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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray for the gift of wisdom to all with great responsibility in this House for the leadership of our Nation.

May all the Members have the vision of a world where respect and understanding are the marks of civility and where honor and integrity are the marks of one's character.

As Members take time in the coming week for constituency visits, give them the ability to hear the voices of all in their districts so that when they return, they are focused on the important work to be done.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within these hallowed Halls be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ALTMIRE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches from each side of the aisle.

THE PRESIDENT'S POLICIES ARE FAILING SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, a Gallup poll was released which sadly stated that 85 percent of small business owners surveyed were not looking for new employees; 66 percent cite the economic recession, 48 percent blame rising health care costs due to the government health care takeover bill, and 46 percent are worried about new government regulations.

These statistics show that the President's policies are failing America's small business owners. The President continues to support policies that are destroying jobs. According to the National Federation of Independent Business, ObamaCare, alone, will destroy 1.6 million jobs.

Over the past year, House Republicans have passed dozens of pieces of legislation that promote job creation and allow small business owners to gain the confidence to begin hiring again. I urge my colleagues in the liberal-controlled Senate and the President to support these initiatives and help put American families back to work.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

NO BUDGET, NO PAY

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Every year around this time, the President submits a budget, the House and Senate debate their own budgets and, well, nothing happens. Congress has not adopted a budget in over 1,000 days, and it's been 15 years since Congress passed all of its appropriations bills on time. This is simply unacceptable, and that's why I ask my colleagues to join me and the bipartisan cosponsors of the No Budget, No Pay Act.

This bill is simple. It says that if Congress can't complete its work, if the budget and appropriations bills are not done on time, then congressional pay would cease and Members of Congress would not be paid until those bills are enacted. Members could not receive their lost salaries retroactively. Once pay is withheld, it's gone forever.

Somehow, I think if this bill were law, Members would find a new urgency and finally find a way to get their work done on time.

INFRINGING UPON RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address

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the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. I rise today in support of freedom and liberty, the basic principles our country was founded upon. It's a sad day for America when our President infringes upon our religious rights, a fundamental right protected by the First Amendment.

The President announced he will make a so-called accommodation on the ObamaCare rule requiring religiously affiliated organizations to offer insurance plans that cover contraception.

Even though the President slightly backtracked his attack on religious freedom, he did not go far enough. The new rule still mandates that religious organizations with moral objections will be forced to act against their religious beliefs.

This is not about health care; it's about our rights under the First Amendment. And this is yet another example of why we must repeal ObamaCare in its entirety, adhere to the basic tenets of our Constitution, and stop the administration's severe overreach. The sooner we repeal ObamaCare, the sooner we restore freedom and liberty to all Americans.

SAME SEX IMMIGRATION BENEFITS

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

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about two wonderful Vermonters from Dummerston: Frances Herbert and Takako Ueda.

They met in college in Michigan more than 30 years ago. Takako, from Japan, was studying English on a student visa; and after completing school, Takako returned to Japan but stayed in touch with Frances. Eventually, Takako returned to the U.S., and she and Frances married. Quite a love story.

Now Frances and Takako face their biggest challenge yet. Takako is being threatened with deportation. Frances and Takako are a same-sex couple. Their marriage is recognized in Vermont, but it's not recognized under Federal law; and without that recognition, Frances and Takako are not eligible for the same immigration benefits as other married couples.

Madam Speaker, these are good people. They have a good relationship. They're good Vermonters. They deserve better.

□ 0910

HHS RULING

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Madam Speaker, from the 1099 provision, to IPAB, to the hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare, it's clear that President Obama's health care law is bad medicine for America. But the recent ruling by the Department of Health and Human Services is the most egregious example of Federal intrusion to date.

Soon after the ruling was announced, I began hearing from citizens across Michigan's First District. Letters and emails came in by the hundreds, with the vast majority in opposition to the administration's position. It is evident from this correspondence that many northern Michiganders are deservedly upset about the administration's blatant attack on our religious freedom enshrined in the First Amendment.

The opposition to this law is not about access to contraception, as my friends on the other side of the aisle would have you believe. Women and men can already access contraception at very low cost. The debate is over the fact that the administration's new rule strikes at the fundamental beliefs of our democracy.

The concept that the Federal Government can force people to pay for actions that violate the teachings of their faith goes against two centuries of American religious freedom. This action represents the very government overreach that the Framers of our Nation fought against and the reason the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution.

Madam Speaker, like most northern Michigan citizens, I see the right to practice one's religion as a fundamental liberty, and I intend to fight this action forever.

GETTING COUNTRY BACK ON TRACK

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, well, we're going to take up legislation which is targeted to fix the reimbursement for doctors, which is absolutely essential to Medicare. This threat should go away forever. We should make a permanent fix and not pretend that we can just keep dragging this on without jeopardizing seniors.

Unemployment, we need to extend that for people who can't find work. They lost their jobs through no fault of their own. They can't find work; we need to help them out.

But borrowing $100 billion from the Social Security trust fund under the premise that the consumer spending generated will bring about economic recovery and create jobs, that's the Larry Summers principle from the stimulus era. Look, that doesn't work. You want to create jobs, you want to borrow $100 billion, let's borrow $100 billion, finance the transportation bill that the Republicans pulled from the floor this week, and put a few million people to work rebuilding the crumbling infrastructure in this country with all made-in-America goods. That would be an effective way to get this country back on track, not Social Security tax cuts.

HONORING LOCAL WORLD WAR II HERO JOHN TEMAN

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, for most Americans, our busy lives make it difficult to reflect as often as we should upon the incredible sacrifices by those heroes who have answered the call to service throughout our Nation's history.

Today, I would like to take a moment to honor the service of one such hero from my home State of Minnesota. Minnesota native and World War II pilot Lieutenant John Teman flew missions in all the major battles in Europe. He flew through flak on the night before D-day in strategic spots over Europe behind enemy lines, and he repeatedly flew missions dropping supplies to the troops trapped at the Battle of the Bulge.

In recognition of his incredible service, John has been awarded seven Bronze Stars, three Air Medals, the Croix de Guerre twice, and on Wednesday he received France's highest recognition and honor, the Legion of Honor.

Madam Speaker, John epitomizes what it means to be a hero. I'd like to thank him for his service and congratulate him on an honor that's much deserved.

REOPENING AMERICAN CAPITAL MARKETS TO EMERGING GROWTH COMPANIES ACT OF 2011

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

Mr. CARNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support bipartisan legislation to create jobs. In December, Congressman STEPHEN FINCHER and I introduced H.R. 3606, the Reopening American Capital Markets to Emerging Growth Companies Act of 2011.

Our legislation will create jobs by making it easier for emerging growth companies to undertake an IPO. On average, 92 percent of a company's growth occurs after they go public. Unfortunately, in recent years the number of companies going public has fallen dramatically. This legislation will reduce the cost of going public for emerging growth companies by phasing in certain costly regulatory requirements.

Last night, our legislation passed out of the Financial Services Committee with a bipartisan vote of 54–1. We have worked hard to craft this legislation in a way that can pass both the House and the Senate and be signed by the President.

Please join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation that will create jobs and grow the economy.

MORE VIEWERS NOTE MEDIA BIAS

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, according to a Pew Research Center survey conducted last month, more viewers feel the national media are biased than ever before. The survey found that 67 percent of Americans say there is a ''fair amount'' or a ''great deal of bias'' in news coverage. Only 10 percent responded that there is ''no bias at all'' in the national media.

These percentages show a significant increase in the number of Americans who believe that they receive biased coverage of current events by the national media. The national media owe it to the American people to be honest and fair. Americans' distrust of the national media will continue to grow until the media adhere to the highest standards of their profession and provide the American people with facts, balanced stories, and objective coverage of the news.

HOUSING CRISIS FACING AMERICANS

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about the housing crisis facing Americans. In California's San Joaquin Valley, we know firsthand the pain the housing crisis has caused our families and communities as foreclosure rates have continued to hover well above the national average.

The $25 billion settlement announced last week gives significant relief to homeowners; but it's not the wholesale, systemic change necessary to put our housing market back on solid ground.

Homeowners are tired of waiting for meaningful change, and tweaks are not enough. Enacting the HOME Act and a homeowner's bill of rights would go a long way toward stabilizing the market and leveling the playing field for the future. We know it's essential to get our economy back on track.

Restoring economic security starts with passing meaningful policies that rebuild the foundation of our communities and the American home. After all, the American home is the single largest investment that the average American family makes in their lifetime. It's part and parcel of the American Dream and the foundation of America's middle class.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3630, MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2012

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 554 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 554

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3630) to provide incentives for the creation of jobs, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate; and (2) one motion to recommit if applicable.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CAPITO). The gentleman from South Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, House Resolution 554 provides for consideration of the conference report on H.R. 3630, a bill to extend the payroll tax deduction, protect Medicare payments for doctors, and begin responsible reform of the unemployment benefits system.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule. Today, we are taking up legislation that does three things: extend the payroll tax deduction, reform our unemployment benefits system, and protect Medicare payments for doctors.

First, on the bright side, Republicans and Democrats were able to find a compromise to pay for two very important things: much-needed reforms to the unemployment benefits program and protecting Medicare payments to the physicians who serve our seniors.

In regard to the payroll tax deduction, unfortunately our friends on the left did not think it was important to pay for the extension. Spending without making the proper adjustments is a notion I am not fond of. My voting record makes no secret of that. This is what makes this vote so difficult today. You cannot always get exactly what you want; but, today, I applaud both sides for attempting to get fairly close to it.

We cannot continue to pay unemployment benefits for 99 weeks indefinitely. We cannot allow payments to our doctors to be affected, as that will only turn around and affect the care available to those in need.

□ 0920

And we cannot raise taxes on American families. By voting for this rule, we are signaling it is time to move forward, plain and simple.

Once again, Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this rule. I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend from South Carolina for yielding me time.

Millions of Americans all across this country are struggling, and they need our help. What they don't need is more Republican gamesmanship at their expense. The Democrats have literally forced the Republicans to realize that they can't just make policy measures that help the rich while taking away from the poor.

I may support this bill in light of the fact that it will give a payroll tax cut to 160 million Americans. It also extends unemployment insurance to those Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and it will allow seniors access to their physicians under Medicare. And, as a footnote there, we really should do the doc fix permanently and stop piecemealing and playing games with this particular measure.

The bill is not perfect, the pay-for is nowhere near perfect, and the length of the extension is not perfect, but it does contain critical provisions that many Democrats negotiated to keep in the bill. While we were able to compromise today, I do not think that my Republican friends deserve too much credit. Since they regained the majority, the American people have seen firsthand their obstructionist policies in action. In fact, earlier this week, my friends on the right attempted to bring to the floor a transportation bill so flawed that my former colleague and Transportation Secretary and good friend of mine, Ray LaHood, stated:

> This is the most partisan transportation bill I've ever seen, and it is also antisafety. It hollows out our number one priority, which is safety. It's the worst transportation bill I've ever seen during 35 years of public service.

The American people want a government that understands the challenges they face daily. Republicans want an economy that works great for the greediest and leaves the neediest out in the cold. Just ask a teacher in my constituency in Belle Glade or Margate or a firefighter in Fort Lauderdale or Pompano Beach and they'll tell you an extra $1,000 in their pockets makes a huge difference in putting food on the table, gas in the car, and being able to stay in their homes.

We've been forced to strike this compromise because, for decades, Republicans have pushed policies that favor the wealthy. We should not forget that, while we are debating how to pay for this payroll tax cut, unemployment insurance, and payments to Medicare

physicians, our Nation's massive deficits are due in large part to Republican tax cuts for the wealthiest in America.

The fact of the matter is that the wealthy have continued to pay less and less taxes. In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan started to lower tax rates, and then President George Bush slashed capital gains and income tax rates for the wealthy to their now historic lows.

As I travel throughout the constituency that I'm privileged to represent, into areas where the unemployment rate in some places in the Glades is 40 percent, I ask myself: Who's actually benefitting from these tax cuts for the rich? It's certainly not the police officer living in Boynton or the nurse working at the VA hospital or the community health center in West Palm Beach.

Madam Speaker, while I'm pleased that we've come to a compromise to extend unemployment insurance, I remain deeply concerned that this bill reduces benefits from 99 weeks to as little as 73 weeks through December. I hear daily from constituents who are approaching the end of their unemployment period and are at a loss as to where to turn next.

Although the economy may be starting to recover, what are we supposed to tell those people who have been looking for a job for months and months on end? What kind of compromise are they supposed to strike with unemployment?

The best way to reduce the deficit is to put money into the hands of people who spend it. This is how we support our communities. If we invest more money in Main Street, consumers will have more money in their pockets to spend on putting food on the table, gas in their cars, and, as I said, being able to stay in their homes.

Every American should have the opportunity to succeed. Opportunity should not be limited by geography, race, gender, or the size of one's bank account. Yet thanks to massive gaps in the Tax Code, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

The top 1 percent of earners are responsible for 20 percent of the Nation's annual income, up from 10 percent in 1981. The wealthiest CEOs are paid 400 times what the average worker earns. Only 30 years ago, it was 20 times as much.

Americans in the highest tax bracket are supposed to pay 35 percent of their income in taxes. However, since President Bush slashed the capital gains rate to 15 percent, the top 400 wealthiest that we continue to identify, one of about the top 4,000, for example, pay only 15 percent in taxes on 80 percent of their income. As the law is currently written, any wealthy American paying the full 35 percent needs to get a new accountant.

In addition to reducing the term of unemployment insurance coverage, this bill raises an additional $15 billion by requiring Federal employees to contribute a larger amount to their retirement accounts. My understanding is this is a grandfathered measure that will protect the ones that are Federal workers now; but I'm not sure that this is going to satisfy Members on either the right or left, or the Democrats or Republicans on this measure, since it's addressing Federal employees and there were other ways to get to that $15 billion.

Federal employees are currently in their second year of a pay freeze, while my colleagues across the aisle only a few weeks ago voted to freeze Federal employees' pay for a third year. Republicans don't think twice about limiting Federal workers' ability to support their families but are more than willing to shut down the government when bankers are asked to pay their fair share of taxes on their bonuses.

How much can we continue to pick on Federal workers? They are not fat cats. They are postal workers, receptionists, janitors, teachers, nurses, social workers, and police officers, to name a few. They are the fundamental underpinning of this Nation. How much can we continue to pile on their backs? We've already broken their bank accounts. How much weight should the wealthiest American, who can afford it, carry?

Investing in America is how we are going to create jobs. Let's build the infrastructure for the coming era of green energy. Let's fix our aging highways and bridges. Please, let's adequately fund our schools so our children can get a good education and can compete on a global level. Doing these kinds of things today will create a brighter America for generations to come.

