

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy.

It is an interesting debate that is going on here today because in terms of the motion to instruct, there really isn't that great a difference of opinion. We are, in fact, going to be able to meet the objectives. We are working hard in our budget to make sure that we deal meaningfully with tax relief for those who need it.

The difference between the Republicans and the Democrats is that they are not willing to make any distinction. For them it is Paris Hilton who is first in line. We have made it clear that we are going to work to make sure that real priorities for American families are adopted. We have proven that in terms of what we have stood for in the past as well as what we are working for in the future.

Democrats have repeatedly voted for a lowered tax bracket on lower-income people, the expansion of the earned income tax credit, marriage penalty relief, increase in the child tax credit, acceleration of the expansion of the 10-percent bracket, increased expensing for small businesses. These were things that people here on the floor who are on our side of the aisle offered up as a responsible alternative when our friends on the other side were engaged in a rather extensive and unfocused effort to try to provide tax benefits for those who need them the least while ignoring the needs of those who need it the most.

They have given some modest bones to a few in America. Those that merit our support will, in fact, be continued. And, more important, we are going to deal with what is the largest tax increase in American history, which the Bush administration and my Republican friends on the other side of the aisle have set the stage for, and that is the tsunami of the alternative minimum tax. That is going to cost \$1 trillion over the next 10 years, and we have made it clear that that is our number one priority to solve, as in the House Committee on Ways and Means we working on this.

We don't have to accede to every single detail for Paris Hilton in order to make sure that we deal with the needs of working Americans and the tax tsunami of the alternative minimum tax, which has been ignored session after session after session by the Republicans when they were in charge.

I find no small amount of irony to hear my good friend from Wisconsin talking about how he has proven it is possible to have a unified budget surplus when for 12 consecutive years of ironclad Republican control they wrote all the fiscal rules, wrote the budgets, wrote the tax policy.

I invite anybody to look at what the now minority proved that they could do. It's a pretty sorry record of fiscal irresponsibility.

Mr. Speaker, my point is simply that the budget resolution that we brought forward is a reasonable, meaningful approach to deal with these fiscal problems.

Independent observers agree that there is no tax increase this year or the next. And we are on a path allowed for in our budget resolution and the work we are doing in the Ways and Means Committee right now to make sure that we solve the tax tsunami of the alternative minimum tax.

I look forward to our getting past this type of discussion here, as my friends on the other side of the aisle seek to substitute rhetoric for their sorry record of non-accomplishment, and look forward to moving forward.