner I believe also commented on this earmark pork, as well. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee called NDIC an expensive and duplicative use of scarce Federal drug enforcement resources. So by any rational standard, this \$400 million disaster should have been shut down a long time ago according to the editorial in the Washington Examiner.

So there is an example of a way to get around the earmark reform that the other side was touting in the last election, as Republicans continue to this day to push for, and as the gentleman from Texas indicated, now that there is what we call a discharge petition being signed, at least by the Republican side of the aisle. I will wait to see whether anyone from the other side of the aisle joins on with us with that discharge petition to compel the additional reform, additional transparency, to come to the floor for a vote. Just to give a 30-second explanation of that, a discharge petition is a mechanism of this House so that when a piece of legislation, good reform legislation like this, is in the hopper, ready to go, but the controlling leadership will not post that for a vote, because the leadership party in power is the one who decides what bills get posted, there is a mechanism in the rules in order to provide a mechanism to get that up for a yes-or-no vote. That is called a discharge petition. The Republicans are doing everything in our power to make sure that does come up for a vote.

Now, you may ask, again, why is this important to me? As I explained before to the gentleman from Texas, what it all really comes down to, it comes down to your tax dollars and where they are going to and shouldn't you have the opportunity to know where those tax dollars actually go to and how they are spent.

One thing that you might not know is that when it comes to the transparency that the Democrat majority says they have given us and the American public when it comes to earmarks,

and that really does not exist, is how the information is now being presented to the American public. Let me explain it in this manner: If it was our desire to make sure that information is being projected out to the Members of Congress in a useful fashion and also to the American public in a useful fashion, how could we do it?

□ 2115

Well, in the earmark reform package that the Republicans were able to compel the Democrats to accept, we said that what you have to do, very simply, is this: Give us a list of all the earmarks and give us a list of what the project is, how much money we are spending, and who the bill's sponsor is.

I should step back for a moment and say, just as the gentleman from Texas said, that we are not suggesting that all earmarks are bad, that all earmarks are extra-Constitutional; that is to say, outside of the bounds of what the Constitution says we should be spending it on. Not by any means. We are just suggesting that if we are going to have earmarks that are within the confines of the Constitution, what we should be spending our American taxpayer dollars on are on priority items. Shouldn't we have that basic information there, who the sponsor is, what the project is, and how much money is being spent on it? Three basic pieces of information.

That is what we achieved. But here's the rub. Here's the little secret that came about in the mechanism that the Democrat majority put together when they implemented that. Instead of putting all that information on one sheet or two sheets or three sheets, whatever you needed for all the many, many earmarks, and there are many, unfortunately, too many earmarks in one place, that we could basically, well, what, put it on the Internet so the American public and bloggers and anybody else who wanted to Google or Yahoo or use any other search engine look into it and find out what it is easily. No, they didn't do it that way.

Instead, here's what they did. They provided it in basically two sets of information. So over here you have a description of the project and how much money it is, and over here you have a description of the project and who the sponsor is. Now, these are two worthless pieces of information, unless they are joined together. Of course, we are looking at literally hundreds of pages of documents that you have to sift through in order to gather that information in one place. Basically, it would take an army of staffers, or of interns, or, maybe, and here's an idea, maybe of people out in the American public going through this, creating an Excel spreadsheet, if you will, to put all that information together so it is in one place.

You know what? That could have all been done on the first day that the appropriation bills came out of committee, by the committee staff them-

selves, and presented here before the House when these bills were voted on. All that information was there. It could have been done very cleanly, simply, so that Members of Congress and, importantly, the American public would have that information.

Unfortunately, that was not the transparent method that the Democrat majority wanted to use. Instead, we are still a case of obfuscation and trying to blur the information that is out there, and basically hiding from the American public what information should be readily available to us, information that the Republican leadership and those people who have been on the floor before and joining us now as well have been fighting for continually as far as transparency in these issues of our American tax dollars and where they are being spent.

What I would like to do in a moment, because we haven't got a chance to get into this yet, is take a look at the other side of the equation. We have spent some time now looking at earmarks and how money is spent. I think we also need to take a look at where the revenue comes from in the form of taxation.

