

happy to invite him to the Make It in America working meeting hosted by the White House and our Democratic whip, Mr. HOYER, tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Mark's experience demonstrates why we need to strengthen our trade laws and pass the China currency reform bill. In the meantime, I would like to salute Mark Andol for his commitment to the American worker.

JOB

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUINTA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to take this hour together with my colleagues to discuss jobs in America. I think we know from our recent visits back to our districts that there's a great deal of pain in America. Americans want to go to work, and yet the jobs are not available.

Our President has proposed the American Jobs Act, a program that would put perhaps 1.9 million Americans to work as soon as the Congress of the United States were to pass that legislation. And so that's the subject matter of this hour, how to get Americans back to work and how to pay for it.

I'm going to start with the pay-for, a word that's used around here but perhaps not readily understood by Americans. Pay-for is how are we going to pay for the Federal programs.

Let's start with an analysis of the distribution of income in America. There's been more and more discussion about this in recent weeks, and appropriately so because what has happened over the last 25–30 years is a skewing, a wide separation of wealth in the United States to a point where it is now perhaps the widest separation between the very wealthy and the middle and poor people in America that has ever occurred in our history. Here's a pretty good description of it. If you take the top 1 percent, we've seen an enormous growth in their income, about 350 percent.

□ 1450

If you take the middle, the other 99 percent of the American population, you see very, very modest growth. And in the case of the poor, you've actually seen a decline in their income over the last two decades. And that's what's happened, this enormous separation between the very wealthy and the middle class, the working men and women of America. It's not that the real rich don't work; just not that many of them. But they sure have got a big share of the money.

Let's take, for example, the top executives of the oil industry. If we were to take the top executives of the big five oil companies and compare them

to a firefighter, a firefighter averages about \$47,000 a year. An executive, a CEO of an oil company, would have 307 times that amount of income. And if you take a teacher at say \$53,000 a year, the CEO would have 273 times the amount of income of a teacher. So what you're seeing here in just the oil industry—and this is repeated certainly in the banking and the Wall Street industries, the financial industries—you see this enormous separation. Thirty, 40 years ago, this was in the range of 40 times, maybe 50 times. But now we're talking 300 to, in the lower 300s, a separation of the super wealthy and the working middle class, the men and women that are out there constructing schools, making our schools or teaching our kids or protecting us, police and firefighters.

I put those graphs up because it provides us with a solution. Before I get to the solution, let's just take one more look at the way this income distribution is occurring here in the United States. The rising inequality since the 1970s saw a very sharp break in the prosperity from an earlier era. From 1946 to 1976, the top 1 percent actually had a very small portion of the total wealth. From 1976 to 1990, we've seen enormous growth in the average income—not the wealth but the average income—of the top 1 percent so that now it dwarfs the rest of the population. So this is why you see Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Oakland, and the other cities talking about the 99ers, the 99 percent. The 99 percent are the rest of us, and the 1 percent are the CEOs, the Wall Street barons and those that have made enormous amounts of income over the last 20 years.

In the last decade, that's become even more apparent with the Bush tax cuts that occurred in 2001 and 2003. They basically significantly lowered the tax rate for the super wealthy and allowed them to keep even more of the extraordinary growth in their salaries and their income.

So how does that relate to American jobs? Well, very, very directly. The American jobs program that the President put forth called the American Jobs Act would provide very substantial opportunities for employment. And what I'd like to talk about is small businesses here. The small businesses of America are given a very substantial tax break in two different ways if they are to hire new people. For example, small businesses with less than \$5 million of payroll are able to not pay their payroll tax, in other words, keep that money and go out and hire people. In addition to that, with Veterans Day coming up in just 1 week, we ought to be thinking about the veterans. We know that we have more than 1.5 million Americans that have been overseas fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan, and a few other places around the world. As those veterans come back, they have become the highest proportion of unemployed in America.

It would seem to me that since we are asking so much of those men and

women that have served in our Armed Forces, particularly those that have served in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, we ought to be looking to their interest very directly and making certain that our programs are focused on them. Well, this is not lost on our President. In the American Jobs Act, he deals very directly with this by providing employers with a very powerful incentive to hire veterans. So with Veterans Day coming up, let's take a look at that. Let's take a look at what the President is proposing for the 877,000 unemployed veterans, the men and women that were out there fighting for this country, protecting us and doing what has been asked of them in an extraordinary way. More than 6,000 of them have given their lives, and over 40,000 have been seriously wounded. Of that 40,000, a very large proportion are permanently, permanently damaged in many difficult and extraordinary ways. And 877,000 of them are unemployed. And the President, looking at the necessity of building jobs in America, said, let's take care of those people.

