

going to vote on a constitutional amendment to make it harder for Washington to raise taxes on the American people.

Just within the last 7 years, a Democrat-controlled Congress hit working Americans with two of the biggest tax increases in our country's history. Today we say, no more.

The typical family today currently pays in taxes about as much as it cost them for clothing, food, and housing all put together. And the typical worker today gives everything they earn from New Year's to May 9 just to pay taxes. That is too much, and it has to stop. Today we ought to vote for this constitutional amendment to require a two-thirds vote in this House.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. PAUL].

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to first compliment the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BARTON] for having brought this to the House floor. I think it is a wonderful opportunity for us to discuss a very important issue and also to make a proposal to do some good around here.

Limiting taxes happens to be an issue that is dear to my heart and something I want to talk about. I have a philosophy about taxes. One is that taxes really hurt us twice, once when we take the money from the people, then when we go and spend it. So rarely do we spend the money wisely, but the people always seem to be hurt.

I have yet in my many years experience in political life had anybody come up to me and say, go to Washington and raise taxes. Everybody feels that they are overtaxed. Anything that we could do to limit taxes I think would be beneficial.

Whether or not this amendment will solve all of our problems is another issue. Quite frankly, it is not going to solve all of our problems. We have seen a proposal floating around for several years about balancing the budget. I am not enthusiastic about the balanced budget amendment precisely because that amendment, in itself, does not preclude what this amendment does, and that is raising taxes in order to balance the budget. That would be very, very detrimental.

The important issue that we have to deal with is the level of government expenditures. If we have a balanced budget at \$2 trillion a year, that is very detrimental. If we have an unbalanced budget at \$1 trillion a year, at least the American people would have more of their own money to spend.

This is an effort to move in the direction of limiting taxes, and I think this is very, very important. There are a lot of things, though, that are out of our control. For instance, a small tax increase is not going to be included here. If we change the Tax Code and change indexing, taxes will go up, and this will not be included.

Another tax that is not talked about much around here, but I consider it a very important tax, and that is the inflation tax. If we in the Congress spend too much, we do not have enough revenues, we can send the bill to the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve creates credit, and therefore diluting the value of our money, and the people suffer because their cost of living goes up. So that indeed is a tax.

We do not have a whole lot of choices on how we accommodate our spending habits here. First, we can tax people; second, we can borrow; and the other is, we can inflate. All of these are detrimental. The important issue is to limit government spending.

We will not solve any of our problems here until we address the serious subject of what should the role of government be. If we continue to believe that the role of government should be to perpetuate a bankrupt welfare state and to police the world and tell people how to live their personal lives, quite frankly, we are not going to get anywhere in solving our problems. We cannot patch this together.

Collecting more revenues would be detrimental. Collecting less revenues would put more pressure on us to spend less money. But then again, it is not going to deal with the subject of interest rates.

What happens if this year the interest rates go up 1 percent? Which they may, because interest rates are rising once again. And if interest rates go up 1 percent, it adds \$50 billion to our interest payment on our national debt. That is out of our direct control here in the House or in the Senate. We cannot take care of that just by passing another law or raising taxes.

Also, we do not have control of the business cycle. We should have much better control, because we understand and should understand the business cycle and we should prevent the downturns. But sure enough, there will be another recession, entitlement payments will automatically go up, put more pressure on us with the deficit, and also put more pressure on those who would like to say, well, if the spending is going up, we have to take care of the people, and what we need to do is raise taxes. The easier, the better. A very, very dangerous situation when it is easy to raise taxes. The Founders of this country in no way intended that taxes on income should ever occur, let alone be done easily.

So this is a small effort in the right direction. I ask for a ye aye vote on this amendment.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. FOWLER].

(Mrs. FOWLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, there is an old joke that asks the question: What is the difference between death and taxes? And the answer to that question: Death does not get worse every time Congress comes to town.

Hopefully, today we are going to take a big step toward making that joke obsolete by passing House Joint Resolution 62.

The evidence is already there that making it harder to raise taxes actually benefits government as well as individuals. In States that have adopted provisions similar to the amendment we are voting on today, taxes have increased more slowly, spending has grown more slowly, economies have expanded faster, and employment has grown more quickly.

Mr. Speaker, we are already working to balance the budget, decrease the size and scope of the Federal Government, and reduce spending. Let us also follow the good example of the States by passing this amendment.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW].

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, on this day, April 15, I am most reluctant to get up and speak against an amendment which, on its face, appears to be something that we all should support. However, I think it is an amendment that we should not be putting into the Constitution of the United States.

The bill before us today does not in any way give the American people any tax relief. What it simply would do is to institutionalize into the U.S. Constitution a provision, an antidemocrat provision, and I do not mean Democrat party, I mean one having to do with democracy; a provision that would say that the minority can run this House. Think about it for a moment. Under this constitutional amendment, 7 percent of the population, through a vote in the Senate, could run the business of the legislative body of this great country of ours.

When this came to the floor last time, I voted for it. Since then, I have been giving it a great deal of thought, and that thought has been somewhat around my support of the constitutional amendment that would require us to balance our budget.

Mr. Speaker, we should think for a moment when we have a situation where we are putting into the Constitution a provision where 7 percent of the population of this great country can stop legislation. We will have put into position in the Constitution a constitutional amendment that requires the Federal Government to balance its budget, and then we try to put a tax bill on the floor when funds may be desperately needed, not in a time of hostility, but perhaps just needed in order to build up our own forces to compete with a force that is potentially hostile elsewhere in this world.

As a leader of the free world and as a leader of this entire world, this country could be brought to its knees by 7 percent of the population. That is absolutely unthinkable to me.

As much as I hate to vote against this amendment, and as much respect as I have for the proponents of this amendment and what they are trying