With that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, my good friend on the left, Mr. HASTINGS, talks a lot about taxes this morning, and that's probably an appropriate conversation to have.

I will say, however, that as we examine the facts around the capital gains tax, let us not forget that President Clinton lowered the capital gains tax from 28 percent to 20 percent, according to the American Thinker. But we also have to keep in mind that the most tax-driven piece of legislation in the last 3 or 4 years is, in fact, the folks on the left and the national health care reform, a $500 billion increase of taxes and fees on the middle class.

□ 0930

Let us not get lost on the fact that those on the left continue to find ways to tax the middle class.

When I think about the notion that we're going to have a conversation about taxation, it kind of gets me excited. I'm looking forward to this opportunity to debate the worthiness of the payroll tax deduction and how both sides have come together. This is a good thing; we've found some common ground on the issue of the payroll tax. But where we will not find common ground is on the issue of slicing taxes for the middle class.

My friends on the left, they talk a good game, but they don't walk the talk. Because when you look at the national health care program, you must concede that $500 billion of new taxes is a bit much for the middle class. You must say that the surtax on investment income—another $123 billion to start 11 months from now—that is a pain for the middle class. It's a pain for the middle class.

When I think about the excise tax on comprehensive health insurance plans—$32 billion just a few years away. When I think about the hike on Medicare, another payroll tax—$86 billion of new taxes starting in another 11 months. My friends on the left, they seem to have this concept that if we just wait a little while, the American people will forget who, in fact, is raising the taxes on the middle class.

I would say that my good friend from Georgia wants to chime in on the debate, so I'm going to yield, Madam Speaker, 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I do rise in support of the rule. And of course I want to thank my colleague from South Carolina, the beautiful Lowcountry, for yielding me this time.

While I am, Madam Speaker, supporting the rule, I must also inform my colleagues that I will be opposing the underlying conference report.

In December, this House passed responsible legislation that afforded a full-year extension of the payroll tax holiday. It provided long-overdue reforms to unemployment benefits. And of course it mitigated the looming 27.4 percent physician-reimbursement cut for 2 years so that all seniors would still have access to medical care.

Most importantly, Madam Speaker, that fiscally prudent legislation was completely offset. My colleagues understand that by that we mean it's paid for with spending cuts. Yet when it came time for the other body to stand with us for the American people, it failed; and it forced us into this 2-month extension. So here we are again. Madam Speaker, I thought that this approach was wrong then, and I still believe that it is wrong now.

While I am opposing the conference report, I do need to commend Chairman CAMP for ensuring that necessary unemployment insurance reforms stayed in the bill; and I want to also commend Chairmen UPTON and WALDEN for working diligently to include sensible spectrum auction legislation, as well as for their work to make sure that seniors—at least through the end of this year, 10 months—have the ability to see their doctors.

As a physician, I have and I will continue to fight for the long-term solution to eliminate this flawed SGR system once and for all. However, despite

these efforts, I cannot and I will not support legislation that extends the payroll tax holiday without paying for it. This will add $100 billion to the deficit, and it will create an even greater shortfall within the Social Security trust fund that already has over a $100 billion shortfall just in the last 2 years. And what is it, $2.4 trillion that the government owes the trust fund that's not there, just IOUs in a file drawer in West Virginia. We did the right thing in December, and I believe that it is a travesty that we would now reverse that course.

So, Madam Speaker, make no mistake, I support tax relief for hardworking Americans, but by reducing their marginal tax rates. But this legislation is simply an election-year gimmick that jeopardizes our already-fragile Social Security system while literally tricking voters—160 million of them—with the hopes that they believe it's real tax relief.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, we can do better, and quite frankly, the American people deserve better. It's time to end all of these games—the smoke and mirrors, the bait-and-switch, the political gamesmanship, all with concern for this next election and to the detriment of this current and future generations.

For that reason, Madam Speaker, while I support the rule, and I thank the gentleman for yielding, I will be voting ''heck no'' against this conference report.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my very good friend from California, the distinguished gentlewoman, Ms. MATSUI, a former member of the Rules Committee.

Ms. MATSUI. I'd like to thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, this bipartisan agreement will ensure that 160 million Americans will not see a tax increase at a time when so many families are still struggling to make ends meet. The payroll tax cut provides American families an average of $1,000 annually to help pay their bills and for day-to-day necessities.

I am also pleased that this agreement will extend unemployment insurance. With the unemployment numbers in my district over 12 percent, continued unemployment benefits are important for so many to make ends meet while still trying to find work.

Additionally, providing for a Medicare physician payment fix will ensure that seniors have continued access to care. But I do urge my colleagues to continue working for a long-term solution to this critical issue.

I am supportive of the spectrum provisions in this bill, which will finally provide public safety with a nationwide interoperability network and ensure a path for continued American innovation. However, Madam Speaker, I do have reservations about other ways this package is paid for.

The second-largest job provider in my district behind the State government is the health care sector, employing nearly 30,000 workers. The Medicare bad debt reductions in this bill would seriously hamper the health systems in my district. For example, UC Davis Medical Center would lose $4 million over the next few years.

Additionally, I am greatly disappointed by the cuts to the Prevention and Public Health Fund—which I actively worked to get included in the Affordable Care Act—as prevention is the best way to improve public health.

While passage of this bill is critical for America's middle class, unemployed, and seniors, I have strong concerns that it should not be at the expense of our country's health care and Federal workforce.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California, Chairman DAVID DREIER.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise first to congratulate my good friend from north Charleston, a hardworking member of the Rules Committee, for his stellar management of this rule. And on the other side, a pretty fair job is being done by my friend from Fort Lauderdale, I have to say.

Madam Speaker, I will say that I listened to the opening statement of my colleague from Fort Lauderdale. As he talked about the plight of those in Florida, constituents of his who are struggling, I was thinking about the fact that today I deal with in an excess of 14 percent unemployment rate in the Inland Empire, part of the area that I represent in southern California.

When I hear the stories all across this country of people who are suffering, it does resonate. And it leads me to say, Madam Speaker, Why is it that we're here today? Why is it that we're here looking at an extension of unemployment benefits? Why is it that we're here looking at an extension of the payroll tax holiday? The reason is that we have an abysmally low, unacceptable gross domestic product growth rate in this country.

We have a GDP growth rate which is not acceptable. Yes, we've seen some positive signs, and we're all gratified about that. I truly believe that the positive signs that we have seen are in spite of, not because of, anything that has come from Washington, DC. I mean, years ago we passed a stimulus bill that was supposed to guarantee that we wouldn't see an unemployment rate that would exceed 8 percent. We all know what has happened. We've seen a great deal of suffering.

We've looked at the 82 percent increase in nondefense discretionary spending that took place in the 4 years leading up to our winning the majority. That, obviously, didn't play a role in getting our economy growing.

□ 0940

The reason our economy is growing is that there is a great deal of innovation, creativity, diligence, hard work on the part of our fellow Americans, small business men and women, working Americans who are out there doing it. That's the reason we're seeing these positive signs.

Now, if we did have pro-growth economic policies put into place, if we had those put into place, it's obvious that we would not have to rely on an extension of unemployment benefits. We would not have to look to extending the payroll tax holiday.

We all know that the payroll tax is designed to specifically go to ensure that people who are retirees are able to have those benefits. So we are, obviously, undermining that.

Now, we all argue, certainly on our side, that increasing taxes for anyone during slow economic times is not acceptable policy, and that's the reason that we are doing what it is we're doing, supporting this measure. It's obviously something that is essential because of the fact that we have not seen the kind of GDP growth rate that we can put into place.

That's why I believe that after we move beyond this, it is essential for us to do all that we can to implement the kinds of policies that will, in fact, spur the kind of incentive, create the kind of incentive that our job creators need. And there are a wide range of things that we have talked about. We all know what those are. I hope that we can come together in a bipartisan way to do just that.

I congratulate my friend, DAVE CAMP, and the other conferees who have come to this agreement. It is acceptable to some of us. Some of us are not enthusiastic.

My friend from Marietta, a few minutes ago, was talking about the package that existed last December. That was good public policy. It ended up not being good politics. I'll recognize that. It was the exception to the rule that good public policy is good politics, because what it did is that accepted what it is we're doing today, what the President requested, that we would extend this package for 1 year rather than just 2 months, which is what we had to reluctantly agree to last December.

And I also have to say that, on the sustained growth rate issue, that is, ensuring that hardworking doctors out there have the adequate compensation for their labors, we need to have major reform of the SGR structure; and I think that what we have done today is a step in that direction, and I hope very much that we are going to be able to do that.

So, again, I thank all my colleagues who've been involved in getting us to where we are. Now that we are going to

do this, it's essential that we move ahead with very positive pro-growth policies.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, today's payroll tax conference agreement will provide $1,000 in the pockets of more than 160 million Americans and ensure that approximately 3.5 million Americans will continue to benefit from much-needed unemployment insurance. We've also protected seniors' ability to see their doctors with an SGR fix through the end of the year.

Despite these critical provisions, though, this is a difficult vote to take. I'm greatly disappointed over how these extensions are offset.

First, the unemployment extension is paid for on the backs of middle class Federal workers. These hardworking men and women continue to be targeted in this Congress, but yet they are not the reason for our Nation's deficit. Meanwhile, my Republican colleagues refuse to require the wealthiest few to pay their fair share.

Secondly, the SGR fix is being paid for with critical health care dollars. In fact, the bill slashes one of the most important investments this country has ever made in preventative health. This is extremely shortsighted. We cannot continue down that path or we'll never address the real cost concerns of our health care system. And, sadly, the bill also manages to cut from one provider, hospitals and nursing homes, to pay for another, physicians. We can't rob Peter to pay Paul, and our health care system can't sustain further provider cuts. Meanwhile, there's still no permanent solution to an ongoing SGR problem that can't continue to be kicked down the road.

I will vote in favor of this bill, but I do so with reservations. I know that on our Democratic side, our conferees fought very hard for the best deal that they could get. So I think we have to vote for this bill because it does a lot of very important things, but I also have to express my reservations.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. JOE BARTON.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina for yielding.

I've been in the House, this is my 28th year, 14 years in the minority and now I'm in my 14th year in the majority. I don't believe I have ever voted against a rule when I was in the majority, but I'm going to vote against this one. I'm also going to vote against the underlying bill.

I'm not saying anything disparaging about the leadership on both sides of the aisle and the leadership in both bodies, but we are taking money away from the Social Security trust fund and we are substituting an IOU that may or may not ever be repaid. So on principle alone, I think we should at least shoot straight with the American people. So I will vote ''no'' on the underlying bill.

On the rule, when we became the majority, we, the Republicans, we promised the American people that we would be more open and more transparent than the previous majority that was headed by Speaker PELOSI; and one of our primary promises was that we would give the American people 3 days, or 72 hours, before any bill was voted on the House floor. This rule waives that principle. And I know it's expedient and I know that there is majority support, as you can tell by the debate for both political parties on this bill, but I think to go back on a principle to the American people, that what we vote on, especially bills that are very important, should have enough time that people can look at what's in the bill. I don't think that's something that you compromise for political expediency.

So I will vote ''no'' against this rule for the first time in my career in the House of Representatives as a member of the majority when a majority rule is up, and I would hope that this is a one-time exception that we violate the principle that we promised when we became the majority.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I had hoped that Ms. VELÁZQUEZ or Mr. ENGEL would be here, but I'll say to my friend from South Carolina: Do you have other speakers?

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. I do not at this point.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. All right. Then I'm in the position of having to go forward. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

When the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance renewal came before the House just 2 months ago, my friends on the right refused to renew either provision, while Democrats tried to avert a tax hike on the middle class. I believe that Republicans would rather let the payroll tax cut expire and unemployment insurance run out than ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share.

Madam Speaker, if it's at all possible, I'm midway, but I still have the time and, with your permission, I would like to yield 2 minutes to my colleague from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. I thank my good friend from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the legislation being considered today; however, I really just need to say this is not the agreement I would have written.

I recognize the importance of making sure our physicians don't receive a 27 percent pay cut, and I have been very, very vocal on the doc fix. I think it's something that is warranted, is much needed, and is fair and equitable, but I strongly oppose the cut in DSH funding to pay for this package.

As a member of the Health Subcommittee of Energy and Commerce, we fought hard to have DSH in the Affordable Health Care Act. And in my home city of New York City, teaching hospitals are very important and they help the people who are poor, and that's why DSH funding is so important.

We'll always need a safety net for hospitals to provide that safety net to our most vulnerable citizens, and cutting DSH payments only makes the task harder. This will certainly have a harmful effect on my district. I really just have to say that.

But, ultimately, I'll vote for this agreement because, at a time when the Great Recession is finally showing signs of ebbing and the recovery is taking root, we cannot remove $1,000 from middle class taxpayers' pockets and expect the recovery to continue.

So I am very glad that we will still have a payroll tax cut. I'm glad that Democrats have been in the forefront, along with the President, of pushing for this payroll tax cut.

We need to do more to help the working people and middle class people in this country, not only the rich. The poor, the middle class, the working class people, they're the ones that need help, and this bill is helping them today.

This conference report is also a slap in the face to our federal work force. Public workers serve their country and without them, our country would not be what it is today. Without their efforts, we would not be the leader in medical research. Seniors would not have their Social Security benefits processed as quickly. People waiting on their tax return would have to wait longer.

Yet, time and again—while asking no sacrifices of large oil companies or the wealthiest income earners—we are asking the federal work force to bear the brunt of paying for extension of unemployment insurance benefits. How can we expect to recruit and retain a qualified, effective federal work force if we continue to decimate their pay and pensions, and attack them for serving their country?

But ultimately, I will vote for this agreement because at a time when the Great Recession is finally showing signs of ebbing, and the recovery is taking root—we cannot remove $1,000 from middle class taxpayers' pockets and expect the recovery to continue.

This bill also fully extends unemployment insurance benefits. While I strongly disagree with the pay-for, at a time when our country is showing strong signs of recovery, I cannot vote against benefits for those who are still looking for work.

I urge my colleagues to support this agreement.

□ 0950

I'll just say again, Madam Speaker, that again this body was able to reach a compromise today. The unfortunate fact is that the Republican Party still seeks to implement policies that unfairly favor the wealthy. Let me identify some of those people.

We would have me in the position of looking in the mirror. We do better than other people in our society, and we ought to pay more in light of that, not just the top 400, but all of us that are doing better so that we don't fall into that category of not taking care of those who have the greatest needs.