So what he has proposed, and I think this is a terrific idea, is that small businesses, in fact, any business that is out to hire a veteran will be given an immediate \$5,600 tax credit so that the taxes owed by that business or that employer would automatically be reduced for every veteran hired by \$5,600. Hire an unemployed veteran, and you can reduce your taxes by \$5,600. Even more so, if that veteran happens to be among those that have been wounded—and as I said, that is over 40,000—if you were to hire one of those wounded veterans, one of the seriously wounded that is connected with their service disability, the tax credit increases to \$9,600. That's a very, very powerful incentive for businesses to hire our veterans. So with Veterans Day 1 week away, it's incumbent upon the 435 of us here in the United States Congress to not just talk the talk, but begin to vote to provide the veterans with the services that they need.

Now why did I start off with this graph? Why did I start off with this, showing the income disparity in the United States? Because this is how we should be paying for it—those Americans that have done extraordinarily well. And we're not talking about just extraordinarily well; we're talking about extraordinarily extraordinarily well. They have seen their income rise to a point of astronomical figures in some cases. And certainly it's seen on Wall Street. It's time for them to push aside the George W. Bush tax cuts. These tax cuts allowed them to keep a very large portion of their income. Taxes went down on income over \$250,000 for joint filers, it went down from 39 percent to 35 percent. And do keep in mind all of the tax writeoffs that they're able to take advantage of that most Americans can't get. But nonetheless, since they've had 11 good years, 11 good years where they have received a significant tax cut, I think

it's time for them to share and help our veterans get a job.

And so the President has proposed, as part of his American Jobs Act, which is fully paid for, that those men and women whose annual adjusted gross income after deductions—adjusted gross income after deductions—is \$1 million or more, we're not talking about mom and pop on Main Street here, we're talking about those folks on Wall Street and those CEOs from the energy industry and the oil companies, those folks, it's time for them to come back and help America. It's time for them to stop shipping jobs offshore, stop playing all the Wall Street gambling games that got us in such trouble, and it's time for them to share in a fair way to pay for an American Jobs Act that would put veterans back to work by providing businesses in the United States with a tax credit when they hire one of those 877,000 unemployed veterans that have been out there keeping this country safe.

So if you earn more than \$1 million adjusted gross income after all of your deductions, yes, 5.6 percent of that income over and above would be surcharged, and it would go back up to just about 40 percent.

□ 1500

Is that going to hurt anybody? No. Is it going to help somebody? Oh, yes. Oh, yes, it's going to help Americans go back to work. And it's not just in the area of veterans, although we certainly ought to be focusing on this. My plea to my Republican colleagues here on the floor is, let's not just talk about veterans and how we honor them next week. Let's vote this week while we are here to put the American Jobs Act out of this House, or at least put this part of the American Jobs Act out of the House and pay for it with a surcharge on those very fortunate Americans who have worked hard, been lucky, or whatever. Allow them the opportunity to pay for putting our veterans back to work. So let's get with it.

Now I know you're going to go back to your districts, and you're going to go to the veterans parades and you're going to talk all the talk. But here's where the walk occurs: in this House, in this week, we have the opportunity—in fact, we have the obligation—to really help our veterans, to really help them by putting them back to work; and this is one way to do it.

Let me talk for a moment about another way of doing it, and I think I'll deal with this one. Not only are there 877,000 veterans unemployed, but well over 9 million, 12 million Americans, and another 12 million that are underemployed. The President, in his jobs act, says for small businesses, if you hire an unemployed person who's been unemployed for 6 months or more, you can have a \$4,000 tax credit. So veterans, \$5,600; a wounded veteran—one of our returning heroes—\$9,600; and for a long-term unemployed American, hire somebody and you can reduce your

tax burden by \$4,000. That's a pretty good deal.

In addition to that, if you're a small business with a payroll of less than \$5 million, you can write off, not pay the payroll tax at all. For individual families, the President has proposed—and we all talk about the need for individual families to have additional money in their pocket, so the American Jobs Act said, for individual families, tell you what, half of the payroll tax that you're presently paying—about 6 percent—you don't have to pay it; you can keep that money. It's over \$1,500 a year in the pockets of average Americans out there.

So the President has put together a program here, the American Jobs Act, to deal with unemployed—some 6 million have been unemployed more than 6 months; hire them, get a \$4,000 tax credit. Hire an unemployed veteran and you can get a \$5,600 tax credit. Or if that veteran happens to be one of the wounded warriors, one of America's true heroes, it's \$9,600.

So it's time for us to act. It's time for the American public to tell Congress we can't wait. We can't wait. We can't take any more of this unemployment. Pass a real jobs program.

