

Redding, CA 96003
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O-House / Senate

C-SPAN
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Washington, DC 20001

Gentlemen:

I am having great difficulty (as I believe other Americans are) in understanding the legislative positions being taken on the current budget bill before the United States Congress. I think that the problem stems, in part, from the unwillingness of the news media to ask the tough and penetrating questions of our congressmen and women AND to insist on direct, in-depth and unambiguous answers.

I am convinced that both major parties are not giving the American people straight answers on this issue. I also strongly believe that we must preserve and rebuild the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, and we must eliminate the outrageously huge national debt.

My local representative, Congressman Wally Herger, to his credit has stated the following in a letter to me:

"Like you, I feel that the size and scope of federal government is much too large. We currently have a \$5.65 trillion national debt. A child born today will pay \$200,000 in taxes during his or her lifetime just to pay the interest alone on this debt.

I agree that a major priority for this country should be to pay off this debt as soon as possible. However, in order to do this, we have to first stop increasing that debt year after year by not spending more than [sic] the government takes in from the taxpayer. Under current projections, the total national debt will not begin to go down until 2006.

While the federal government is currently running "total" budget surpluses, those surpluses only exist due to the borrowing from Social Security, which currently runs surpluses. Because this is the case, the debt will continue to grow even in reported surplus years. I believe this practice is wrong and have introduced legislation that would completely and permanently separate Social Security from the rest of the budget. As a fiscal conservative, I do not consider my job done until the debt begins to go down."

Congressman Herger's information is astounding, and the American people should hear this and more straight talk on this issue. Unfortunately, the news media is failing in its

responsibility to the American people to get this and the "rest of the story" out to them.

Regarding polls that the news media conducts, I believe that many are not carefully and/or scientifically prepared. CNN just released a poll showing that of the so-called independents considering running for president, Jesse Ventura and Donald Trump headed the list while Pat Buchanan came in a poor fourth. I do not believe this was an accurate poll. If this poll failed to poll only those voters who intended to vote independent, it has given an inaccurate picture of the relative strengths of the candidates. For example, voters and non-voters of Republican and Democrat persuasions, wanting a weak candidate to run against their party, will attempt to influence the outcome of the pool by responding with the name of a weak independent candidate. Moreover, the polls should be limited to those citizens who indicate that they vote regularly or definitely intend to vote in the upcoming presidential election.

The news media has as its prime responsibility to provide accurate and in-depth information to the American people. Please do so, as you have great power, indirectly, if not directly, in determining the future course of this nation.

Thank you for your attention.