I see I have been joined by another valiant fighter from Texas, a leader on these issues, who is also a leader of the Republican Study Committee, an organization of individuals who are dedicated to the issues and principles that we have been discussing on the floor tonight and in the past as far as adhering to the strict tenets of the Constitution and being concerned about where the American tax dollars go, and concerned about all the transparency issues, have been fighting both now under the Democratic leadership to increase the transparency and bring some fiscal constraint to these issues, but also, this is important, was also here engaged in the fight back in the days when the Republicans were the majority. There was a voice out there on the conservative right of the party.

I am pleased to be joined by my friend from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlemen for yielding. I especially appreciate the gentleman's leadership, his principled leadership in this body. For the people of his district in New Jersey, Mr. GARRETT is somebody who is truly committed to the principles of Constitutional government, limited government, fiscal responsibility. He is a voice of sanity on this floor. He is admired and respected by all of his colleagues, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly appreciate his leadership here tonight.

It is an important topic that he has introduced here tonight, and that is the topic of earmarks, which many people know as pork-barrel spending. I know perhaps pork-barrel spending has been around since the dawn of the Republic, but too often, too often the pork-barrel spending represents a waste of the hard-earned taxpayer money.

If you look at the Federal budget, and both myself and the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Speaker, serve on the Budget Committee, the dollars involved are still big. They are still big. We, in this Nation, and we should be ashamed of this, this body should be ashamed that it spends more money on earmarks than it does for the entire veterans health care system. Think about that. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. This is wrong.

In the last election, the Democrat party said they were going to be different. I agree with the gentleman from New Jersey. We are both Republicans. We were not always happy with the leadership that we saw in our party in dealing with earmarks, in dealing with the "bridges to nowhere," in dealing with the "indoor rain forest" and all the other earmarks that have come to really represent fiscal irresponsibility. But my party finally awoke to the fact that the people would not tolerate this.

The Republican party at the end of the last Congress put in reforms to at least bring in the disinfectant of sunshine into this body, so we at least knew where the earmarks were coming from, who was the sponsor, and we had the ability, we had the ability to come to this floor, to come to the people's House and offer amendments to strike those earmarks.

Now, the Democrat party had in some respects rightfully criticized the Republican party. They said, well, if you will allow us to come to power, we will be different. We'll be different. The Speaker said, "We pledge to make this the most honest, ethical and open Congress in history." She also went on to say, "I would just as soon do away with all earmarks." Yet now we wake up and the Speaker of the House, I believe, now gets more earmarks than any other Member of Congress. If you are going to lead, you have to lead by example.

So what the Democrats have done, Mr. Speaker, is that they have rolled back the transparency, they have rolled back the accountability that the Republicans put in, albeit too late, in the last Congress.

This is how under Democrat leadership we end up with the \$2 million earmark for the Rangel Center for Public Service requested by none other than Congressman CHARLES RANGEL to provide himself with an office and a library. This is transparency? This is accountability? This is fiscal responsibility? One Member of Congress decides to take \$2 million of the people's money and build a museum to himself? This is what the Democrats call responsibility? This is what they call fiscal responsibility?

There is \$1 million for the Center for Instrumental Critical Infrastructure in Congressman MURTHA's district? No one, including the chairman, no one, including the chairman who wrote the bill, could confirm that the organization even existed. But somehow they are going to end up with \$1 million.

There is \$231,000 for the Lincoln Airport Commission, an airport in Illinois that doesn't exist, and an airport that was supposed to come out of the private sector. And the list goes on and on and on.

Now, I am not here, Mr. Speaker, to say that every single earmark is a bad use of the people's money. But, more often than not, earmarking represents a triumph of seniority over merit. It represents a triumph of secrecy over accountability. And because of that, it wastes the people's money and it leads to the culture of spending.

The American people are not overtaxed. The Federal Government spends too much. We know, Mr. Speaker, already with just the government we have today, adding no new programs, no new benefits, just the government we have today is destined to bankrupt our children and grandchildren.