I know my colleague here, a few moments ago, was talking about the 15 bills that went over to the Senate. If you take a look at those bills, not one of them was a real jobs bill. What they did was basically gut the environmental regulations of this Nation so that our children can have a little more arsenic, a little more mercury, a little more pollution, and a little more polluted water. That's not a jobs bill. There is no economist in this Nation that will tell you that by gutting the environmental regulations you're going to produce jobs. What you're going to produce is sickness, ill health, cancer, and the rest. So those are not real jobs bills at all. The real jobs bill is the American Jobs Act, and we're going to be talking about that with my colleague from Ohio in just a few moments.

I want to share with you a piece of legislation that I've introduced. All of us are paying taxes—or at least I think most every American pays some sort of tax, a payroll tax or perhaps an income tax. That tax money is used for a variety of things. It's used for our military; it's used for our Social Security and Medicare and the like. It's also used to subsidize a variety of programs. Today at a press conference, we talked about the \$12 billion a year of subsidies that we pay to the oil companies. That's right, you and I pay our tax money to the oil companies so they can have a little more. Keep in mind that this year their profits are up 100 percent. In the last decade, they've had \$1 trillion of profit. They don't need our tax money. But there is a program for clean solar and wind. Those kind of programs are our tax money being used to subsidize green energy.

We also use our tax money to build highways, bridges, trains, light rail

systems. This bill, H.R. 613, simply says that if our tax money—in this case, the gasoline tax money—is going to be used, it must be used to buy American-made equipment, so that that Amtrak train out there is made in America. We're paying for it. It's our tax money; it ought to be American made. This is part of the Make It In America agenda. If you want to put a solar panel on your roof and you want the Federal tax credit, terrific, buy American-made solar panels. If you don't like American-made solar panels, use your own money, buy whatever you want; but don't use our tax money to buy a Chinese panel. Help American jobs; make it in America.

The same way with these wind turbines we're seeing all around the United States. It's our tax money that's subsidizing that, and that's good. What's not good is if that wind turbine is made in China or Europe. American made. You want the tax credit, buy American made credit.

Now joining us from the great State of Ohio is Congresswoman BETTY SUTTON. I know that you've been involved in this for a long time, the Make It In America agenda.

I yield to the gentlewoman to share with us her thoughts.

Ms. SUTTON. I thank the gentleman for his leadership. Representative GARAMENDI has been a strong voice for the people of this country, standing up for the middle class, and it is my privilege to join you down here on behalf of the hardworking people of Ohio.

I think that we begin by noting that we think that the true measure of America's economic success is the well-being of American families, not just the stock market or corporate profits. Now, I know that you've already talked about this, but it's just so important that we focus on the fact that the promise of America must be for all Americans, not just the wealthy few.

So we come to this floor and we once again look at a couple of things. One of them—we've heard it many times, but it bears repeating—you know, even some of those who have done so well in America now are calling on us to have them do well by America. We've heard Warren Buffett say—here's a chart that shows that his income was \$46 billion, his tax rate is 17.7 percent. His secretary's income is \$60,000 and his secretary's tax rate is 30 percent. And to quote Warren Buffett, he says: "My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress." So even he is calling on Congress, and we join him in that call because it's so important that we focus on what is the backbone of this country. What makes this country so great is the strength of its middle class, and we know that it has been squeezed and squeezed and squeezed.

We are now in a place where one in four homeowners are under water. That means owing more on their mortgage than their house is even worth. We

know that college tuition and fees increased about 300 percent over the last 20 years, and graduates are now leaving school with an average debt of \$24,000. Taxes for the richest 400 Americans were sliced in half as their income quadrupled and now are paying only 17 percent.

Now, this is a complicated problem, and it's a serious problem; but the good news is that it doesn't have to be this way. We all know that the key, the solution to strengthening this great country and restoring the promise of the middle class lies in getting people back to work.

So I'm very happy to hear you talking about your bill that deals with making sure that we're buying American—iron, steel and manufacturing goods—when we move into new industries in the future. And I have a number of bills that require the use of iron and steel and manufactured goods made in America when we build our infrastructure, which, of course, is one of the key components, that building of our Nation's infrastructure that our President is trying to make happen with the American Jobs Act.

□ 1510

Why do we need to do that? Obviously we need to put people back to work, but we also have this: We have more than 2,700 miles of our roads in need of repair. That's greater than the distance between Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, California. Now, that's from the Research and Innovative Technology Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation. So we know that the need is extraordinary.

What would this mean for our workers? Under the American Jobs Act, building new jobs for nearly 2 million unemployed construction workers. Can you imagine?

