

this failed policy. Not so fast. Sixty-six percent of all growth between 2001 and 2007 went to the top 1 percent of Americans. Did that trickle down to the rest of us? All you have to do is ask a family in Albany or Schenectady or Troy, New York that I represent. My district will say it most certainly did not.

In the debate over extending tax cuts, the choice is clear. I stand with the 98.1 percent of households in my district, the middle-income community, the working families. I hope my colleagues on both sides will review their own district numbers and do the same.

#### FINISH BUSINESS

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, on November 2, Americans sent a message to Washington that we are sick and tired of the out-of-control spending and bigger government that has existed over the last 2 years. While the lame duck Congress has unfinished business to complete, such as permanently extending the current income tax rates, Democrats in Congress have hinted at other plans to continue their irresponsible spending spree by passing a massive omnibus spending bill.

Mr. Speaker, after the bell-ringing on November 2, surely Democrats in their few remaining days of control are not intending to use this lame duck session to continue the failed policies that got us into this mess to begin with. I implore this body to act immediately to cut spending, balance the budget, extend the current tax rates, and send this Nation on a new path to greatness while ensuring the people's voice is once again heard in Washington.

#### EXTENDING TAX CUTS VERSUS UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. PINGREE of Maine asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, in the remaining days of this Congress we have some choices to make, and those choices couldn't be more clear. Are we going to extend tax cuts for the rich, giving millionaires an average break of over \$100,000, or are we going to continue unemployment benefits of about \$245 a week for out-of-work Americans? Are we going to approve a giveaway to high-paid CEOs that the Congressional Budget Office puts at the bottom of their list of what would stimulate the economy, or are we going to extend the unemployment benefits the CBO puts at the top of that same list? Are we going to hand out tax breaks to the wealthy that will add \$700 billion to the deficit, or are we going to continue funding unemployment checks that generate \$2 in economic activity for every \$1 in benefits paid?

The American people sent us here to set priorities and make tough choices.

Putting American workers ahead of millionaires and billionaires should be our priority, and it shouldn't be a tough choice to make.

#### BIG GOVERNMENT ORDERS BIG SIGNS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Highway Administration is ordering all local governments to go out and purchase new road signs. Why? Because the brilliant bureaucrats say these signs are easier to read. It took 800 pages of "easy-to-read" regulations and redtape to mandate making letters two inches taller. The new signs must be reflective and cannot be in all caps. New York City alone will have to spend \$27 million just to revamp their sufficient signs. Millions will be spent by other financially troubled cities.

Why is this happening? Because, as the saying goes, "We're from government, and we're here to help you." What if the towns refuse to replace their perfectly good signs with the Federally authorized signs? Will the intrusive Federal street sign police come out and cart the city officials off to jail for road sign violations? And what's next? Will the Feds soon require signs be in multiple languages? Once again, Big Government solves problems that don't exist and answers questions no one is asking. And that's just the way it is.

#### MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS AND JOBS

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, we must remind the American people when President Obama took office, he inherited a \$1.2 trillion deficit, the recession, and mounting job losses. In the last 2 years we have worked hard to end the outsourcing of jobs overseas and lay the groundwork to create new jobs here at home. But with the unemployment rate at 9.6 across the Nation and over 14 percent in my area in California, we must do more. If Congress does not act to extend the unemployment insurance benefit, 2 million Americans stand to lose benefits during the holiday season. Yet, instead of working with us to provide assistance to struggling families, Republicans—I state Republicans—continue to obstruct and push for budget-busting tax breaks for America's millionaires.

We must extend unemployment benefits, and we must approve the Obama middle class tax cut plan without the deficit-increasing tax breaks for America's richest few. Let's work together to help families through these tough times and create the jobs the American people need.

#### AMERICA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, Ireland, with a population of just 4.4 million, has been forced to get a \$90 billion bailout to keep from crashing. With our debt of almost \$14 trillion and trillion-dollar yearly deficits, we are very close to becoming a gigantic Ireland financially. A similar bailout for the U.S. would be over \$6 trillion.

In yesterday's Washington Post, columnist Fareed Zakaria, concerning what he called our economic crisis, wrote this:

"Washington is asking consumers to stop saving and start spending, while the government issues more debt and the Fed lowers rates—all measures designed to increase debt." "In other words," he wrote, "we are fighting a crisis caused by excessive debt by encouraging excessive debt. Is that really the best way to get growth?"

A few months ago the Post editorialized, "It's time to stop worrying about the deficit and start panicking about the debt. The fiscal situation was serious before the recession; it is now dire."

The problem is that the Post, like too many in this city, always attacks any attempts to cut spending.

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#### CONGRATULATING CHARLES BARNUM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan placed a call to the principal of the Charles Barnum Elementary School in Groton, Connecticut, to congratulate the school's 100 percent math score and 92 percent reading score in the Connecticut Mastery tests.

The school's success was notable for two reasons: First, because Barnum is a good old-fashioned public school that raised its test scores to almost perfection the right way—through teamwork by administration, teachers, staff, students, and parents—and second, because it's a school adjacent to the Groton Navy sub base with over 90 percent of its student body children of active duty Navy. These are families which face tremendous challenges with parents away at sea for months at a time incommunicado with their kids. Despite that environment, the Barnum community has made sure that its kids are achieving the highest level of proficiency in reading and math.

Congratulations to Principal Valerie Nelson and everyone at Barnum, and thank you for giving the country an example of educational success which we in Congress should carefully examine as the time approaches to reform America's schools.