Don't take my word for it. The Comptroller General of America, the chief fiduciary officer of our government, has said that we are on the verge of being the very first America generation in American history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. It has never happened in the entire history of America, that we could be the first generation to break faith with all those other generations that have left us with an America with greater freedom and greater opportunity. Now here we are spending the people's money, taking away from people who do not vote because they are children and those who have not yet been born, and because of the spending patterns of the Federal Government, we are due to leave them a lower standard of living.

It was just this week on Wednesday that my wife and I celebrated our son's fourth birthday. We have a daughter who is 5½. We have a great stake in America's future. I will not be a part, the gentleman from New Jersey will not be a part, the Republican Study Committee will not be a part, the Republican Conference will not be a part of leaving the next generation with that lower standard of living; restricting their freedoms, restricting their opportunities, leaving an America that is less than the America we know. We won't be a part of it.

It all starts with the earmarks. The earmarks are the culture of spending. I wish I had been creative enough or articulate enough to come up with the line from the Senator from Oklahoma, who said, "Earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction."

They teach people to become dependent upon the Federal Government. It totally, totally puts the value of merit aside, and, because of that, it is critical that we reform the process and restrict the number of earmarks.

Democrats, the Democrats who in the last election on some occasions again rightfully criticized the Republicans for our earmark practice, but instead they are rolling it back.

Now, it is a little bit of inside baseball, but in Washington you have what

are known as appropriation earmarks. Ostensibly, the Democrats, our friends from the other side of the aisle, have given us some limited accountability there. But there is also something known as tax earmarks. There is something known as authorizing earmarks, more creative ways to spend the people's money. It is all pork. If you want to go on a lean pork diet, you just can't cut out the sausage. You have to cut out the bacon and the ham as well. The Democrats said they were going to do so much more, and they have done so much less.

We all know recently in what is known as the SCHIP bill, and, Mr. Speaker, we all know that Washington excels at acronyms, but in this particular bill, approximately 25 Members of Congress in the dark of night managed to cut some kind of deal in a smoke-filled backroom to get extra reimbursements for their hospitals that nobody else in America receives.

Supposedly we were supposed to have accountability. Supposedly we were supposed to have transparency. But not with all the loopholes that the Democrats have put in to their so-called earmark reform process.

So I would like to say that talk is cheap, but, unfortunately, talk is rather expensive here, costing billions and billions of dollars in earmarks that the Democrats refuse to clean up, that they claimed they would clean up in the 2006 election, and instead they keep on coming.

I remember introducing an amendment on the floor to restrict an earmark that was geared towards the Hollywood movie industry to help train people, train people for Hollywood, this struggling movie industry whose top ten box office hits from just a few weeks ago grossed almost \$1 billion. Somehow the American taxpayer has to help them recruit people for their movie sets.

The list goes on and on and on. Nothing, nothing has been done. The dollars are still going to the Saint Joseph's College theater renovation in Indiana; \$150,000 for the Kansas Regional Prisons Museum in Lansing, Kansas.

There is no accountability. There is no transparency. There is no reform here. And because of this, because of this, the next generation is looking at a lower standard of living.

That is why I am so happy that the gentleman from New Jersey has come to the floor to lead on this issue for all of the American people, and I am happy to yield back to him.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. On just your last point, you raised this a moment ago, and before I say this, happy birthday to your 4-year-old. But maybe if your 4-year-old knew exactly what the debt that he has is, he would not have been so happy at his birthday party.

□ 2130

You raised the point that the next generation for the first time in American history is not going to be as well

off as the previous generation. Before you came here, I said one of the things that I learned early on in politics from a Member from the other side of the aisle back in my county was: What does this do for me? Or in this case: What does this do to me?

In this case it really hits home for someone such as yourself or someone else who has a little one back at home. What does it do for my children? What does it do for my grandchildren? Or in this case, what does it do to them? Of course, in this case, it saddles them with a debt, an obligation, for something that they are not gaining any benefit from; but you and I and others in this generation may be gaining benefit from. But who is paying for it, your 4-year-old. And that, of course, is not fair.

So many times, so many times we hear Members come to the floor and say: here is my program. Here is my earmark. Fill in the blank for whatever it is. It is the compassionate thing to do, to spend this money on this program.