We know that when we strengthen our infrastructure, we strengthen our middle class and we strengthen our Nation as a whole and its place in the world.

So, with that, thank you again, Representative GARAMENDI, for being down here fighting the fight, because we can do things differently and get different results, results that work, not just for the privileged few, not just for the billionaires and millionaires, but for people out there who want nothing more than a chance, a fair chance at the American Dream.

Mr. GARAMENDI. How correct you are. Thank you very much, Ms. SUTTON, and thank you for bringing up the issue of infrastructure. Infrastructure's a problem all across this Nation.

I spoke earlier about the use of our tax dollars to support infrastructure so that we buy American, so that we can make it in America. And those are middle class jobs. Once we start making things in America, we start making middle class jobs.

The American Jobs Act has the potential of putting 2 million Americans

back to work, many of them construction. Those are not just temporary things that are going to be built. Those are permanent foundations upon which the economy will grow in the future. So it's a sanitation system; it's a water system; it's a highway. That is a solid investment that gives the American economy a foundation upon which it can build, and immediate jobs.

What does it take?

Ms. SUTTON. You mentioned our water and our sewer infrastructure, which is important, critically important. And as we build that out, I have a bill that's called Stop American Jobs from Going Down the Drain Act, and what that would do is it would require that when we build that water—

Mr. GARAMENDI. Reclaiming my time, you have a bill that does what?

Ms. SUTTON. It's called Stop American Jobs from Going Down the Drain Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thought I heard you correctly.

Ms. SUTTON. That's correct. And it's very simple because it deals with our water and our sewer infrastructure, which is in desperate need of rebuilding in this country. And as we rebuild it, we can even multiply the jobs out if, as this bill requires, we use American iron, steel, and manufactured goods, because then the ripple effects of putting those folks who work in those industries, our ironworkers, our steelworkers, those who work in manufacturing, they also will have the benefit of us building out, in addition to our construction workers.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I want to come back to your Don't Let American Jobs Go Down the Drain Act. I love that title. But even more so, I like what it tries to accomplish. I'm going to come back to it.

Our colleague from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) has also joined us here today.

If you could share with us your thoughts. You're not too far from Ohio. You must have similar issues in that great Midwest.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Everybody has the same issues: the underground systems, the water systems, the overhead systems, the bridges. I wonder sometimes about those who don't support the American Jobs Act. Don't they drive over bridges? Don't their families drive over bridges?

We have 400 unsafe, structurally unsafe bridges in the State of Illinois, and so aside from the jobs that it would create, the safety issues that would be addressed.

I wanted to just debunk a myth that is so persistent and that some of our colleagues on the Republican side want to repeat over and over again, and that is that the stimulus bill did nothing, created no jobs. And of course that's just not true. No matter how many times they say it, it is not true. Between 1.9 million and 3 million jobs were created or saved.

But I also know it's not true because many of those same people, when the ribbons get cut on those projects, actually appear at the ribbon cuttings. As we speak right now, there are people who are collecting those photos and videos and news accounts of those people who say the stimulus program created no jobs so that we can compile those kind of things and show the hypocrisy that you have when the project opens, there they are, smiling and cutting the ribbon, because it's not true. It did create jobs.

I wanted to point out that at the very beginning of our country, George Washington asked Alexander Hamilton to come up with a manufacturing strategy. Hamilton was the Secretary of the Treasury, and he came up with an 11-point manufacturing strategy because, at that point, almost everything had to be imported mainly from England, from whom our colonies had just broken and now our new country was trying to create its independence.

Really what Alexander Hamilton did was kick off the American industrial revolution, and there are a number of principles which I think are very applicable today. They call stimulus—he doesn't use that word, but he talks about pecuniary bounties, which essentially is to support industries, to give money to create jobs. This has been found to be one of the most efficacious means of encouraging manufacturers; and it is, in some views, the best, though it hasn't been the practice, he says, of the United States, and that we should do that.

He also says, the encouragement of new inventions and discoveries at home, and the introduction into the United States such as may have been made in other countries, particularly those which relate to machinery.

So we had a comprehensive industrial manufacturing policy which involved the public sector making contributions, investing and making sure that not only did we have a vibrant industrial economy, but we had people that would work in those things.

By the way, when George Washington found out that he had been elected President, he looked for an American-made suit and finally found someone in Connecticut that was actually making those, the fabric; because, while we had the raw materials, they were made into clothing mostly in England, and he was darned if he was going to be wearing an imported-from-England suit to the inauguration as President.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I'm absolutely fascinated. I'd heard some of this before, but I'm so happy you brought that to our attention. So since the very first day of this country, we've had a policy in the United States of encouraging manufacturing, making it in America.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. That's exactly right.