It is time to stop playing politics with the livelihoods of those who have been hit the hardest and need our help the most. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, it is time for us to move forward in this debate. The conference committee has done their job and brought us a compromise, which is exactly what the American people have been asking for from Congress, and that is for us to work together.

Supporting the rule for the conference report signals that we are ready to finish this debate and move on to the most pressing issue facing our Nation today, and that is creating the environment that creates jobs.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. CAMP. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 554, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3630) to provide incentives for the creation of jobs, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 554, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of February 16, 2012, at page H834.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I would inquire of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) whether or not he is opposed to the conference report.

Mr. LEVIN. I support the conference report.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, in that event, I claim the time in opposition to the conference report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAMP. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 3630.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CAMP. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I come to the floor today in strong support of this conference report as a result of a lot of long hours, hard work, and determination on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol. This agreement shows the American people that Congress can govern and Washington can work.

First and foremost, this legislation prevents a tax increase on 160 million Americans. As a conservative, I look at the agreement and see some very big wins. Chief among them are the most significant reforms to the Federal unemployment program since it was created in the 1930s, all designated to promote reemployment and paychecks instead of unemployment and benefit checks.

While extending unemployment benefits through the end of the year, this agreement creates a national job-search standard for the first time, covering benefits from beginning to end and requiring every American to look for a job if they receive unemployment benefits.

The agreement allows States to spend unemployment funds on paying people to work instead of just sending them a check when they are out of work. It ensures taxpayer funds are properly spent by permitting drug testing under commonsense rules that help people get ready for a job. It expands work-sharing programs to help avoid layoffs in the first place; and it improves fiscal responsibility by not only recovering more overpayments, which currently total a staggering $12 billion per year, but also by making sure that this program is fully paid for.

And the last item is something I want to focus on for a moment. All government spending in this agreement is fully paid for, and not with one dime of higher taxes. All spending on unemployment and health care are fully paid for. This is a significant victory for those of us concerned about the national debt and the culture of deficit spending that has gripped Washington for far too long.

For example, the unemployment program has added nearly $200 billion to our Nation's debt over the last 4 years. No more. We paid for it in December, we're paying for it today, and we set a clear precedent that Congress must live within its means, no more spending unless its paid for. Period.

Now, I understand this is a compromise, and not everyone likes everything in here. If I had my way, the bill passed by the House in December would be the law. That was the only bill that extended these programs through the end of the year. It was the only bill that was fully paid for, and it was the only bill that ensured seniors and their doctors were protected from dramatic cuts for at least 2 years. But we don't control Washington.

Democrats still control Washington. They control the Senate, and they control the White House. Yet utilizing the process that dates back to our Founding Fathers, House Republicans have scored significant victories in this conference committee. Our Founding Fathers recognized that Washington would not always be united. In their wisdom, they knew that even divided government must still govern, and that's what we're doing here today, governing and providing a solution to the very real problems Americans are facing in their daily lives.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this legislation, which pays for new spending with spending cuts, prevents working Americans from getting hit with a tax increase next month, reforms our employment programs, and ensures seniors continue to have access to their doctors.

Madam Speaker, I come to the floor today to speak in strong support of this conference report. As a result of a lot of long hours, hard work and determination on both sides of the aisle, and both sides of the Capitol, this agreement shows the American people that Congress can govern and Washington can work.

As a conservative, I look at the agreement and see some very big wins. Chief among them are the most significant reforms to Federal unemployment programs since they were created in the 1930s, all designed to promote reemployment and paychecks instead of unemployment and benefit checks. This agreement:

Creates a national job search standard for the first time, covering benefits from beginning to end, and requires every unemployed American to look for a job if they receive unemployment benefits;

The agreement allows States to spend unemployment funds on paying people to work, instead of just sending them a check while they are out of work;

It ensures taxpayer funds are properly spent by permitting drug testing, under commonsense rules that help people get ready for a job;

It expands work-sharing programs to help avoid layoffs in the first place; and

It improves fiscal responsibility by not only recovering more overpayments, which currently total a staggering $12 billion per year, but also by making sure that this program is fully paid for.

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that extended these programs through the end of the year; it was the only bill that was fully paid for; and it was the only bill that ensured seniors and their doctors were protected from dramatic cuts for at least 2 years.

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And, that is what we are doing here today—governing and providing a solution to the very real problems Americans are facing in their daily lives.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this legislation which pays for new spending with spending cuts; prevents working Americans from getting hit with a tax increase next month; reforms our unemployment programs; and ensures seniors continue to have access to their doctors.

In the Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference for H.R. 3630, the description of sec. 7003, Points of Order in the Senate, was erroneously included in the joint statement.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The basic fact is that this legislation is very different from the December House Republican bill, very different, and any efforts to mask that are faults. That House bill was the main bill before the conference committee.

The basic fact is the conference committee made major changes to the House bill that passed in December essentially on a partisan basis. Therefore, this legislation is much better for the American people.

The Speaker said this about this bill:

> Let's be honest. This is an economic relief package, not a bill that's going to grow the economy and create jobs.

That's not an honest statement. It's wrong. This is a bill that relates to the economic growth of the United States of America. We're recovering, and this bill will provide a boost to continue that recovery.

□ 1000

It continues the 2 percent payroll tax through the calendar year; and it is not offset, as was true of the House Republican bill in December. It had massive harmful cuts that would have been countercyclical and that would have undermined further economic growth. In that respect, this is very different.

It's also very different in terms of unemployment insurance. Let's be clear about that. The bill that the Republicans passed through the House that was the main bill before the conference committee would have slashed 40 weeks of unemployment insurance for millions of Americans in every State regardless of the unemployment rate in that State. This bill essentially changes what was in the House bill. It extends unemployment insurance through the rest of the year up to—this is the maximum—up to 89 or 99 weeks through May, up to 79 weeks through August, and up to 73 weeks through December, depending on the level of unemployment.

Let me just say, our chairman has talked about job search and now a requirement that people be looking for work. That's already in the law of every State. That isn't a meaningful reform. In terms of job search, everybody not only registers, but also, as I said, is required to look for work. I find it an insult to the unemployed of this country to say, essentially, that we're simply giving them a check instead of a paycheck.

If you talk to the unemployed, through no fault of their own, they are looking for work. They had a paycheck in most cases year after year after year. They worked for their unemployment insurance. To simply label this an effort to get people off of unemployment insurance—unemployment insurance is not a welfare program. People work for it, and they need that subsistence as they look for work.

The bill that passed through the House had a GED requirement. That is out. To say to people you don't get a check if you're not in a GED program when there are 160,000 people in this country who are on waiting lists for education, that's out of here because it deserved to be out of here.

In terms of the drug programs, the effort to test people for drugs, it is so limited. So it is really masking the reality to call this major reform. It freezes the reimbursement for physicians through December.

Let me just close by saying a few words about the limits on this bill, because there are limits.

It would have been much better to treat unemployment insurance as an emergency, as we have for 20 years. This is the highest level of long-term unemployed on record in this country, which is another reason not to blame the unemployed for the unemployment, as the House bill in December did and some of the rhetoric on this floor continues to do. We were not able to obtain this, and I want to say this in terms of a precedent. In my judgment, it should not serve as a precedent. The precedent is 20 years treating it as an emergency.

Let me also say, it is deeply unfortunate that some on the other side insisted that Federal workers carry a disproportionate share of the cost of this bill, even after there were put forward bipartisan pay-fors that would have covered the cost of UI. In the bill that came through here on a partisan basis in December, there would have been an impact on Federal employees of $67 billion. This bill has a provision that will apply to pension programs, $15 billion over 10 years compared to the $67 billion that was in the bill that the House Republicans passed.

Let me just say in closing, this argument provides tax relief to working families, certainty for unemployed workers that a framework is in place for the year, and a real commitment—and I emphasize this—by us Democrats to aggressively continue to pursue efforts to strengthen the economy and boost job growth so that those hardest hit by the recession can return to work as they desperately want to.

I just want to reiterate how wrong the Speaker was when he said:

> Let's be honest. This is an economic relief package, not a bill that's going to grow the economy and create jobs.

The opposite is true. The provisions in this bill will help to continue economic growth, the payroll tax. Most economists say that. Unemployment insurance people spend, and that is not only good for their subsistence but good for the economy of our country. For all those reasons, I urge support of this conference committee.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

I have taken the unusual process of claiming time in opposition to this bill. I have done so so I would have sufficient time to place in context the bill that we're considering. I do not rise to necessarily defeat this bill. I'm going to vote against this bill. I'm for almost all of this bill. What we are funding this bill with was unnecessary, unfair, and ought to be rejected.

I want to say at the outset that my friend Mr. CAMP and I had a very positive discussion. I believe that Mr. CAMP and I could have reached an agreement, which would have put me in support of this legislation. We didn't get there. We tried late in the game, and we didn't get there. I regret that. I think Mr. CAMP tried.

I know that everybody on my side would have supported the agreement that Mr. VAN HOLLEN and I put forward. That agreement would say, as the current agreement, that the only individuals paying for this bill out of 315 million Americans are the 2 million civilian workers who work for us, who work for all of us, who day after day, week after week, month after month make sure that we give services to the people of the United States, protect the United States, ensure that our food is safe, ensure that we have FBI agents on the job, make sure that at the Defense Intelligence Agency we know what other people are doing. These are all our civilian employees, highly skilled, highly trained, highly educated, and, yes, highly motivated. Every day they give outstanding service to the people of the United States. We talk here and we pass laws here, but none of that talk and none of those laws makes a difference unless somebody implements what we say and the policies that we set.

This Congress is on the path to being the most anti-Federal worker Congress that I've served in. I'm going to place that in context for you, which is why I wanted the time.

□ 1010

What is the context we find ourselves in? First of all, we have a very struggling economy. The good news is the economy is coming back, but not fast enough. We need to create more jobs, expand opportunities, and make sure that the American Dream is alive for all working Americans, working Americans like our Federal employees, working Americans like the folks at GM who have just done very well, working Americans who work in the hardware store, the grocery store, the gasoline station, hardworking Americans. And we don't have enough jobs for them. As a result, we have high unemployment.

I congratulate my friend from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) for his leadership in making sure that the unemployment provision in this bill is sufficient to try to reach those folks and make sure they don't fall off the ledge. We walked away from them in December. I'm glad that we're not walking away from them today.

We also have, as all of us know, a struggling economy; and, therefore, we put into effect giving $1,000 more to each and every worker. Now, many of your leaders did not support this 2 percent reduction, and I understand that. I won't go into their names. Some are in the Chamber. But the fact of the matter is, it puts an additional $1,000 into average working Americans' pockets—people who pay FICA, that is, people who are making less than $106,000. That's an important thing for us to do to try to keep this economy growing. I'm for that. I was for it in December. I'm for it in February. I'm glad that we're going to have consensus on that today.

In addition to that, we are playing a silly little game with the doctors and with Medicare patients; and this silly little game pretends that we're going to extend SGR for 10 months. That's baloney, and everybody knows it. We're going to continue to extend SGR over and over and over again. We should have done it permanently in this bill. We should have done it last year and in the last Congress, the Congress in which I was the majority leader. We should have done that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HOYER. I yield myself 2 additional minutes.

So with respect to SGR, ladies and gentlemen, we're playing a game, and the doctors all over this country and the Medicare recipients all over this country know we're playing a game. We're giving them no certainty, no confidence that, come this September, October, November, we won't have another one of these silly little debates.

Now we also, in that context, have a deep deficit and debt that confronts this Nation that we have to deal with. And we had two commissions that said we had to deal with it. One was Bowles-Simpson—my friend from California (Mr. BECERRA), who sits in the Chamber here with me, sat on that commission—the other was Domenici-Rivlin. And we've had others, including the Gang of Six in the United States Senate. And all of them had as a premise that we needed to deal with the fiscal problem that confronts us. And the other premise was all of us need to contribute to that solution. All of us.

Now what do we see that's being proposed in this Congress, partially in this bill, but only partially in this bill? We have either on the floor proposed or passed over the last 2 years—listen to this, ladies and gentlemen—we are about to cut or propose to cut $134 billion out of our Federal employees over the next 10 years. Nobody else in this bill—not a millionaire, not a billionaire, not a carried-interest beneficiary, not an oil company—nobody in this bill, other than Federal employees, is asked to pay.

I understand we have hospital cuts. By the way, how do we have $5 billion of that? Because we just increased by 1 year the cut that they know they got. It's the same for some other things. No individual, other than a Federal employee, is asked to take a cut in this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. HOYER. I yield myself 2 additional minutes.

Now, you will say to me, Oh, it's future Federal employees, so it doesn't really matter. That's $15 billion of the $134 billion that has been proposed. They've already paid $60 billion, $60 billion. And by the way, your side of the aisle is not going to give them that 0.5 percent that the President asked for, so that will be $30 billion. So in 3 years—Mr. and Mrs. America ought to know, Madam Speaker—Federal employees will have paid $90 billion in contributions to help bring this deficit down. And by the way, Federal employees, as a percentage of our population, are down by a third over the last 20 years. It's not that the bureaucracy has grown. Yes, our population has grown. We are trying to serve them. They are down by a third in numbers.

Now, I know something about Federal employee pay. I represent 60,000 Federal employees. And you could say, Well, HOYER is up there defending his people. You would be right. You would be very right. But most of the Federal employees don't live in the Washington metropolitan area. They live in your districts, all over this country, serving your farmers, serving your drugstores, serving everything that you do.

Do I think it's the private sector that makes this country great? Absolutely. Do I believe they need an energized, high-morale, highly educated Federal workforce as their partner? I do. And you will not have that, ladies and gentlemen, if we keep along this path of every time we come to a bill that's a little bit of trouble, the pay-for is to reach into the Federal employees' pockets. They're pretty much going to say, I'm not with you any longer.

And I want to tell you: in terms of recruiting and retaining, you will not do it. Forty percent of the Federal workforce, ladies and gentlemen, can retire in the next 5 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. HOYER. I yield myself 1 additional minute.

Ladies and gentlemen, you are going to be able to recruit those folks only if you have a competitive workforce.

Let me give you a figure that you might find interesting. There are 33,300 employees at Goldman Sachs. Average salary, ladies and gentlemen: $367,057, the average salary of 33,300 people. You won't be able to compete. You won't be able to get NSA employees, as opposed to Siemens or Microsoft or some of those other corporations, many of which are in Ms. ESHOO's district. You won't be able to recruit them, and you won't retain them to have the best and the brightest defending America and making America the strongest and greatest country on Earth. Do you want America to be an exceptional country? Then you'd better have the best civil service on Earth, as well as the best private sector.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. HOYER. I yield myself 1 additional minute.

