

The tax and budget fantasy continues here on Capitol Hill. I voted against the so called "Balance Budget Agreement" in 1997 because it was clear to me that Congress had no intention of abiding by the spending restrictions that were mandated. I felt that it was dishonest and merely a political gesture. The Omnibus-spending bill of 1998 which broke the caps by \$20 billion and resulted in spending more, less wisely illustrated the worst of both worlds.

We are now on the verge of missing a historic opportunity to do something meaningful based on our strong fiscal condition and economy. I will not support the trillion-dollar tax cut "Christmas tree" legislation because it continues the fantasy. The costs of this bill would explode over time. It would deny meaningful tax relief to those who truly need help. We should provide a significant payroll tax relief for the many Americans who are on the financial edge. Many Americans are paying a very significant social security tax that is higher than their federal income tax.

The hypocrisy is obvious and unfortunate. At a time when Republicans are looking to cut government revenues by a trillion-dollars they are maneuvering to break the budget caps upon which this imaginary surplus is predicated. Every Member knows that Congress will spend more money this year than the caps allow. Since this is the case we should at least do it directly and honestly by publicly adjusting these spending limits. Any realistic assessment would dramatically reduce the amount of money available for today's tax cut scheme.

The American people would applaud if Congress took three simple steps:

1. Pay off the national debt,
2. Protect Social Security and Medicare and
3. Provide meaningful tax relief to Americans who need it the most, through the reduction in payroll tax for social security.