Mr. GARAMENDI. George Washington's inaugural suit, I'm going to use that. That is a wonderful, wonderful story.

I understand the canal system, that was a way of transportation. Infrastructure also came about at that time. I know here in the Potomac River canal, George Washington started that at about the same time, and then the Erie Canal. All of these were transportation systems that were right back at the very beginning of our country.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. These are called public works projects for a reason. They're done by the public sector. They are good for our country. They are good for our economy. They put people to work. And that's exactly what we ought to be doing, and that's what the American Jobs Act is for.

Let me just emphasize one other piece of it, and that is the piece of fixing our schools. Again, not only does this create jobs and not only does this do it summer, winter, spring, and fall because you don't have to wait for construction season, but it's also good for our children who are sitting in schoolrooms around the country that are really toxic, where there's asbestos contamination and that are dangerous or inadequate in the sense of being unwired for the kinds of technologies that we need for the future in order for them to be able to get good jobs, not only now but when they become adults and go into the workforce.

This is such a no-brainer to me. If we are serious about wanting to educate our children as well as put people to work, as well as create a healthy environment for them, this is such a sensible proposal, a part of the American Jobs Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. As I recall, there are 35,000 schools that could be renovated—classrooms, playgrounds, roofs, painting, bathrooms, laboratories—35,000 schools across this Nation.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. And electrical connections for the Internet.

□ 1520

Mr. GARAMENDI. I bet some of those are in Ohio.

Ms. SUTTON. Absolutely. Ohio is in need, and I think it's important that we look at not just the cost that we're experiencing today from the failure to put people to work doing this work that needs to be done in our schools, building our Nation's infrastructure, which needs serious attention, according to all of the estimates and all of the surveys out there. The fact of the matter is, it's important to look at the long-term effects, too. Because those schools, if we fail to invest in education, whether it's in the physical facilities or education in general—which is another place that some of our colleagues across the aisle want to cut back.

The American Jobs Act is going to put more teachers in the schools. One of the things that we do is we choke off our future because other countries, make no mistake, they're investing in education because they know that that

creates a better future, not just for the children and the students themselves, but for their Nation and the strength of their Nation.

They're also investing in their infrastructure for the same reason, because having an up-to-date, a state-of-the-art infrastructure is going to strengthen their competitiveness. It's going to strengthen their place in the world.

And while others are doing that, here we are with all of this work that needs to be done that would add to the value of our Nation which is so great in the first instance. But there is no substitute for creating real value.

In this last recession, we saw the very risky proposition of people on Wall Street moving money around, not creating any real value. You would think that more would have learned the lesson, because we need to have strong infrastructure. When you put people to work building things, you're creating real value. When you put people to work in manufacturing and you take something of lesser value and you turn it into something of greater value, that cannot be replaced with the smoke-and-mirrors trading that we saw going on before the recession.

Mr. GARAMENDI. You're quite correct about smoke and mirrors.

When you brought up education, in the American Jobs Act, the President has proposed a better deal for America. And part of it is this education piece. It's right here.

In the American Jobs Act—fully paid for; we're not adding a nickel to the deficit—fully paid for is a huge and important education piece. We talked about the renovation of schools. Just the environment in which kids will learn. If you have a good learning environment, it's clean, it's healthy, well lit, the electrical system is working, you have air conditioning and the rest, kids are going to learn much, much faster in a better situation.

But you also need a teacher. Now, I know in California, I know from my daughter and son-in-law, both of whom are teachers, the layoffs that have occurred in their school and the increase in their class size. My daughter went from 22 or 23 to 32 or 33 students in her class because of layoffs. The President in his American Jobs Act has proposed that 280,000 teachers across this Nation go back into the classroom, that they don't have a pink slip, that they're not unemployed. That they're actually teaching our kids.

And as you said, the most important investment a society makes is in the education of their children. Infrastructure, critically important. Security, national security, military, critically important. But if you don't have a well-educated workforce, all the rest will fail.

So let's put those teachers back in the classroom. Let's use a fair tax policy: Those that have done so extraordinarily well in the last two decades, the top 1 percent, let them help the rest of the 99 percent by paying 5½ per-

cent more on income over and above a million dollars. It works. It's fair. And 280,000 teachers will be back in the classroom in my own State. Some 30,000 teachers will be back in the classroom. And there will be police and firemen in the street to help protect us. What's wrong with that? Why are we not doing it?

In the Senate last week and again this week, a Republican filibuster was used to stop the progress of the American Jobs Act, and here in the House of Representatives, it's not even heard before committee. The Republican leadership will not even allow it to be heard.