Well, I guess it might be compassionate if they were reaching into their pocket and pulling out their own money to pay for that particular program. But, gosh, in the 5 years I have been here, I have not seen any Member of Congress when they came with their program say they are going to spend for it. No, they are just going to saddle it onto America's debt.

As you said, if you have little ones out there, that debt is not necessarily paid for by you and I, the current American taxpayers. It is going to be passed on the next generation.

The question we should be asking the other side of the aisle, after they railed against the Republicans for spending so much, now they are spending even more. Now they are going to have to raise taxes under their PAYGO rules. We will get to that in a little bit. How compassionate are they when they transfer that burden, when they transfer that debt on to future generations?

Keeping to this issue of how to fix the problem, the gentleman from Texas, you might want to comment on the petition that is currently being circulated, a discharge petition which I explained earlier, and how that will address the issue of authorization language as well.

But before you do that, let me share with you a quote or two with regards to what the other side of the aisle said about this process last year when they were in the minority. This is actually something I had put forward last year to say when it comes to earmark reform, you can't just look at appropriation bills; you have to look at the authorization language. And as mentioned before with the earmark reform from the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA), the \$400 million earmark, that was in essence done through authorization language. You have to do both of these.

The other side of the aisle agreed with us at that time. They said, "You

can't just have earmarks viewed as appropriation bills unless you take up earmarks in tax bills and earmarks in authorization bills. But if you are going to have earmarks and you are going to have transparencies, you have to do it in the appropriation bills and in the tax bills and in the authorization bills. I would put it in writing." Who said that? Representative NANCY PELOSI, California.

Likewise, "To not do something about Authorizing Committee earmarks in the process is a joke, in my view." Who said that? DAVID OBEY.

So we knew where they stood last year when they had their positions on transparency. Now that they are in the majority, we wonder exactly where they stand this year, when they have the ability to do something about it. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and this is a very important issue for this body to take up.

Again, the term "discharge petition," what does it mean? It is something that shouldn't be necessary. What it says is we are asking Members to have the leadership schedule a vote on this bill so that the Democrats can't roll back the transparency and accountability reforms that the Republicans put in at the end of the last Congress. Again, we are talking about porkbarrel spending here.

Every single leader of the Democrat Party claimed they wanted more accountability. They wanted more transparency, and then they go and exempt two-thirds of the spending in what we call authorizing. So they left out huge categories of this. But we shouldn't be surprised because right after the election, when they were bringing spending bills to the floor, they actually wanted us to vote on the spending bill and then later, only later were they going to tell us what the earmarks were in the bill. They tried to hide them from us. We brought that to the attention of the American people and the American people said no. And we enjoyed a victory. Fiscal conservatives made the Democrats at least make good on that pledge and bring this transparency and accountability back here.

So this is a very important effort of the Republicans in the House, and we hope we will be joined by the Democrats who claim that they are committed to fiscal responsibility, who claim that they want to have earmark reform. They complained that the Republican earmark reforms didn't go far enough, and yet they rolled them back. All we are saying is bring us what we had at the end of the last Congress.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, you raise a point: this is what they were saying last year but they are not doing it this year. We are hopeful that at least now that we have discussed this on the floor, the information is out there, the discharge petition is going forward, although that has not been a secret because there is a line

every day that we are in session here of Republican Members standing down in the well signing the discharge petition, so they know it is coming.

But let me give you two other quotes of what folks from the other side of the aisle were saying last year about this. When they were talking about the measure that would only provide for appropriations and not authorizations last year, they said: "It is a half measure at best that would do nothing to stop wasteful and unnecessary projects like the bridge to nowhere." That was the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Finally, "My proposal requires the public disclosure of all earmarks, not just those of the Appropriations Committee, but authorizing and tax bills and much, much more." Who said that? Representative SLAUGHTER from New York, now head of the Rules Committee.

So we seem to have some very important people here last year from the other side of the aisle starting with NANCY PELOSI, Speaker, to head of the Rules Committee saying they agree with our ideas as far as broadening earmark reform and transparency.