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know whether most of you know this. I saw a gentleman from Florida who's been here for a couple of months pontificate that I didn't know anything outside of the Beltway.

I was the sponsor of the Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act. And George Bush Sr. signed that act, and we worked with his OMB to get it. And what does it say? Federal employees cannot get a raise unless the private sector gets a raise. We're precluded from getting a raise unless the private sector gets a raise. And what does it further say? That the private sector—which is the economic cost index, by the way, in case you want to know exactly what the statistic is—says, we're going to take a half a point less.

So what have you done in this bill, unnecessarily? Because you're going to freeze their salary for a third year in a row. Bowles-Simpson said do it for three. But Bowles-Simpson said, Everybody ought to share, everybody. We ought to get $1 trillion in revenues, $1 trillion in cuts. Everybody.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. HOYER. I yield myself 1 additional minute.

But nobody but Federal employees, nobody is targeted in this bill other than Federal employees. You can tell I'm angry about that because that's not fair, and that's not how you ought to treat our employees, America's employees. America's public servants, we call them. We ought to stop dissing

them. We ought to stop demagoguing them. We ought to stop using ''bureaucrat'' as an epithet. America needs them.

I will have some other things to say in a few minutes, Madam Speaker. But we ought not walk away from our Federal employees any more than we ought to walk away from those 160 million people who need this tax cut or walk away from those 2.4 million who need that unemployment insurance or walk away, as we have, from the doctors who need certainty, long term—not for 10 months, but long term.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1020

Mr. CAMP. Before I yield, I just would like to say to the gentleman that he did characterize our conversations correctly. It was very late. I do look forward to working with him in the future on these issues as we move forward.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), a conferee.

Mr. WALDEN. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. CAMP, and I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan for his extraordinary leadership in pulling the House and the Senate together as chairman of our conference.

One of the key elements of this legislation is freeing up an enormous swath of spectrum for use, to grow jobs in technology and innovation, generate $15 billion to the treasury to help pay for some of the things that are being discussed today, to extend the middle class tax cut, to provide unemployment for those who are seeking work. And in the process here, there are estimates of building out the 4G network, which will take spectrum like that which will be made available here, could generate somewhere between 300,000 and 700,000 American jobs, and unleash technology and innovation in America.

In addition to doing that, the Republican House, in concert with our colleagues across the aisle and across the Chambers, have come together to finally take care of our public safety officials who, on that terrible day of September 11, discovered that their devices did not communicate well with each other, if at all. So, finally, we have come together to create an interoperable, public safety broadband network that they can operate on wherever they are, wherever disaster may strike, and they'll be able to communicate with each other. We've allocated money to build it out. I think we've put a governance structure in place. While it is not exactly as I hoped would happen, I think it will function. We will see.

So we have built out a public safety network for our public safety officials. That will get underway. This bill will help generate 300,000 to 700,000 American jobs, generate $15 billion in private sector money coming into the government to help pay for some of this, and protect our over-the-air broadcasters. Our TV broadcasters who will be asked in a voluntary auction if they want to give up their spectrum are protected so that the viewers out there in America will still be able to see and watch their over-the-air public and private broadcasters.

Madam Speaker, this is good legislation, and I hope Members will support it.

Spectrum is increasingly becoming the lifeblood of our communications sector and our economy. U.S. investment in 4G wireless networks could range from $25 to $53 billion in the next five years, produce $73 to $151 billion in GDP growth, and create 371,000 to 771,000 new jobs, according to a recent study. But that can't happen without spectrum, and a spectrum crunch is looming. Back in December, the House of Representatives tackled the spectrum crunch head on when it passed the Jumpstarting Opportunity with Broadband Spectrum Act of 2011, also known as the JOBS Act.

Title VI of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act follows the spectrum auction framework from the JOBS Act to free up valuable spectrum that when put into service will unleash new technologies. It will help meet the growing demand for mobile broadband, foster private-sector investment, and promote hundreds of thousands of jobs. To raise billions of dollars in federal revenue, it authorizes truly voluntary incentive auctions, ensures that any spectrum cleared with federal funds spectrum is auctioned, and enables all wireless carriers to compete in open auctions. The FCC should not be picking winners and losers. The market should.

Unleashing the pent-up demand of the commercial sector will drive innovation and help snap our country out of its fiscal doldrums. The innovation of the mobile sector has helped America lead the world in wireless and bring the power of the Internet to every corner of the country. No longer bound by wires to one location, wireless Internet access has spawned the creation of countless new technologies, a proliferation of wireless devices of all shapes and sizes, and even services so revolutionary they fostered actual revolutions. This legislation takes all of that innovation to a new level and creates real private-sector jobs.

The bill also provides the best protection of any competing legislation to make sure American viewers can continue to watch programming and news from the Nation's free, over-the-air broadcasters, who just went through an expensive and difficult federally mandated conversion to digital. And using the money from spectrum auctions, this legislation should generate upwards of $15 billion in net revenues while also helping build a nationwide, interoperable broadband network for our first responders.

It also includes a priority of my colleague, JOHN SHIMKUS, who has been an ardent and articulate supporter of next-generation 911 services. Thanks to his tireless advocacy, we were able to secure $115 million for NG911 deployment modeled on the Shimkus-Eshoo NG911 Act, and we did so in a fiscally responsible manner, making sure we hit our revenue targets first before spending the money.

This legislation didn't just drop out of the sky. It is thoughtful and carefully crafted legislation that finds the right balances. Its provisions were improved as a result of the input and counsel from five hearings and 11 months of discussions with members of both sides of the aisle, the FCC and TIA. Throughout this process my staff and I have worked in good faith with broadband providers, broadcasters, and public safety officials.

Our economy needs the help, Americans need new jobs, and we need to generate federal revenue for the American taxpayer. This legislation does all of these things—and it does them well.

Mr. LEVIN. I now yield 2 minutes to Mr. WAXMAN, a member of the conference committee and the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

(Mr. WAXMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I'll vote for this bill, but I do so with reservations. We should have done better in meeting our responsibilities to the American people.

There are important provisions in this legislation that will do a lot of good for families and our economy. We are extending the payroll tax reduction for millions of families, extending unemployment insurance, and ensuring that doctors serving seniors will be paid for their services through the end of year, and we are making spectrum available for new innovations in wireless communications.

While these are provisions I support in the conference report, there are significant missed opportunities and poor choices that affect Federal workers and preventive health programs.

Nowhere is this lost opportunity more apparent than our failure to end the Medicare physician payment formula, known as the SGR, and set us on a path to a fair and reasonable physician reimbursement system. Having to settle for another temporary solution, which leaves us at the end of the year even deeper in the hole in terms of a permanent solution, is a real failure and one that fails Medicare beneficiaries and doctors alike. I did not agree with the cuts in reimbursement for hospitals and nursing homes and, unbelievably, in prevention services in order to pay for the physician reimbursement levels at a reasonable rate.

I'm deeply concerned about the Federal employees' provisions. I think that is very unfair.

I do not have similar reservations about the spectrum provisions in the conference report. Our bipartisan, bicameral negotiations resulted in legislation that will make new spectrum available for broadband services, will create a nationwide band of spectrum that can be used for innovative, unlicensed applications, and will provide for the construction of an interoperable broadband network for first responders.

Taken as a whole, I believe we should support this package even with its serious shortcomings.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report for H.R. 3630.

Although I will vote ''yes,'' I do so with reservations. We could and should have done better in meeting our responsibilities to the American people. Nevertheless, I commend the members of this conference for the positive things they achieved.

First and foremost, we are doing a lot of good for families and our economy in this legislation. We are extending the payroll tax reduction for millions of families, helping them in a difficult economic time and providing much-needed stimulus to our economy.

We are extending unemployment insurance, which is a lifeline to those out of work.

We are ensuring that doctors serving seniors will be paid for their services through the end of the year.

And we are making spectrum available for new innovations in wireless communications at the same time as providing public safety with a national broadband network. These spectrum policy decisions will be an engine for economic growth.

While these are the provisions I support in this conference report, there are also significant missed opportunities and poor choices that affect federal workers and preventive health programs.

Nowhere is the lost opportunity more apparent than in our failure to end the Medicare physician payment formula known as the SGR and set us on a path to a fair and reasonable physician reimbursement system. Having to settle for another temporary solution, which leaves us at the end of the year even deeper in the hole in terms of a permanent solution, is a real failure, and one that fails Medicare beneficiaries and doctors alike.

We had the opportunity to use the war savings from Iraq and Afghanistan to pay for this solution. The Republicans said no. At the minimum, we should have used these savings to pay for the debt caused by previous short-term temporary fixes. The Republican leadership refused to allow that to happen.

As a result, we are, once again, forced to accept a short-term ''solution'' that simply stops an immediate crisis, but ensures that physicians in Medicare face another emergency a year from now. This is a poor result.

It is not right to ask Medicare beneficiaries to bear the cost of the failure of an arbitrary formula written into the law in 1997. It is not right to ask other providers, particularly safety-net providers serving a disproportionate share of low income seniors and individuals with disabilities, to take cuts in their payments for the same reason. And it certainly is not right to reduce our commitment to prevention by robbing the Prevention and Public Health Fund of critical dollars that could help us keep people healthy instead of paying for them when they are sick.

I am also deeply concerned about the federal employee provisions. It is simply unfair to ask working Americans who happen to serve the taxpayers through their work for the government to pay for half the costs of continuing unemployment benefits for the entire nation. This denigrates public service, and it is unworthy of us to impose such an involuntary sacrifice on them. Moreover, it is a bad precedent to be paying for this emergency economic relief at all. We have not done so previously, and I am sorry we are doing it in this legislation.

Although I have serious reservations about these provisions, I have none recommending that the House adopt the spectrum provisions in the conference report. Our bipartisan, bicameral negotiations have resulted in legislation that will make new spectrum available for smartphones and tablets, will create a nationwide band of spectrum that can be used for Super WiFi and other unlicensed uses, and will provide spectrum to fund the build-out of an interoperable broadband network for first responders. Establishing a nationwide public safety broadband network allows us to complete the major piece of unfinished business from the attacks of 9/11. These provisions will promote innovation and economic growth while contributing $15 billion to pay for this legislation.

These spectrum provisions are the result of many members' hard work. Two Senators not on the conference made an enormous contribution, Senator ROCKEFELLER, the chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, and Senate Majority Leader REID, and I thank them for their leadership. On the conference, Senator KYL and Chairmen UPTON and WALDEN deserve great credit for their work in crafting this pro-growth, pro-innovation compromise.

Taken as a whole, I believe we should support this package, even with its serious shortcomings. It is not what any of us would have written. This is indeed a compromise.

But the alternative would be worse. Failure to pass this package would let the middle class tax cut lapse and undermine our economic recovery, cause the unemployed to lose their benefits, and slash physician payments in Medicare so that our seniors and disabled lose access to their doctors. It would also mean a halt to progress in developing the wireless superhighways of the future and ensuring we have an emergency broadband network in place to respond to terrorism and urgent events.

That is why I support this conference report and ask my colleagues to do likewise.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
February 2012.

SUMMARY OF THE SPECTRUM PROVISIONS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE, DEMOCRATIC STAFF

The payroll tax relief conference has reached agreement on landmark bipartisan legislation to ease the nation's growing spectrum shortage, create a nationwide, interoperable broadband network for public safety officials, and raise $15 billion.

The legislation gives the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) the authority to pay TV broadcasters for underutilized broadcast spectrum and resell it at higher prices to wireless companies to meet the growing spectrum demands of smartphones and tablets. This provision is expected to make a large band of prime spectrum available for auction, raising over $25 billion. The bill provides $7 billion in auction proceeds and spectrum worth $2.75 billion (called the ''D Block'') to a new ''First Responder Network Authority'' to build a broadband network for police, firefighters, emergency medical service professionals, and other public safety officials. A key provision in the legislation authorizes the FCC to create guard bands in the broadcast spectrum auctioned to wireless carriers that can be used for innovative unlicensed uses like Super WiFi.

The legislation agreed to by the conferees is based upon two existing pieces of legislation: H.R. 3630, the spectrum provisions passed by the House, and S. 911, the bipartisan legislation approved by the Senate Commerce Committee. The conference report incorporates most of the auction-related provisions included in the House legislation, with changes regarding unlicensed spectrum and FCC auction rules. The public safety provisions are based on the national model outlined in S. 911, with changes to ensure flexibility for states.

THE AUCTION PROVISIONS

The auction provisions in the final legislation are largely the same as those in H.R. 3630 as passed by the House with two significant exceptions: (1) the provisions relating to unlicensed spectrum and (2) the provisions relating to FCC auction authority.

Unlicensed Spectrum: Unlicensed spectrum has been an engine of economic innovation and growth, enabling new forms of communication like WiFi and Bluetooth. Many advocate that allowing unlicensed use in the broadcast frequencies could lead to new breakthroughs like Super WiFi. The conference report advances this goal in three ways: (1) it gives the FCC the authority to preserve existing TV white spaces; (2) it gives the FCC the authority to optimize these white spaces for unlicensed use by consolidating them into more optimal configurations through band plans; and (3) it gives the FCC the authority to use part of the spectrum relinquished by TV broadcasters in the incentive auction to create nationwide guard bands that can be used for unlicensed use, including in high-value markets that currently have little or no white spaces today. Nationwide, unlicensed access to guard bands will enable innovation, promote investment in new wireless services, and enhance the value of licensed spectrum by protecting against harmful interference and allowing carriers to ''off-load'' data to alleviate capacity concerns.

FCC Auction Rules: Under current law, the FCC has broad authority to craft auction rules in the public interest. The agency has used this authority to ensure that communications markets remain competitive and spectrum is not concentrated in the hands of only one or two providers. H.R. 3630 would have restricted the FCC's future ability to limit participation in spectrum auctions, regardless of the size or market dominance of potential bidders. The conference agreement modifies this prohibition by expressly preserving the FCC's ability to ensure competition through spectrum aggregation limits and other rules.

The legislation also drops a provision in the House-passed bill that would have limited the FCC's authority to set license conditions, such as open-internet requirements, on auctioned spectrum.

THE PUBLIC SAFETY PROVISIONS

The conference report provides our nation's first responders with access to the spectrum and advanced wireless broadband communications they need to protect the public and to communicate with each other across the country. The legislation provides for the construction of a nationwide public safety broadband network, as envisioned in the Senate bill, with an ''opt-out'' option for states that demonstrate the capacity to build their own networks and connect them to the national network.