So let's get on with it. Let's put Americans back to work.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. SUTTON. Thank you so much, Representative GARAMENDI.

It seems there are some here in this body, and, with all due respect, there are a lot of folks who come to Congress and they're fairly well-heeled themselves. It seems that some who are here, they seem fixated on protecting those tax breaks that ship jobs overseas. They seem very concerned about that top 1 percent, the billionaires and the millionaires.

It seems as if they almost believe that we can fix this country's economy without making most Americans better off, which is a backwards proposition. It's almost like they think that the top 1 percent is who built this country, and that that's where all of our policies should be aimed.

But I disagree and I know, Representative GARAMENDI, that you do as well. We understand that when we have people working, building infrastructure and making things and manufacturing, that that has a way of rippling out, right? And then we have those taxpayers who of course are energizing our economy. And then we have the revenue that comes into our communities that can put our firefighters and our police officers and our teachers into a salary that they have earned and they deserve for doing the important work that they do.

But instead of doing that, instead of making the choice that those at the top should pay a fair share, they want to take more out of those firefighters and teachers and police officers and nurses.

Right now as we speak, we're a week away from a referendum in the State of Ohio. If that issue, Issue 2, is voted down, it will be a really big moment because what that would do is it would repeal a bill that was passed by the State legislature there. And that bill is aimed at attacking our firefighters, our police officers, our teachers, and our nurses by reducing their collective bargaining rights, their ability to even have a voice at the table, to be part of the solution, which they always are because they know what's going on in America.

They didn't go into those jobs because they thought that they would

make tons of money. They went into those jobs because they had a commitment to service, to teach our kids, to run into our homes when they're burning to try and save us, to go out on our streets and make them safe. And yet they're the ones that some are looking at to get money back?

It wasn't our teachers or our firefighters or our police officers, it wasn't the seniors on Social Security or Medicare, it wasn't the students and their Pell Grants that drove our economy off the cliff. It was Wall Street that drove our economy off the cliff. And it's time that they pay a fair share so middle class America can start to breathe a little easier again knowing that they'll have opportunities in this country.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I am so proud of what you and others are doing in Ohio, fighting back against an extraordinarily unfair law that takes away the ability of people to come together and collectively voice their concerns. That's what it's all about.

You can say it's unions, and yes, but it's also the ability of people to say, Wait a minute—we're all working here at this school. We're the workers. We're the teachers, and we should have a voice in what is going on here. Not just in our pay and in our benefits, but also in the way this is working.

□ 1530

So you're fighting back, and you're making progress. Hopefully, that proposition will pass, and we'll begin to set a new model.

Ms. SUTTON. Representative GARAMENDI, I couldn't agree more with the idea that this is the voice of the people, that this is a referendum. They said to the Republican Governor and the legislature there, You've gone too far. Our firefighters and our police officers and our teachers, they're not our enemies. They're our heroes; they're the people who we look up to, who do good work on behalf of all of us, not just those who are the privileged few. And this is where we make our stand: on this referendum.

It's so important that the American people look at what's going on, frankly, in Ohio, and that we have a strong voice. Just to make sure that we have a correct record, a "no" vote on that issue is going to repeal that bad bill. We'll see what the people in Ohio do, but I am confident that we're speaking up together for one another and for police and firefighters and teachers.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We need to also understand where the power has shifted. The power has shifted here.

This is the average pay of the CEOs of the five biggest oil companies—\$14.5 million. That's 307 times the pay of a firefighter, 273 times the pay of a teacher, 263 times the pay of an average police officer, and 218 times the average pay of a nurse.

So what we have seen—and part of this has to do with collective bargaining—is that the power has shifted to the CEOs, to the extraordinary

wealthy, and that it has resulted in this situation: where the middle class and the poor in America have seen virtually no change in their incomes over the last 20, 25 years. They've been flatlined—basically the same level of income. They're just making it.

This particular line is the next highest 20 percent. The only reason they've seen their incomes grow is that both husband and wife are now working. Back there, back in the seventies, mostly just one or the other was working; but now both are working.

But look here: this is the top 1 percent. Here are the 99ers. Here is the 99 percent down here at the bottom and the 1 percent up here. What we're saying is let's put Americans back to work with the American Jobs Act, and let's have a Fair Tax, not the George W. Bush tax cuts that gave this group even greater wealth, a greater annual income by cutting their taxes, but rather to restore that tax rate and allow that money to be used to hire the unemployed veteran.