So maybe tonight, and I think we only have a couple more minutes, I would be willing to stay with you here on the floor if you would join me, if anyone from the other side of the aisle, leadership from NANCY PELOSI's office or the Rules Committee, to come and join me and say they will sign on to our petition, or if the Speaker would agree to move that piece of legislation since that is what they wanted to do last year when they were in the minority, and if they will do it now that they are in the majority. Will you wait with me if they indicate they will come to the floor?

Mr. HENSARLING. I will be happy to stay here as long as necessary to have the Democrat leadership commit to the words they made before the election and have their actions after the election comport with those words before the election.

And if I could, and I know that time is coming to a close, I would like to add, as you brought up, every Member who comes to this floor with an earmark says this is a good thing; the money can be used for a good cause. I don't doubt that. There are many good causes in America. The YMCA, the Girl Scouts, cut flowers. There are a lot of great causes. But the question is, number one: Is it a Federal priority and how do we pay for it today?

Today, since the Federal Government continues to run a deficit, although under our President's leadership with more tax revenue from economic growth, it is falling. But right now, the money for a earmark can only come from one of three sources, number one, by raiding the Social Security trust fund. Is the earmark worth taking money away from our seniors?

Under the Democrats, we now have a plan for the single largest tax increase

in history, almost \$3,000 per family. More earmarks lead to more taxes. Is it worth putting a \$3,000 tax burden on a family of four to pay for the Charlie Rangel Museum to himself? Or debt to our children and grandchildren? Is the Charlie Rangel Museum to himself, is that worth passing on \$2 million of debt to our children and grandchildren? It is not worth passing on that debt to my children, and it is not worth passing on that debt to the children of the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Texas, much less the children of the people of America.

And so I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his leadership, his principled leadership, in trying to reform earmarks.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I think our time is just about up, and I appreciate your efforts not only tonight, but throughout your entire time here. It has been a pleasure working with you in the House while you stand beside the American family and the American family budget.

Americans place much responsibility in the hands of their Representatives in Congress. The American public deserves to know where their hard-earned tax dollars go. They have a right to this information. If the Democrat majority is not going to literally open the books in a clear and concise manner so the American public and Members of Congress know where the dollars go, if the Democrat majority is not going to give us the transparency that the American public deserves when it comes to where their dollars go, then the Republican Party and the Republican minority will see to it that the job is done on behalf of the American public.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRALEY of Iowa). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2155

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BRALEY of Iowa) at 9 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 976, CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. ARCURI, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-346) on the resolution (H. Res. 675) providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill

(H.R. 976) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for small businesses, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and September 25 on account of official business.

Mr. HONDA (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of official business.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of family matters.

Mr. STUPAK (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of business in the district.

Mr. HERGER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and September 25 on account of illness.

Mr. LUCAS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of family health issues.

Mr. POE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 7:00 p.m. and September 25 on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

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

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

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MICHAUD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, September 28 and October 1.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, September 28 and October 1.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and September 25, 26, 27, and 28.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROHRBACHER, for 5 minutes, September 25.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 456. An act to increase and enhance law enforcement resources committed to investigation and prosecution of violent gangs, to deter and punish violent gang crime, to protect law-abiding citizens and communities from violent criminals, to revise and enhance criminal penalties for violent crimes, to expand and improve gang prevention pro-

grams, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Education and Labor for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3528. An act to provide authority to the Peace Corps to provide separation pay for host country resident personal services contractors of the Peace Corps.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, September 25, 2007, at 9 a.m., for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3417. A letter from the Chief, Recruiting Policy Branch, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Recruiting and Enlistments [Docket No. USA-2007-0017] (RIN: 0702-AA57) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3418. A letter from the Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Public Housing Operating Fund Program; Revised Transition Funding Schedule for Calendar Years 2007 Through 2012 [Docket Number FR-5105-F-02] (RIN: 2577-AC72) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3419. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Mgmt. Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medical Devices: Immunology and Microbiology Devices: Classification of In Vitro Human Immunodeficiency Virus Drug Resistance Genotype Assay [Docket No. 2007N-0294] received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3420. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the Matter of Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations. (Charleston and Englewood, Tennessee) [MB Docket No. 05-273 RM-11273 RM-11307] received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3421. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the Matter of Amendment of Section 73.202(b), FM Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations. (Waukomis, Oklahoma)