The legislation creates a First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and provides FirstNet with $7 billion and a license to use the ''D Block'' and adjacent public safety spectrum to build the nationwide public safety network. To ensure national interoperability, the legislation also creates a technical advisory board at the FCC to develop interoperability standards. States that want to construct their own portion of the national public safety network have the option to apply for federal grants to build and

operate the radio access network in the state if they can demonstrate to the FCC that the network will meet the interoperability standards and to NTIA that they have the resources and capability to provide comparable coverage and security and maintain ongoing interoperability.

Unlike the House-passed bill, the legislation does not require public safety officials to return the important 700 MHz ''narrowband'' spectrum to the FCC for auction. Instead, the legislation requires the return of less efficient spectrum known as the ''T-band.'' This transition occurs 11 years from the date of enactment, and public safety relocation costs will be reimbursed from any auction proceeds.

Finally, the legislation provides funding for critical public safety research and development activities and deployment of Next Generation 9–1–1 services, which will complement the advanced broadband capabilities of the public safety network by enabling the delivery of voice, text, photos, video, and other data to 9–1–1 call centers.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I now yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the ranking member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. HOYER.

This bill accomplishes three very important objectives: it extends the payroll tax cut for 160 million Americans; it extends unemployment insurance to millions of Americans who are out of work through no fault of their own; and it supports the Medicare program. So I am not here on the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote against this bill. In fact, I'm confident it will pass.

The bill is also significant for what it will not do. Unlike the original Republican House bill which cut compensation for current Federal employees by about $40 billion, this bill does not cut compensation for any current Federal employee, not one cent. Let me repeat that. I'm pleased that Senator CARDIN and I and other members of the conference committee were successful in holding harmless our hardworking current Federal employees.

That being said, I'm going to vote ''no'' to send a message that enough is enough when it comes to using the Federal workforce as a piggy bank to fund our various national initiatives. Here's why. While no current employees are impacted by this bill, it does cut compensation for future employees hired starting in January 2013; and that will, as Mr. HOYER said, it will make it much more difficult for us to attract the Federal employees we need to do our national work together as part of our Federal service.

And indeed, one-half, a full half of the 10-month extension for unemployment insurance that benefits the entire country, $15 billion is financed by cutting compensation for future Federal employees. That is a disproportionate share from the Federal workforce. The Federal workforce has already contributed over $88 billion toward deficit reduction by the denial of two COLAs and the proposed COLA cut this year, and the Republican transportation bill would cut another $42 billion from Federal employees to finance our national highways. That's a ridiculous approach.

Federal employees, as Mr. HOYER said, are willing to do their fair share to help reduce our deficit, but stop singling them out and making them scapegoats. They had nothing to do with the financial meltdown on Wall Street. They are not the drivers of our national debt. And I am sick and tired of hearing some Members of Congress bad-mouthing and belittling Federal employees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HOYER. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. They are an easy political target for some, as Mr. HOYER said, but it is irresponsible to denigrate their good work. These are the men and women who care for our veterans and many of our wounded soldiers. These are the people in our intelligence community who helped track down Osama bin Laden. These are the folks at NIH and elsewhere who help find treatments and cures, that help prevent diseases that plague every American family. They are the folks who protect our borders. They are the folks who help run the Medicare and Social Security system. They're the folks in the Capitol Hill Police that protect this great center of democracy right here.

So while this conference report does many good things, we need to send a message that it's time to stop scapegoating Federal employees and using them as the piggy bank for our national objectives.

Mr. CAMP. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS), a member of the conference committee.

(Mrs. ELLMERS asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

□ 1030

Mrs. ELLMERS. Yesterday afternoon, I happily signed the conference report that was very, very well put together; and I commend Chairman CAMP for the hard work that he did and my fellow conferees. This joint conference committee came together, and it was tasked to negotiate the payroll tax holiday extension.

This is a very important breakthrough and shows that we can actually work together and compromise for the sake of the American people. I would like to thank, again, Chairman CAMP and my fellow conferees once again for the honor and privilege to serve on this committee.

Our report does what is necessary to provide a responsible level of certainty to job creators and ensures that millions of hardworking Americans will be protected. In this Obama economy, it is important that American taxpayers keep more of their money and use it to make ends meet. Gas prices are projected to go up above $4 a gallon, Madam Speaker, by the summer. If this puts a little more money in individuals' pockets so that they can pay for a half a tank of gas or one-quarter of a tank of gas, then I say I'm all for it.

Furthermore, this deal strikes the most dramatic blow to ObamaCare yet, keeping a promise I made when I first came to Washington. With this agreement, we are cutting spending by more than $50 billion and using a portion of these savings to pay for the doc fix. What is the doc fix? The doc fix ensures that millions of Medicare patients, our seniors, will receive that medical care. It will prevent the 27.4 percent cut to physicians for Medicare services.

We must now return our focus to the most pressing issue facing our Nation, which is job creation and fixing this economy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CAMP. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Madam Speaker, the President has submitted another bloated budget that ignores the economic crisis we are all living through under the Obama economy. It's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work on removing these barriers to prosperity and focus on the one thing that matters most—job creation and continuing to provide certainty to millions of Americans who are looking to us to make concise decisions about their future and the future of their children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Just as a reminder, the time remaining is the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) has 11¾ minutes remaining, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) has 10 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. It's now my pleasure to yield 1 minute to our distinguished leader, Ms. PELOSI, from the great State of California.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his relentless and persistent advocacy on behalf of a thriving middle class in our country and his work to ensure that we would have this payroll tax cut as well as the extension of unemployment insurance that he fought so hard on, as well as on making sure that our seniors are able to see their doctors under Medicare. Congratulations and thank you, Mr. LEVIN.

I rise today, Madam Speaker, in support of this legislation. Of course, I identify with the concerns expressed by our distinguished whip, Mr. HOYER, and of Mr. VAN HOLLEN regarding our public employees.

Before I talk directly about what is in the bill, I do want to say that for our country to thrive and for us to do our very best, we must have a great relationship between the public and the private sector. The private sector is the driving engine of job creation in our country, but it cannot succeed unless we also have an effective and thriving public sector. It's about so

many things that relate to our public safety. The courts, the implementation of laws passed in Congress, they don't exist unless the public sector then implements them. So this is a symbiotic relationship that has existed from the beginning of time in our country.

It's not a zero sum game. We cannot say we're going to do this in the private sector at the expense of the public sector. So I salute them for their persistent leadership and recognizing the important role that the public sector plays. It was not necessary for us to go down the path that has been taken in this bill, and I'll get to that in a moment.

First, I want to say that this represents a victory for the middle class in our country, and I salute President Obama for going out there so strongly and taking this message to the American people that it was very important for us to have a payroll tax cut for the middle class. It's important to those families because it puts $40 more into a paycheck to buy groceries, to buy gasoline, and to make ends meet—to make ends meet.

In addition to being personally helpful to families, it has a macroeconomic effect because these families will immediately spend that money and inject demand into the economy, and that is a job creator. Any economist will tell you that this is very important to continuing the economic recovery in our country. To have rejected it, as had been in the mix earlier, would have halted, if not turned back, our economic recovery.

So let us recognize that we had three pillars that we insisted be in this package, we on the Democratic side, one that we would have a payroll tax cut for 160 million Americans, preferably unpaid for, and that is the way it is in this bill. What is unfortunate is that we did not use our choice of a pay-for, should it be paid for, the surcharge, to cover the unemployment insurance. That would have been a preferable place to go, the extension of unemployment insurance. It could have also been used to pay for the SGR, the ability for seniors to see their doctors instead of taking money out of the prevention piece of the Affordable Care Act. Prevention makes America healthier, it saves money, and it expands opportunity for people to get in the health care loop. That's unfortunate, and it could have been avoided as well as the unfortunate provision relating to our public employees.

Even on that score, Mr. HOYER said, as Mr. VAN HOLLEN did, there was a further compromise that could have been made that addressed some of the needs of the Republicans to vote for this bill without doing more harm to, as Mr. HOYER said, the recruitment and the retention of public employees, the best—the best—public employees to help implement our laws. And I want to salute all of them for their patriotic duty to our country, to make and keep us safe in every possible way, and to allow commerce to proceed in a very positive way.

Now let's get back to why this is important, this victory for the middle class. This was a fight. Why should it have been a fight? There's something out there in the public, the ''ground truth,'' the common sense coming up from the ground that this was an important thing to do; and the American people overwhelmingly supported it. There's a ground truth out there from the public, common sense coming up from the ground, that in order for us meet our needs and also reduce the deficit, that we should have a surcharge on the wealthiest people in our country, people making over $1 million a year—not having a million dollars—making over $1 million a year.

That was not contained in this bill, but it will be part of the debate as we go forward. So let's take a moment to say that we recognize here on this floor of the House the importance of a thriving middle class to our democracy—to our democracy—and that this action taken today is an important step, but we have much more work to do.

Democrats are committed to reigniting the American Dream, to building ladders of opportunity for all who want to work hard, play by the rules and take responsibility. But we have work to do. In this thriving—this reigniting—American Dream, it's about recognizing the role of entrepreneurialism in our system of small businesses and what they do to grow our economy and how we have a public-private relationship there to encourage small business. And also, again, all of this relates to a thriving middle class.

□ 1040

So I urge my colleagues to be ever-vigilant about every opportunity we can take to support the middle class. Today is a good day in that regard. It's just one piece of it, though. We have much more work to do.

In any bill that comes up, there are things you may not like in it, and you say: Well, I'm not going to vote for it for that reason. On balance, I come down in favor of supporting what the President asked us to do, which we did do, and what the American people want us to do. But I don't want to go forward without registering the concern that we could have done better in this.

One place we can start on our next legislation is to look at the surcharge for the wealthiest people in America instead of taking billions of dollars from preventive care so that we can offset the cost in here. None of it needed to be offset. The payroll tax cut has not been, unemployment insurance has not traditionally been paid for, and we didn't have to do it now. In fact, paying for it diminishes some of its stimulative effect because economists will tell you unemployment insurance benefits paid out are immediately spent back into the Treasury, as the payroll tax cut will be too, and stimulates the economy by injecting demand and creating more jobs.

SGR, we should have gone all the way with it. We should have done it permanently. We could have paid for it with our war savings or with a surcharge at the high end. Republicans said no.

Having said all of that, the fact that we are here today is an admission that this is the right thing to do in terms of the payroll tax cut and unemployment compensation and our seniors. It's a recognition that the American people are watching, and they have little appetite for us to be fighting over what they know is the right thing to do, which is to take every action we can to grow our economy, focusing on the middle class, small business, entrepreneurial spirit, and the rest. Again, we have important work to do to reignite the American Dream in even bigger ways.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I urge our colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I thank my colleague.

I support the doc fix in this bill. I support the payroll tax cut extension in this bill. I support the extension of unemployment insurance to so many of our fellow Americans who have suffered in the Great Recession. Sadly, I cannot, however, bring myself to vote for this bill.

I represent the third largest number of Federal employees in the United States. They're asking a simple question: What is the nexus, what is the relationship between their employment and these worthy subjects? And the answer is ''none.''

Three times this week the Republican majority has attempted to get at benefits and pay and compensation of the Federal workforce, and often it's based on misinformation—a bloated workforce. We entered data into a hearing record just the other day that shows that the Obama administration, in absolute terms, has 350,000 fewer Federal workers than those that served during the administration of President H.W. Bush. As a ratio to thousand population in America, it's the lowest since John Kennedy was in the White House in 50 years.

They've already given $90 billion to debt reduction through pay freezes and future pay freezes. And of course there is legislation to whack at their pensions, affecting both current and future employees in the pending transportation legislation that I hope will die of its own weight. It is not fair to ask only one group in America to make a sacrifice. Shared sacrifice should mean shared sacrifice.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to a member of the House-Senate conference committee, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. HAYWORTH).

Ms. HAYWORTH. I thank the chairman.

Madam Speaker, this conference report that we bring to our colleagues for a vote today represents a remarkable good-faith effort by the members of a committee who combined—who worked together, Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—to act responsibly for the American people and in response to what the American people have asked us to do.

As a physician—and I practiced for 16 years in the Hudson Valley in New York—the importance of extending reimbursement assurance for our seniors who rely on Medicare, for the doctors who care for them who have to keep their doors open is a crucial issue. But not only did we provide that assurance through the end of this year, we also provided for some other crucial provisions for our rural hospitals, for our ambulance services, for a number of other aspects of care that rely on our action and on the responsible action that we take today.

And, yes, we did pay for those extensions in a responsible way, as we must in a time of looming fiscal crisis. We have a debt that extends to $50,000, roughly, per man, woman and child in this country. It is unconscionable for us to fail to acknowledge that responsibility. For all of us to do our part in that way, we have, yes, asked our Federal employees to help us. Because as the employer, the Federal Government has to take its responsible steps as well.

The hope that all of us have is that we will continue to work through this year. We will move from here with this consensus document and continue to work on the growth that our economy desperately needs and do so together by controlling what the Federal Government does.

Mr. LEVIN. I now yield 2 minutes to another conferee, the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

In December, this Congress gave 20 conferees three tasks to achieve by February 29: to extend the payroll tax cut for 160 million middle class Americans; to ensure Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own receive their unemployment insurance benefits; and to guarantee our seniors on Medicare have access to the doctors of their choice and the care that they need.

We achieved this goal. But let's be clear, this agreement is by no means free of controversy. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) eloquently illustrated that. Our Republican colleagues succeeded in extracting a pound of flesh from middle class working Americans who also serve ably in our Federal Government.

But what was the alternative that we faced? A House Republican bill passed in December that quadrupled the cuts to workers in their salaries and their benefits; that increased the cost of Medicare for millions of seniors; that eliminated and restricted access to physical speech and occupational therapy in hospital settings for Medicare patients; that eliminated the child tax credit for millions of modest-income families; and that eliminated unemployment insurance benefits for nearly 3 million Americans who had lost a job through no fault of their own.

This agreement represents a rejection of the approach in the House Republican bill of December. It is a compromise, free of the controversial and extraneous measures in that Republican bill in December. But it is a bill of controversy because we are asking American workers who work very hard, who give their all and just happen to work for the Federal Government, to pay the cost of helping other Americans who are unemployed.

We could have made this a good bill. We could have asked every American—especially those most able to contribute—to help out. We didn't in this bill, and that's why it's a compromise. It could have been much better, but we faced a deadline by February 29 where 160 million American families would have seen their taxes increase. We would have seen a situation where millions of Americans would have lost their unemployment insurance. We needed to act, and we did.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this compromise measure.

Mr. HOYER. I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Government Reform Committee, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that we are extending the payroll tax cut through the end of the year, which is essential to support our continued economic recovery.

I am also pleased that we are providing unemployment benefits to ensure that millions of Americans have access to benefits they so urgently need and that we are implementing the doc fix to ensure that seniors on Medicare can continue to see the physicians of their choice.

