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I urge my colleagues to break the gridlock on Capitol Hill and support the President's deficit reduction plan. It is a vote for small business, not business as usual.

CUT RADIO FREE EUROPE

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

Mr. KLUG. Mr. Speaker, I and a number of my colleagues were frustrated yesterday because we were never allowed to offer an amendment on this floor to cut 15 percent out of the operating budget of Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Liberty, because we were told that \$32 million in cuts would devastate an agency that obviously did good work throughout the cold war, but I and a number of other people think is now in many ways an outdated relic.

Consider these facts this morning in the Washington Post. It turns out that the president of the Munich-based operation receives \$316,000 in salary, including a \$52,000 post allowance for living expenses and payment of German taxes.

The director of Radio Free Europe receives a package worth \$318,000 and the personnel director gets a package worth \$232,000.

At a time of \$400 billion deficits, we are spending \$250 million a year telling the people of Russia what they already know, that Soviet rule was miserable.

It is time to get serious about the deficit and cut Radio Free Europe and cut these exorbitant salaries.

MISREPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. HOAGLAND. Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing an enormous amount of rhetoric and misrepresentations from groups like the Citizens for a Sound Economy and others about the reconciliation bill before the conference committee and how it is bad for small business.

Well, I commend to your attention an article written yesterday in the Wall Street Journal with the headline, "Foes of Clinton's Tax Boost Proposals

Mislead the Public and Firms on Small Business Aspect."

Now, my colleagues have already talked this morning about increasing the expensing for small businesses, more than doubling it, about the targeted capital gains tax relief that was in the House bill; but you know, when it comes right down to it, the most important thing of all that the Clinton proposal does for small business is to keep interest rates low. The prime rate is lower now than it has been in 25 years.

I talked to a constituent from Omaha yesterday who just got a 15-year mortgage for 6½ percent. That is what is important about this package.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MIKE WALDMAN OF NEWSDAY

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

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, being a newcomer to this institution can be a daunting experience. Yet, from the start, Mike Waldman of Newsday reached out to me with a genuine desire to be helpful. And helpful he was. I am deeply saddened by his death on Monday.

Mike was always there when I had questions about how things really worked in this crazy town and in this unique institution. His sage advice reflected not only his many years of journalistic experience, it also reflected his innate political sachel [common sense]. I will miss his counsel very much, but I will miss his friendship even more.

In a world with so many out for No. 1 and willing to step on others in order to boost themselves, it was refreshing to know Mike Waldman who gave so much and yet asked for nothing in return. In an environment where adversarial relations between the press and politicians are the norm, and the two groups generally view each other with suspicion, if not contempt, Mike Waldman stood above it all.

Mr. Speaker, here were two people from very different worlds—Mike having covered Presidential campaigns and other important political happenings for decades, and me, a brandnew Member of Congress. It was an odd couple that emerged at the end of one career and, perhaps, the beginning of another.

I wish I could find more eloquent words to describe the person behind the name and face. To be able to pick up the phone and just talk and be absolutely honest with each other—that is what I will miss the most about Mike Waldman.

REBUILDING THE ASYLUM SYSTEM

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

Mr. MAZZOLI. Mr. Speaker, we cannot expect a pickup to carry the weight a dump truck can carry. Pretty soon the pickup breaks down and has to be rebuilt. That is exactly the analogy for our current asylum system. It has been asked to bear too heavy a load. It has broken down and needs to be rebuilt.

A bill, H.R. 2602, was introduced by the gentleman from Kentucky, along with his colleagues and his friends, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM] that would in fact rebuild and revitalize the asylum system so it is there to grant asylum protection from persecutions to those who deserve it, but to deny that same protection to the people who do not deserve it.

The section of the bill authorized by the gentleman from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] deals primarily with keeping people out of the United States who are attempting to travel with fraudulent papers. The section of the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM] would provide an expedited but fair hearing for those who plead asylum when they reach this shore. And, my part of the bill would make general changes in the asylum law to reduce the lengthy, almost interminable, hearings and appeals of today's law.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the asylum system is broken and we have to fix it.

THE BYRD RULE

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, leading House negotiators on the tax bill conference committee are looking for ways to dump the other body's Byrd rule. The Byrd rule prohibits the bill from containing items which do not directly reduce the deficit.

The President and House Democrats have been working hard to convince the American people that this massive tax increase bill is a deficit reduction package. If this is the case, why are we afraid of the Byrd rule? If our No. 1 goal is to reduce the deficit, we should have no problems with the Byrd rule.

The forceful reaction of House Democrat leaders against the Byrd rule makes me wonder just what they intend to tuck away in the tax bill during their secret meetings. And it really makes me wonder whether they are as committed to deficit reduction, as they profess.

Mr. Speaker, the Byrd rule could actually force Congress to keep its promise of passing a deficit reduction bill. Maybe that is why Democrats are trying to kill the Byrd rule.

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