There are 877,000 unemployed veterans. These are the men and women who fought for us in Iraq. These are the men and women who fought for us in Afghanistan. These are the men and women who came back without their legs, with their minds jumbled because of an IED—877,000 of them. Give them a chance by this group that has been so extraordinarily successful, in part, because of their own work and, in part, because of the tax cuts that they've enjoyed for the last 11 years.

Ms. SUTTON. The gentleman makes such an important point.

Here we are. We're coming up on Veterans Day. It is not enough to just go out to ceremonies on Veterans Day and express our appreciation, although that should happen. We should be expressing our appreciation to veterans, not just through those ceremonies but through our policies. We have all of these veterans out there who are returning from the current wars, and we have other veterans out there looking for opportunities. The American Jobs Act will help us to create those opportunities that they so richly deserve.

Let's be clear: the people who are fighting our wars, they are part of the 99 percent. Very few are part of the 1 percent. So it's really, really important that we do focus on giving them the opportunities, the American Dream, the fact that if you work hard and if you try hard and if you play by the rules that you'll be able to make it in America. That is part of what they were fighting for.

So I could not agree more. We've got to focus on getting help to our veterans.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Exactly.

As we begin to wrap up our hour here, Veterans Day is one week away. There are 435 of us here in this House who are representing the American people, and we have an opportunity. All of us will be out there on November 11. We'll be doing our parades, and we'll

be giving our speeches about how wonderful the veterans have been in America; 877,000 of them have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan and have served this country in an extraordinary way. They're unemployed. They need a job.

The American Jobs Act will provide every employer in the United States with a \$5,600 tax reduction, not a tax credit, that is, their taxes will be reduced by \$5,600 for every unemployed veteran they hire. If they hire a veteran who has been wounded, one of the returning American heroes, it's a \$9,600 reduction in that employer's tax.

Why are we not doing this? It's fully paid for. It's paid for with a small tax increase by those who have been so extraordinarily successful in the last decade. Why are we not helping our veterans find a job?

Because, in this House, the Speaker and the Republican Party refuse to address this issue. No hearings have taken place on the American Jobs Act that the President has put before this Congress. You can talk the talk. You can talk the talk forever. You can go home and you can talk the talk; or you can be here this week, and you can give our veterans a real opportunity. It's not just those who have returned from the war. There are veterans out there who fought in the previous wars, who served this country in Vietnam and in the first gulf war. They're unemployed or they are retired and they're receiving Social Security.

So, here on this floor, proposals have been put forth; and in the supercommittee, again proposals have been put forth to reduce the Social Security benefits, to reduce the foundation for retirement in this Nation so that the 1 percent don't have to pay their fair share of the taxes. Something is desperately wrong. Those seniors and those veterans are dependent upon Medicare for their health when we consider that it was Medicare that took more than 50 percent of the seniors out of poverty in the 1960s and gave them the health care that they needed to stay alive. Yet the proposal put forth on this floor that was voted on three times by our Republican colleagues would destroy Medicare and put every senior at risk, and those who are 55 and younger would never receive Medicare. They'd be thrown to the mercy of the private insurance companies.

Why would we ever allow that to happen? Because apparently some want to continue the tax breaks for the super-wealthy.

But here we are one week away from Veterans Day—and a lot of talk. I want some action. America can't wait. These 877,000 veterans can't wait for a job. In Ohio and in California and in every other State in this Nation, this is the reality faced by veterans. This House has an obligation, this Speaker has an obligation to put the legislation before this House and to let us speak, to let us represent the people who elected us.

Ms. SUTTON, thank you so very much for joining us. You've been a wonderful

Representative of Ohio. I've watched you fight day after day to put legislation in place so that your men and women in your district can go back to work. Please wrap it up. Share with us your thoughts.

Ms. SUTTON. It is my honor and my privilege to stand up for the people of Ohio and for the veterans you were just speaking of.

I just have to say, those veterans, those men and women who were on the battlefield, they weren't just fighting for Wall Street; they were fighting for the United States of America and all that it stands for. They weren't just fighting for the top 1 percent; they were fighting for all of us. Now they're coming back, and we have an obligation. We have a promise that we have made to them, part of which would be fulfilled if we could get the American Jobs Act passed. So it is incumbent upon us to beat back.

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We hear a lot of rhetorical terms. In the last election we heard over and over again, Oh, we could create jobs if we could get government off the backs of the job creators.

Well, look, the refrain, people don't want government on their back, I agree they don't want government on their back. But you know what? They do want government on their side. And that is not what they have been getting and that is why we have to be here, to stand up for the middle class, to stand up for those veterans, for those seniors, for those college students, for those workers, for those firefighters and those police officers, those teachers and those nurses who have suffered far less growth as, we know, Wall Street continues to flourish with record CEO bonuses and all of those profits. We just want people to pay a fair share, and we want the American people to have a fair shake.