That said, there are a number of provisions in this agreement that deeply disappoint me.

□ 1050

For example, this agreement will reduce by 30 weeks the maximum number of weeks of unemployment insurance available to residents of States with average unemployment rates.

While the unemployment picture certainly improved in January with the creation of 243,000 jobs and a reduction in the unemployment rate of 8.3, there are still 12.8 million people unemployed in this Nation and millions more who work part-time but want full-time work. For millions of our fellow citizens, unemployment benefits are truly a lifeline.

I'm also deeply disappointed that the conference report requires new Federal workers to contribute more to their pensions. Our Federal employees are not a piggy bank. We should not reach into their pockets anytime we need to pay for something.

Federal workers are the backbone of our government. In return for their hard work and dedication, the majority has rewarded Federal workers with an unprecedented amount of criticism; assault on their compensation and benefits, including proposals to extend their current 2-year pay freeze and to arbitrarily cut the number of Federal employees; and, now, to slash their retirement benefits.

So I'm going to vote against this conference report. It is an important bill to get through, but I have to vote against it in the name of my employees.

Mr. CAMP. I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee and a member of the House/Senate conference.

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the great State of Michigan for yielding.

I rise, obviously, in support of this conference report. It's not perfect, but it is certainly the right thing to do now.

Our economy is still struggling big time. Families are struggling. In my home State of Michigan, we know better than anywhere else the pain of high unemployment and anemic economic growth. And extending the temporary payroll tax relief and unemployment benefits, it's not the way to fix the economy, but we need to do it now to offer a measure of relief to those in need.

But our long-term goal is certainly much bigger: We've got to fix the economy. We've got to create jobs. We need to return America to a place where these temporary patches are not needed.

In addition to the payroll tax and unemployment health extension, this package includes the doc fix through the end of the year to protect seniors who depend on Medicare and prevent physician reimbursement rates from being slashed by nearly 30 percent. Again, it is but a temporary solution to a long-term problem.

As chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I am absolutely committed to working with my good friend Chairman CAMP to develop a permanent solution to the Medicare physician payment system, one that protects seniors and their doctors in the long term while also protecting taxpayers and making sure that Medicare is efficient, effective, and sustainable.

These temporary solutions are a big part of the package, but, Madam Speaker, it would be a terrible mistake to ignore another part of the package, one that will help support literally hundreds of thousands of jobs, one that will spur billions of dollars of investment in our economy and affect the daily lives of nearly every American. I'm talking about spectrum reform.

Spectrum, it's the airwaves that carry wireless communication. Spectrum is all around us and we sure do use it. With the explosion in smartphones, tablets, mobile broadband devices, Americans are using more spectrum than ever before. This bill helps our country make more efficient use of those airwaves.

We're clearing large swaths of spectrum for innovative wireless investments, and the upshot is that wireless companies will pay the taxpayers billions of dollars for the right to build the next generation of wireless networks. It's a huge win for consumers and taxpayers.

This package is the culmination of years of effort, bipartisan effort, numerous hearings, extensive stakeholder input, cooperation on both sides of the aisle.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CAMP. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. UPTON. I want to recognize my good friend and chairman of the Communications and Telecommunications Subcommittee, both GREG WALDEN and ANNA ESHOO from California, for their tireless efforts to push this bill across the finish line.

No qualified bidder can be excluded from the auction, and we're not giving away airwaves that the taxpayers paid to clear. These are good, solid reforms with clear congressional intent, and I appreciate the hard work to get an agreement and advance this wireless future.

I thank all my colleagues on the conference committee. We worked together, we got it done, and the taxpayer's going to be better off.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 2 minutes to another hardworking member of the conference committee, Mrs. SCHWARTZ from the State of Pennsylvania.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. This conference committee was charged with resolving differences between the House and the Senate so that we could extend middle class tax cuts, protect seniors' access to their doctors, and extend unemployment benefits for Americans looking for work. As a member of the conference committee, I'm pleased we found a compromise to meet these goals and we are able to provide stability for millions of Americans.

Action today means 160 million American taxpayers will be able to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. These are middle class families struggling to pay their mortgages, their food bills, child care costs, and college tuition. This tax cut will better enable them to meet their obligations and contribute to growing the economy.

Action today means that 13 million of our hardest working Americans will receive unemployment benefits and be better able to provide for their families.

There are encouraging measures of economic growth in our country, but recovery is still fragile. We've had 23 consecutive months of private sector job growth. Unemployment numbers are down, yet millions of Americans are still looking for work. Action today better ensures that losing a job will not mean economic disaster for families who have worked hard and played by the rules.

An action today means that we will keep our promise to 47 million seniors by preventing a drastic 27 percent cut to physicians who care for Medicare beneficiaries. This is a win for American seniors, but it does not relieve us of our responsibility to permanently repeal the SGR and replace it with a new payment system.

For over a decade this failed policy has created uncertainty and instability for patients, for health care providers, and for the Federal budget. Throughout this process, I advocated for both permanent, fiscally responsible repeal of the failed Medicare policy and a path forward to new payment models to improve quality while reducing costs. Despite bipartisan support for this approach, a long-term agreement could not be reached. I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to end this perennial threat to the promise of Medicare once and for all.

I urge support for middle class families, for America's seniors, and for millions of Americans still searching for a job. I urge support for this conference report.

Mr. HOYER. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. I thank my good friend from Maryland.

I appreciate the work of the conferees, but I oppose this conference agreement, not out of concern for the welfare of the tens of thousands of Federal employees that I represent, but out of concern for the welfare of the great Nation we serve.

We are blessed with the least corrupt, most effective, least discriminatory, most responsive Federal workforce in the world. And yet how do we repay them? We are requiring them to increase their pension contributions by 400 percent, with no increase in benefits.

So we are sending them a signal: We don't really appreciate what you're doing. You're expendable. It's a signal that will not be lost on the recruits that we desperately need in the future, let alone the hundreds of thousands, really, of Federal employees who could easily be making much more in the private sector.

The whole country is going to pay a price for the signal that this bill sends, and that's why I think we should defeat it.

Mr. CAMP. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 1 minute to the distinguished Representative from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today as the ranking member of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee on this legislation because I think it's so important. It will define our Nation's ability to lead the world in wireless broadband deployment. It also will define how we finally provide our first responders with a nationwide interoperable broadband network.

This legislation will usher in more competition, enhance innovation, bolster the American economy, and very, very importantly, create jobs, good jobs.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the other Chamber for coming together to develop legislation that promotes the public interest and ensures a return on investment for the taxpayer by supporting unlicensed spectrum, a nationwide interoperable public safety broadband network, and provisions to ensure that our Nation's 911 call centers will have the modern tools needed to improve the quality and the speed of emergency response.

Incentive auctions will ensure that we have the world's leading wireless infrastructure, and the future for unlicensed innovation in the TV band is bright.

□ 1100

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. ESHOO. Public safety will have the tools to finally build out a critical nationwide interoperable broadband network and the inclusion of provisions to promote and fund Next Generation 911, which will enable the delivery of voice, text, photos, videos, and other data to 911 call centers.

Our country has been counting on us to make smart, bipartisan choices. I'm proud of what we've accomplished and what it represents for American entrepreneurship, competition, and ingenuity.

I thank my colleagues, and I urge them to support the legislation.

Mr. HOYER. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. I now yield 1 minute to the distinguished Representative from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS. I'd like to enter into the RECORD three letters from representatives of public employees and retirees who are wondering why it is that they've had to sacrifice $60 billion of reductions over the last decade when they didn't create the deficit and yet they're asked to pay for it.

THE NATIONAL
TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION,
February 16, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 150,000 federal employees represented by NTEU, I am writing to urge you to VOTE NO on the conference report on H.R. 3630, the payroll tax extension legislation. This conference report singles out one group—federal employees—to offset fully half the cost ($15 out of $30 billion) of the unemployment insurance extension included in the bill, while there are no offsets included for the payroll holiday extension.

Federal employees are in the second year of a two year pay freeze that is contributing $60 billion to deficit reduction. It is unconscionable to come back to them for a second $15 billion hit, while no other group has been asked to sacrifice. Under this agreement, millionaires and billionaires continue to keep their tax cuts and corporations that have shipped jobs overseas keep their tax loopholes, but middle class federal employees who guard our borders, keep our food and water safe and protect our financial systems will get a 2.3% pay cut due to increases in pension contributions with no increase in benefits. While the payroll tax holiday extension and the unemployment insurance extension only last for the next 10 months, the loss to a new federal employee making $50,000 a year that is $1,000 per year, every year for the rest of their career.

This is not shared sacrifice, it is targeting one group of middle class workers for an extremely disproportionate burden. We urge you to vote no on the conference report on H.R. 3630. For more information, contact Maureen.Gilman@NTEU.org.

Sincerely,

COLLEEN M. KELLEY,
National President.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL–CIO,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, which represents 650,000 federal workers throughout the nation, I am writing to urge you to vote against the Payroll Tax Holiday/Unemployment Insurance extension conference report that pays for the latter by taxing the working and middle class Americans who make up the federal workforce. Forcing new federal employees (hired after 2012) to pay an additional 2.3 percent of their incomes to cover the cost of lengthening the period of eligibility for Unemployment Insurance is not a compromise and it is not a form of shared sacrifice.

For a GS–3 nursing assistant earning $27,322 while working in a VA hospital psychiatric ward, this will be a $628 annual tax increase. For a GS–5 USDA meat and poultry inspector earning $31,825 while protecting Americans from E. Coli and other deadly diseases caused by contaminated meat, this will be a $732 annual tax increase. For a GS–7 federal penitentiary correctional officer earning $38,790 while guarding ruthless gang leaders in dangerously understaffed institutions, this will be an $893 annual tax increase. In short, this ''deal'' is an outrageous injustice that deserves the vociferous opposition of every Member of Congress with a conscience.

Please note the following:

The extension of unemployment insurance is temporary, but the additional 2.3 percent tax on new federal employees in this bill would be permanent.

The 2.3 percent tax on new federal employees will go to a retirement trust fund that is already fully funded; it is not to address any kind of shortfall in federal retirement financing.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' data on private sector defined benefit plans, 96 percent of employers require no funding contribution from their employees, but this plan would force new federal employees to pay 3.1 percent of their incomes for this modest benefit.

This plan is entirely unfair, unnecessary, and undeserved.

There is simply no legitimate rationale for imposing this tax on federal employees. Federal employees are extremely sympathetic to the dire situation of the long-term unemployed. We strongly support the extension of unemployment benefits, but we absolutely oppose placing a full 50 percent of its cost on federal employees, and forcing them to pay these insupportable rates in perpetuity.

If there must be offsets to counter the cost of extending unemployment insurance, let them come from a group that has not already given $80 billion toward deficit reduction in the form of a two-year pay freeze, and is slated to give $28 billion more from the plan to withhold salary adjustments in the future. The millionaires and billionaires who have continued to profit during this economic recession haven't been asked to pay one nickel more in taxes. Americans continue to pay massive subsidies to oil companies as well as bail out the banks that started this recession with their shady lending practices that caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs, their homes, and their savings.

Please stand up to this shameful maneuver and vote to oppose the conference report.

Sincerely yours,

BETH MOTEN,
Legislative and Political Director.

NARFE,
Alexandria, VA, February 17, 2012.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 4.6 million federal employees and annuitants represented by the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I am writing to urge you to oppose H.R. 3630 because of its cuts to federal retirement benefits.

President Obama has already imposed a two-year pay freeze and proposed only a marginal pay raise for 2013, that together save about $88 billion. H.R. 3630 would force newly hired federal employees to pay 2.3 percent more, permanently, for retirement benefits. This would save $15 billion, for a total budget savings from federal employees of $103 billion over 10 years. No other group of Americans has been asked to sacrifice in this way. I urge you to stop singling out federal employees for unfair cuts.

Even more importantly, these actions undermine the federal government's ability to attract and retain the highest level of skilled talent it needs to deal with the challenges facing us. Singling out federal employees for disparate treatment threatens to do permanent harm to a federal civil service critical to meeting the increasingly complex and deeply important tasks of government. At a time when more is being asked of our government, the American public deserves an engaged and efficient workforce, not one that members of Congress characterize as the source of our country's problems.

Federal employees ensure that the food we eat and the water we drink are safe; they protect our borders and our airways; they take criminals off our streets and keep them behind bars and they care for our veterans and provide the intelligence needed to thwart terrorism. Day after day, they perform the tasks needed to maintain the stability and security of our country. The constant assault on the federal workforce will only undermine the strength of our government and the welfare of our nation.

President John F. Kennedy once said: ''Let the public service be a proud and lively career. And let every man and woman who works in any area of our national government, in any branch, at any level, be able to say with pride and with honor in future years: 'I served the United States Government in that hour of our nation's need.' '' We are proud of the service we have given to this country, and we ought to instill that same pride in the next generation of public servants. Sadly, that is not what is happening today.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote against H.R. 3630, and specifically to oppose the provisions unfairly targeting federal employees.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH A. BEAUDOIN,
President.

I rise in opposition to the conference report on behalf of Federal workers, and I wonder where it is that we will be able to find the next Robert Ball, who lived in my district, who was the architect of Social Security. I wonder whether we will be able to find the national security and intelligence specialists, who live out in my district in Collington, for the next generation. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether we will be able to find the next negotiator of a START Treaty, who lives in my district. We won't be able to find them because we've asked Federal workers to continue to sacrifice for a deficit that they didn't create.

With that, I would just say, please let's vote against this legislation, vote against the conference report. Support Federal workers and the talented workforce that we have, for future generations.

Mr. CAMP. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise again to support this legislation.

Once again, we're reading about how troubled the economy is. This is the weakest recovery since the Great Depression. It is certainly the kind of economy we all want to improve.

The underlying piece of this legislation frees up spectrum that will generate hundreds of thousands of jobs as 4G is built out. They need spectrum to build out 4G. This provides spectrum.

This is a voluntary incentive auction, so nobody is being for forced off the airwaves; but they have the opportunity to leave the airwaves and then repack the bands and then make this spectrum available. People say, What is that? That's what powers your devices, whatever you have on whichever hip, your iPad, your Android, whatever needs this spectrum. In the process, it will generate $15 billion from the private sector into the government by auctioning off this spectrum to help pay for the middle class tax cut and pay for unemployment extension and the doc fix.

Now, we would have, on our side of the aisle, preferred a 2-year fix for our physicians taking care of seniors on Medicare, but that was not to be, and we know that. But we could not let them fall off the cliff and see their reimbursement rates cut 27.4 percent.

So contained in here are solutions both for the long term and short term we're going to have to revisit.

But the other thing we did that's really important is we're going to build out an interoperable public safety broadband network for our first responders. Our brave men and women, public servants, police and fire, will finally have this Congress answer the call that has been pending since 9/11.

Post-9/11, they said you've got to get our public safety people an interoperable broadband network, and it didn't get done until now. So when you vote for this legislation, you're voting to help your public servants and police and fire finally have the tools to keep them safe and do their jobs.

Mr. LEVIN. How much time is there for each?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). The gentleman from Michigan has 3 minutes remaining, the gentleman from Maryland has 1 minute remaining, and the gentleman from Michigan in support has 4¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield now 1 minute to the very distinguished Representative and a leader in our caucus, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I support this compromise because it ensures that we will be able to continue tax cuts for millions of American workers, and it preserves vital benefits for unemployed Americans that are essential for the overall economy and safeguards seniors' access to their doctors.

While I will vote ''yes,'' this agreement is not perfect. I have serious objections to the continuing demonization of public servants in the Federal Government. We should not keep cutting their pay and benefits while refusing to ask the top 1 percent to pay one penny more. Federal employees have sacrificed now, and they should be given time to share in the sacrifices. All of us should.

I'm also disappointed that this bill cuts money for prevention which is so important to the health of all Americans. Mr. Speaker, I believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cheer.

Mr. HOYER. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. If we're prepared to close, I will yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I yield myself 1 minute.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend the Speaker. I'm glad that he's in the chair. He and I have worked together because we understand what needs to be done in order to meet the fiscal crisis that confronts our country. All of us need to participate—not just our Federal employees, but all of us.

In the short term, we need to do what this bill does:

160 million people will get an extra thousand dollars that hopefully will help build our economy, create jobs, and expand opportunity for our people;

The unemployed will make sure that they've had that safety net that is critical for them and their families;

The doctors will have a short period of time to have some confidence that they will be compensated to serve Medicare patients over the next 10 months.

The only people asked to pay for that, as I said before, are Federal employees. That is why I took this 20 minutes, to say to each and every one of us in this House, first of all, Federal employees ought not to be the piggy bank out of which you pretend that we're going to be able to pay the deficit. That's wrong. It's not been recommended by any of our groups.

I've had the opportunity of working with Mr. CAMP, who, in my view, is a very conscientious Member of this body. I'm glad that he's the leader. Actually, I wish Mr. LEVIN were the leader, because he's of my party. But since my party is not in control, I'm glad that Mr. CAMP leads it, a reasonable person.

Ladies and gentlemen of this House, America must know that we all need to contribute. The Federal employee has paid $60 billion over the last 24 months, over the next 10 years already. This year, they will have their pay reduced from what the law requires another $30 billion. That's $90 billion. Forget about this bill. Forget about the highway bill which says $44 billion in additional reduction in benefits. It's $134 billion that's on the table. It hasn't passed, but it's on the table.

Let us, as conscientious Members of this Congress, as representatives of our people, come together and have a plan that does not require nickel-and-diming of Federal employees, nickel-and-diming of doctors, nickel-and-diming of Medicare patients, and nickel-and-diming of America. Let us come together and do what America knows what needs to be done.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mr. LEVIN. How much time is left for Mr. CAMP and myself?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 2 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Michigan on the proponent's side has 3¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I think this has been a healthy discussion, and I think all of us respect very much the positions that have been put forth. I think we need to look at where we came from.

The main bill before the conference committee was the bill that passed on a partisan basis here in December. It essentially would have countermanded the effort at continued economic growth through the payroll tax bill. It would have required very inimical payfors. It would have threatened the pay of 160 million people. That bill also would have drastically cut unemployment insurance.

Cutting unemployment insurance is not reform. It is not reform. People have worked for it. These are people looking for work who can't find it. We have worked so hard—so hard—to defend and to preserve the lifeline of unemployment insurance as best we could; and essentially it does preserve it in major ways through the rest of this year. For seniors, we have made sure that health care and their physicians are available.

With respect to differing points of view, I strongly urge support for this conference committee report. It is said it isn't perfect, and it is often said no bill is perfect; but we have worked to preserve the basic ingredients to promote economic growth and to preserve the unemployment insurance so critical for the unemployed of this country.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This conference report extends the payroll tax cut to 160 million working Americans. It prevents a cut in physician payments through the end of the year so that seniors can get the medical treatment and care that they need under Medicare.

This represents about $800 for working families in America over the next 10 months. Most importantly, this agreement includes no job-killing tax hikes to pay for more government spending. The deficit spending on unemployment stops with this legislation. This agreement firmly establishes that extensions of unemployment benefits must be paid for.

This legislation also includes some of the most significant reforms to unemployment since the 1930s—job-search requirements, drug screening and testing, reemployment programs. These are all critical for work readiness and for reemployment, and these are essential reforms to the unemployment system. We also reauthorize Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with this legislation; but while doing so, we make reforms to that program, as well, by closing the loophole that allowed welfare funds to be accessed at ATMs and in strip clubs, liquor stores, and casinos.

The government spending in this bill is fully offset. Reductions to ObamaCare pay for more than half of the health spending in this legislation. This also restores to the Congress a process dating back to our Founding Fathers. They knew that, at times, government would be divided and that we wouldn't always agree. This agreement was debated in public while using that time-honored process.

With that, I urge all Members to support this bipartisan House-Senate conference agreement, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, what are we doing?

The bill before us today, which would extend the expiring payroll holiday for 10 more months, exemplifies all that is wrong with Washington. No wonder the American peoples' faith in Congress is at an all-time low.

First, the agreement steals $93 billion from the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for a 10-

month extension of a temporary program that was supposed to expire two months ago.

Second, there is no offset for this new spending. It adds $93 billion to the deficit this year—money we will have to borrow from countries like China, which is spying on us, taking our jobs and has terrible record on human rights.

Third, this bill only asks for sacrifice from a small number of Americans—federal employees and postal workers—to pay for the unemployment insurance extension and the Medicare ''doc fix.''

Fourth, this ''holiday'' has proven to have little impact on economic growth and job creation, while significantly growing our deficit.

Finally, the House Appropriations Committee led efforts to cut $95 billion in spending in the 2011 and 2012 fiscal year appropriations bills. This bill undoes all of the discretionary spending cuts achieved by the House in one fell swoop.

As chairman of the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations subcommittee, I have cut $11 billion from the budgets of the Commerce and Justice departments since Republicans reclaimed the majority. These were difficult cuts, but necessary to start reining in our unsustainable deficit and debt. And they will be completely undone after today's vote.

Have we already forgotten the debates over the deficit last year?

A year ago, we hoped to consider $4 trillion in debt reduction under the Bowles-Simpson Commission and the ''Gang of Six'' proposals. By the summer, we were voting on the Budget Control Act, which established a supercommittee charged with finding an additional $1.2 trillion in savings over 10 years.

Now, the White House and Congress are going in the other direction and choosing to spend away the $95 billion in deficit reduction actually achieved last year.

This is shameful.

The American people are right to be disappointed that the President and the Congress have walked away from every serious deficit reduction effort.

They should be appalled that both sides have joined together to spend more money and weaken Social Security.

This agreement is giving away the store. And for what? A payroll ''holiday'' that most Americans haven't even noticed, according to a recent nationwide poll.

Our country is going broke. The national debt is over $15 trillion and is projected to reach $17 trillion by the end of this year and $21 trillion in 2021. We have annual deficits of over $1 trillion. We have unfunded obligations and liabilities of $65 trillion. We are going the way of Greece.

Why are we voting to extend a policy that does nothing more than steal from the Social Security Trust Fund, which is already going broke?

Social Security is unique because it is paid for through a dedicated tax on workers who will receive future benefits. The money paid today funds benefits for existing retirees, and ensures future benefits. Because you pay now, a future worker will pay your benefits. That is why, until December 2010, this revenue stream was considered sacrosanct by both political parties.

Social Security is already on an unsustainable path. Today's medical breakthroughs simply were not envisioned when the system was created in 1935. For example, in 1950, the average American lived for 68 years and 16 workers supported one retiree. Today, the average life expectancy is 78 and three workers support one retiree. Three and a half million people received Social Security in 1950; 55 million receive it today.

Every day since January 1, 2011, over 10,000 baby-boomers turned 65. This trend will continue every day for the next 19 years. Do these numbers sound sustainable to anyone?

The Social Security Actuary has said that by 2036 the trust fund will be unable to pay full benefits. This means that everyone will receive an across-the-board cut of 22 percent, regardless of how much money they paid into the system.

Does it make sense that everyone, regardless of income, will get money from this ''stimulus?'' Does anyone think that Warren Buffet or Jimmy Buffet changed their buying habits as a result of this temporary suspension?

Or did General Electric's CEO, Jeffery Immelt, the head of President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness who recently shipped GE's medical imaging division from Wisconsin to China, really benefit from this ''holiday?''

We all know what needs to be done to address the deficit and debt and that is why I have supported every serious effort to resolve this crisis, including the Bowles-Simpson recommendations, the Ryan Budget, the ''Gang of Six,'' the ''Cut, Cap and Balance'' plan and the Budget Control Act.

I also was among the bipartisan group of 103 members of Congress who urged the supercommittee to ''go big'' and identify $4 trillion in savings. I continue to work with my colleagues to advance the Bowles-Simpson report. I voted for the Balanced Budget Amendment. Since 2006, when George Bush was in office, I have introduced my bipartisan legislation, the SAFE Commission, multiple times in hopes of dealing with this problem.

While none of these solutions were perfect, they all took the necessary steps to rebuild and protect our economy. In order to solve this problem, everything must be on the table for consideration: all entitlement spending; all domestic discretionary spending, including defense spending; and tax reform, particularly changes to make the tax code more simple and fair and to end the practice of tax earmarks and loopholes that cost hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Some of the pay-fors in today's bill could be better used to address our deficit, such as the profits from the spectrum auction. Another pay-for that was previously proposed, and signed into law last December, raised the rates that mortgage lenders can charge on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loans. This 10 basis point increase makes a home loan more expensive for thousands of individuals looking to buy a house, while doing nothing to further reform these two lending entities. But rather than putting these offsets to good use, we're spending them away for a 10–month extension of this ''holiday.''

But the bill before us now is even worse than what was previously considered because the biggest portion, the $93 billion cost of the payroll holiday, is not being offset. Once again, only a small segment of our society—federal employees and postal workers—are being used to pay for the other measures wrapped into this proposal.

While there are many federal employees in the Capital region, it is worth noting that more than 85 percent of the workforce is outside of Washington. Eighty five percent. More than 65 percent of all federal employees work in agencies that support our national defense capabilities as we continue to fight the War on Terror.

Has anyone fully considered the impact that this legislation will have on our ability to recruit qualified individuals to the CIA, the NSA, the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Counter Terrorism Center?

Or the impact it will have on the FBI, which has, since 9/11, disrupted scores of terrorist plots against our country?

Or the impact on our military, which is supported by federal employees every day on military bases across the Nation?

Or the impact on VA hospitals across the country, which are treating veterans from World War II to today?

Or the impact on the Border Patrol?

Or the impact on NASA, its astronauts, engineers and scientists?

Or the impact on NIH, and other federal researchers, scientists and doctors?

Federal employees are currently working under President Obama's two-year pay freeze as they do their part to address our deficit. But to ask them to spend the rest of their careers paying for a 10 month policy? That doesn't make sense.

Leadership from both parties has said that extending this payroll ''holiday'' is paramount. I see what has happened. We all know that the President has used the power of his bully pulpit to push for the policy. Just look at the headline of this morning's National Journal Daily: ''Payroll Deal Hands Victory to Obama.'' But he missed the opportunity to support his own Bowles-Simpson Commission to seriously deal with the deficit.

The fiscal tsunami that is coming demands that we make tough decisions. Should laws be passed just because they are perceived as popular? I regret that months have been spent on this flawed policy instead of tackling the difficult choices to address our nation's massive unfunded spending obligations.

There is never a convenient time to make hard decisions. The longer we put off fixing the problem, the worse the medicine will be and the greater the number of Americans who will be hurt. I understand that many feel they need help. But, as many have said, ''there's no such thing as a free lunch.''

America is living on borrowed dollars and borrowed time. We must stop leaving piles of debt to our children and grandchildren.

We can't afford this debt financed spending. I voted no on this policy in 2010. I voted no on this policy on December 13. I voted no on December 20. And I vote no today.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that today, I am witnessing a glimmer of hope that bi-partisanship based around enacting job creating legislation and helping the middle class is possible. This is something that has been sorely missed throughout the 112th Congress.

The actions we take today will put over $90 billion into the economy. In the Garden State, this means $100 million into the construction industry, over $285 million into manufacturing and the creation of almost 1,500 retail jobs. More importantly, this means families in Bergen, Passaic and Hudson counties will receive between $1,000 and almost $1,500 directly in their pockets over the course of the next year.

While people say this isn't a lot of real money, I will tell you, every dollar matters when people are in need and every dollar matters to help continue our economic recovery.

Over the last couple of months, we've seen signs that our recovery is accelerating, including 23 month of private sector job growth, 247,000 new jobs in January added, with the highest increase in manufacturing jobs since the late 1990s. This week, initial jobless claims dropped yesterday to their lowest level since March 2008, recent economic surveys showed strong gains in new orders, and the Dow Jones is at its highest level since May 2008.

However, despite this good news, now is not the time to take our foot off the gas. The President has proposed a whole list of job creating ideas contained within the American Jobs Act that will kick this recovery into high gear, including a $5 billion fund to hire and retain police and firefighters, and a bold plan to invest in American infrastructure, that stands in stark contrast to the politicized and broken bill we are debating in the House.

As we pass this legislation, we mustn't stand here and simply savor this hard fought victory for the middle class, we should use it as the foundation to further economic growth and create more jobs.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan legislation to extend the payroll tax cut through 2012, delay a massive Medicare physician pay cut until January 1, 2013, and extend unemployment benefits for long-term unemployed workers.

It's not often we get to laud bipartisan legislation these days. Nor did this bill start out that way. The bill the House Republicans passed late last year on this topic was highly partisan. While extending the payroll tax cut for a year and preventing a physician pay cut for two years, it achieved those goals by shifting costs to Medicare beneficiaries and undermining low-income financial assistance in the Affordable Care Act. It extended unemployment benefits, but the price for that extension was cutting off benefits for the long-term unemployed and mandating onerous new rules such as drug testing and GED requirements. It was standard Republican fare—give with one hand, but take away more with the other.