Thank you for your leadership. You have been tremendous.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And thank you so very much for so ably representing Ohio and your constituents.

We've got work to do. We've got veterans to care for, and they need help. Americans want jobs, and the American Jobs Act is there. If we were to bring that up today or tomorrow instead of the foolish little bills that have been going on around here for the last month and a half, Americans could go back to work, and it would be fully paid for with a fair tax. We have work to do.

I ask the Speaker of the House and my Republican colleagues to give Americans a chance to go back to work. Put the American Jobs Act up for a vote; put that tax up for a vote, and let's pass it. I think we'd vote it out of here in half a moment if we had a chance. But right now we don't even have that chance.

With that and hope for the future and thanksgiving for those men and women that have been out there protecting

this Nation, the veterans, young and old, able and disabled, we thank them.

I yield back the balance of my time.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we are going to talk about a very important development here in the House of Representatives—in fact, in the entire Congress. Because of the vote this summer on the Budget Control Act, we are going to have in both the House and the Senate for the first time in about 15 years a vote on a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. The last time we did this was on March 2, 1995—actually, the House had already passed it with 300 bipartisan votes, and it was brought to the Senate floor on that day. The U.S. Senate failed by one vote to send a balanced budget amendment to the States for ratification. The amendment had passed the House by the required two-thirds majority previously, and the Senate vote was the last legislative hurdle before ratification by the States.

As we know, balanced budget amendments—in fact, any constitutional amendment is voted on by the House and the Senate, requiring a two-thirds vote in each body, and then it does not go to the President of the United States, as legislation does. Instead, it goes directly to our States, and then three-quarters of the State legislatures would be required to ratify it.

If that amendment had passed, then we would not be dealing with the fiscal crisis we now face. If that amendment had passed, then balancing the budget would have been the norm rather than the exception over the past 15 years, and we would have nothing like the annual deficits and skyrocketing debt that we must address today.

The good news is that, like 1995, this Congress is again standing at a crossroads at this very moment. The decisions we make today will steer the direction of the country for the next 15 years. We have an opportunity now to take action to ensure that 15 years from today our children will face a much brighter fiscal picture. We must not allow ourselves to miss this opportunity.

Experience has proven time and again that Congress cannot, for any significant length of time, rein in excessive spending. The annual deficits and the resulting debt continue to grow due to political pressures and a dependency on government programs. In order for Congress to be able to consistently make the very tough decisions necessary to sustain fiscal responsibility over the long term, Congress must have an external pressure to force it to do so. The most realistic

change we have today to enact this type of institutional reform is through a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution.

Many Members of Congress have introduced balanced budget amendments in this Congress. I introduced two versions on the first day of the 112th Congress.

H.J. Res. 2 is the exact text that passed the House in 1995 and failed in the Senate by one vote. This amendment requires total annual outlays not to exceed total annual receipts. It also requires a three-fifths majority to raise the debt limit. This legislation also has limited exceptions for times of war.

H.J. Res. 1, which I also introduced, goes much further. In addition to the provisions of H.J. Res. 2, it requires a two-thirds majority to raise taxes and imposes an annual spending cap that prohibits spending from exceeding 18 percent of GDP.

In the U.S. Senate, 47 Republican Senators—all the Republican Senators—have cosponsored a balanced budget amendment, which is a strong sign that the Senate is ready to engage in debate on this subject as well.

Our extraordinary fiscal crisis demands an extraordinary solution, so we simply cannot afford to succumb to political posturing on this issue at a point in time so crucial to our Nation's future. We must rise above that and move forward with a strategy that includes legislation that will get to 290 votes on the House floor.

So as we consider a balanced budget amendment, I encourage the Members of the body to devote our efforts to passing the strongest balanced budget amendment that can garner two-thirds of the House of Representatives. We're at a crossroads in the country. We can make the tough choices and control spending, paving the way for our return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, or we can allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

I have been joined by a number of outstanding Members of the House, and I am going to call upon them to offer some comments about the importance of a balanced budget amendment to them and to their constituents as well.

Since he got here first, I'm going to yield first to one of our new Members, from the State of Indiana, a great fiscal conservative, someone who believes strongly in limiting our government and balancing our budget, Congressman TODD ROKITA.

Mr. ROKITA. I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding me this time and for your leadership here in the Congress year after year over the years to see that we've come to this point where we again can have a vote in these Chambers about the condition of our country and about living within our means.

As I talk about the balanced budget amendment, I want to also address