After an embarrassing debacle to end 2011, House Republicans backed down. Now, with today's legislation, they've backed down even more. That's good news for working families, Medicare beneficiaries, and unemployed workers. But don't be fooled that they're suddenly ready to govern. They are not.

They recognized the political risk of not enacting this legislation and then reluctantly came to the conclusion that they had to work with Democrats to get this done.

Once this bill passes, they'll go right back to the issues they really care about: lambasting President Obama for creating a solution that protects religious institutions while providing free contraceptives to American women; trying to require the building of the Keystone pipeline across our country—putting our environment at risk—in order for Canada to export oil to other countries; and pursuing the most partisan transportation authorization bill in history—one that actually defunds mass transit and eliminates vital safety programs. All the while, doing nothing to create jobs or strengthen our economy.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report to accompany H.R. 3630.

I am very pleased that we are extending the payroll tax cut through the end of the year, which is essential to support our continued economic recovery.

I am also pleased that we are providing unemployment benefits to ensure that the millions of Americans have access to the benefits they so urgently need, and that we are implementing the ''Doc Fix'' to ensure that seniors on Medicare can continue to see the physicians of their choice.

That said, there are a number of provisions in this agreement that deeply disappoint me.

For example, this agreement will reduce by 30 weeks the maximum number of weeks of unemployment insurance available to residents of states with average unemployment rates.

While the unemployment picture certainly improved in January with the creation of 243,000 jobs and a reduction in the unemployment rate to 8.3 percent, there are still 12.8 million people unemployed in this nation—and millions more who work part-time but want full-time work.

For millions of our fellow citizens, unemployment benefits are truly a lifeline.

I am also deeply disappointed that the conference report before us requires new Federal workers to contribute more to their pensions.

Our Federal employees are not a piggy bank. We should not reach into their pockets every time we need to pay for something.

Federal workers are the backbone of our government.

In return for their hard work and dedication, the majority has rewarded federal workers with an unprecedented assault on their compensation and benefits, including proposals to extend their current two-year pay freeze, to arbitrarily cut the number of federal employees, and now to slash their retirement benefits.

As a result of the current freeze in their pay, Federal workers have already contributed $60 billion toward the reduction of our Federal deficit.

They are now being asked to pay for unemployment insurance and the ''Doc Fix'' while we still refuse to ask millionaires and billionaires to contribute one additional penny.

It is time we stop the assault on our Federal workforce. We must implement policies that will ensure that our investments in our nation are a shared national priority.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, we have before us a less than ideal piece of legislation. All of us recognize it is vital the payroll tax cut be extended. This cut has put money in the pockets of 160 million Americans—17 million of them in the tri-state New York area. These consumers—indeed our entire economy—cannot afford for this measure to lapse.

At the same time, this bill does not go far enough in helping those who have been hurt by the recession. Millions of Americans are seeking employment but still cannot find it. Indeed, our economy would need to create 230,000 jobs each month—for two years—to regain all the jobs lost since December of 2007. This bill makes it more difficult for out-of-work Americans, by shortening the amount of time they may receive unemployment benefits to 73 weeks. At the same time we cut these benefits, our Republican colleagues insist on protecting those ''vulnerable millionaires'' who continue receiving tax cuts.

Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this bill—but reluctantly. We cannot afford for Unemployment Insurance or the payroll tax cut to expire. Still, it is my hope that in the future we can do more to protect working families who have suffered from this downturn.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of extending the payroll tax cuts for middle-class Americans, but with a few concerns regarding the source of its funding.

The recent compromise on H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, highlights the critical need to have sensible negotiations with the average American in mind at all times. I believe that it is a success that this Congress was able to extend the payroll tax cut, which will provide a typical middle-class family with an additional thousand dollars in their paychecks over the course of a year. For most low- and middle-class families, a thousand dollars can go a long way to buy food for their family, put gas in their car, and cover minor medical expenses.

The payroll tax cut extension also continues federal Unemployment Insurance programs through the end of 2012, providing job-seeking Americans additional time to find work in a persistently sluggish economy.

I understand that the final version of the payroll tax bill puts off a 27.4 percent reduction in pay to Medicare doctors by making a handful of health care cuts. The nearly $20 billion cost of the so-called ''doc fix'' is covered largely by a $6.9 billion cut to Medicare hospitals, as the federal government decreases how much they will pay hospitals and doctors when Medicare enrollees fail to pay their premiums and co-pays. It also slashes $5 billion from a fund earmarked for preventive medicine established in the 2010 health care law, cutting a third of the total money appropriated for the fund under the law.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama has already imposed a two-year pay freeze and proposed only a marginal pay raise for 2013, which together save about $88 billion over ten years. I am concerned that H.R. 3630 would force newly hired federal employees to pay 1.5 percent more, permanently, for retirement benefits. This would save $15 billion, for a total budget savings from federal employees of $103 billion over 10 years. No other group of Americans has been asked to sacrifice in this way. I worry that this action would undermine the federal government's ability to attract and retain the highest level of skilled talent it needs to deal with the challenges facing us. Singling out federal employees for disparate treatment threatens to do permanent harm to a federal civil service critical to meeting the increasingly complex and deeply important tasks of government.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011.

I have never believed in short-term tax policy because uncertainty is the enemy of prosperity. For that reason I have authored the Tax Relief Certainty Act which would make permanent the tax cuts established in 2001 and 2003, repeal the estate tax, and provide permanent relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax.

While I would have preferred this conference report was more than another piecemeal approach to tax relief, the question we

face today is whether this Congress is going to avoid a tax increase on working families. During these difficult economic times I believe that we should not allow a tax increase on working families, and therefore, I will support this bill.

I am pleased that this conference report includes important reforms in unemployment benefits. As I travel around Indiana, small business owners in one community after another have told me about the need to reduce dependency on unemployment insurance. I believe we can provide a safety net for those who have fallen on hard times while at the same time protecting the incentive to work.

This legislation takes an important first step toward reforming unemployment insurance by reducing the maximum number of weeks of eligibility for benefits based on a state's unemployment level and creating national job search requirements for everyone collecting state and federal unemployment insurance benefits. I am also pleased that this conference report contains language that will not interfere with Indiana's efforts to return the state's unemployment trust fund to solvency.

The deal before us today is nothing to write home about, but it does avoid a tax increase on working families during these difficult economic times and starts us down the road toward unemployment insurance reform—and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues for reaching an agreement on a longer term extension of the payroll tax cut. While this bill is not perfect, it does provide the average American middle-class family with an additional $1,000 over the year through the payroll tax cut extension, it continues Unemployment Insurance through the end of the year, and prevents cuts in Medicare physician payment rates. More than 160 million Americans will benefit from the payroll tax extension and millions of seniors using Medicare will be able to continue to see the doctor of their choice.

Despite the assistance this legislation will provide to millions across the country, I have reservations about a number of problematic provisions. The Republican Majority continues to put the burden of the recession on Federal public servants. By requiring an increase in retirement payments by new employees, this legislation further undermines the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain the best talent. The vital services provided by the more than 2 million civilian employees cannot be compromised. It is time this Congress recognized the service that Federal employees provide to our senior citizens and the disabled, to our military service members and veterans, and to our overall safety and health. In addition, the reduction in weeks of unemployment insurance benefits starting in May will put a hard burden on some of America's hardest hit families. Lastly, the cuts to reimbursements for hospitals who serve large numbers of un-and-under-insured patients will put the load of the cost directly on the hospitals providing care.

Despite these concerns, I support this bill today because the extensions help this country continue on a path of job creation and economic growth. We are well in to the second session of the 112th Congress and still my colleagues on the other side have failed to bring meaningful jobs legislation before the House for a vote. It is time the Republican Majority responded to calls from the American people to strengthen our workforce for middle class families.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I voted in favor of the conference agreement on the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 because I believe it is necessary for our nation's continued economic recovery, which still remains fragile. Economists of every stripe have endorsed the three major components of the bill which will provide some additional confidence for both consumers and business. However, I have serious concerns about parts of the compromise, chiefly the lack of a permanent repeal of the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and the funding sources for the ten-month SGR "patch."

Medicare cuts to community hospitals and skilled nursing facilities included in the compromise threaten the already thin financial margins these institutions are operating on. Also included in the compromise is the elimination of $5 billion from the Prevention and Public Health Fund created by the Affordable Care Act. These cuts will stifle progress on disease prevention which in the long-term is the best way to reduce health care spending. And, the fact that these programs will be cut to pay for a short term fix of a broken SGR formula that was passed into law nearly two decades ago and has proven to be totally infeasible, is particularly galling.

While the window of opportunity to repeal the SGR permanently in this package has passed for now, Congress still has an obligation to enact a permanent fix to this flawed policy when the ten-month fix expires. We know now that the longer a permanent fix is delayed, the more precarious our system of care for seniors and veterans will become. On a positive note, growing bipartisan, bicameral support for abolishing the SGR is building, paid for with savings from the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds. The Congressional Budget Office has confirmed these funds are available which provides a promising opportunity in the coming months to repeal the SGR finally once and for all.

Fixing this long standing problem must be a bipartisan priority for this Congress. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle towards a permanent solution to the SGR that gives our doctors, seniors and veterans the long term certainty they need—and deserve—in their care.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand with the President and working Americans today by supporting this measure, which will add an average of $1,000 to the paychecks of working North Carolinians this year, extend unemployment benefits for Americans who have lost jobs through no fault of their own, and ensure seniors on Medicare will be able to see their doctors. After a year in which Republicans in Congress took the country from one manufactured crisis to the next, this bipartisan agreement is a step in the right direction and at a time when so many families are still struggling to make ends meet, it may be our last chance to help revive the economy as we head into an election year.

Once again, however, House Republicans are asking us to rob Peter to pay Paul, and the positive economic impact of this measure will be undermined in part by their senseless and misguided insistence that federal employees, hospitals, clinical laboratories, and preventive health programs must bear the cost. Unemployment benefits are paid out during true economic emergencies and should not require offsets. And to the extent we should offset the cost of the other programs extended in this measure, we should do so by asking corporations and the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share—not by asking middle-class Americans and providers of health care who have already sacrificed in the name of deficit reduction to do even more.

I'm particularly troubled by the demonization of federal workers by Republicans in Congress, which has reached a crescendo of late. To be effective and respond to the needs of the American people, government needs to attract the best and brightest to public service. Federal employees have already been subjected to a pay freeze, and now we are asking them to open their wallets again to pay for unemployment benefits for workers who have lost their jobs.

I cannot in good conscience oppose a measure that puts money in the pockets of American workers, protects our fragile economic recovery, and maintains the safety net for unemployed workers and health care for seniors. But we simply must do better if we are to maintain the promise of expanding opportunity for working and middle class Americans.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concerns with a health provision in the Payroll Tax Compromise. Even though we have successfully protected Medicare beneficiaries from significantly increased premiums on Medicare patients with incomes below $40,000, and prevented attempts to undermine the Affordable Care Act's mission of expanding coverage to millions of Americans, the Payroll Tax compromise still contains provisions that will hurt middle-class and economically disadvantaged Americans. Specifically, I am concerned about the inclusion of cuts to Medicare laboratory services. Under this legislation, clinical lab payment rates will be cut by an additional 2 percent in 2013, on top of the cuts that were included in the health reform law. These new cuts also rebase the lab fee schedule, resulting in lower rates for clinical lab services for years to come.

In some independent clinical laboratories, especially those serving rural communities or nursing home populations, 80 percent or more of their patient-base consists of Medicare beneficiaries. The cuts being faced threaten their practice's existence and no additional cuts—big or small—can be absorbed without adversely impacting patient care. Medicare payment amounts for clinical laboratory services have already been reduced, in real terms, by about 40 percent over the past 20 years. While clinical laboratory testing is less than 2 percent of all Medicare spending, it has been subject to significant freezes in payments and cuts over the last decade.

Clinical laboratories are an important part of the health care system. Their tests inform up to 70 percent of a doctor's medical decision-making. As the first point of intervention, laboratory tests serve as the foundation for the diagnosis and clinical management of conditions like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, and infectious diseases. These clinical laboratories do more than just draw a person's blood. They are a major part of the medical process.

Independent clinical laboratories also are essential for those who must depend on the laboratory's mobility for testing. Medicare

beneficiaries in nursing homes rely upon the services provided by independent clinical laboratories that can deploy medical professionals to their place of residence. If these laboratories continue to have their Medicare payments cut, not only will jobs be lost, but patients will suffer.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to repeal these cuts.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I voted against the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 3630, but within this legislation, there are provisions that I do support. I support giving a payroll tax cut to 160 million Americans, extending unemployment insurance to those Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and to allow seniors access to their doctors under Medicare. But there is a damaging aspect of this bill that will affect the pensions of future federal employees.

This bill raises an additional $15 billion to extend unemployment insurance coverage by requiring federal employees to contribute a larger amount to their retirement accounts. Federal employees are currently in their second year of a pay freeze while my colleagues across the aisle only a few short weeks ago voted to freeze federal employees' pay for a third year. Republicans don't think twice about limiting federal workers' ability to support their families, but are more than willing to shut down the government when bankers are asked to pay their fair share of taxes on their bonuses.

How much can we continue to pick on federal workers? They are not fat-cats. They are postal workers, janitors, teachers, nurses, social workers, and police officers. When did they become the bad guys? How much can we continue to pile on them before their backs break? How much weight should the wealthiest Americans, who can afford it, carry?

I am also concerned that this compromise to extend unemployment insurance reduces benefits from 99 weeks to as little as 73 weeks through December. I hear daily from constituents who are approaching the end of their 99 weeks and are at a loss as to where to turn next. Although the economy may be starting to recover, what are we supposed to tell those people who have been looking for a job for months and months on end? What kind of compromise are they supposed to strike with unemployment?

Furthermore, this legislation will blow a $100 billion hole in the deficit by not paying for the measure. It is a precursor from the Republicans for the beginning of the end of Social Security.

Millions of Americans all across this nation are struggling and they need our help. The Republican majority would rather implement policies that unfairly favor the wealthy, while asking the least among us to make enormous sacrifices. I am sick and tired of Republican gamesmanship. I voted against this measure, because 'enough is enough.'

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, with reservations, to support H.R. 3630, the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation of 2011.

Benefits paid out by Social Security now exceed payroll taxes collected, and with no change the trust funds will run out by 2035. While this conference report would continue our policy of replacing uncollected payroll taxes with funds from general revenue, the $93 billion cost for ten months of this policy makes clear we cannot afford to continue it for the long term. Our focus on Social Security should be reforming it to ensure its viability for those who have paid in, not infusing it with hundreds of billions of additional dollars we don't have.

However, H.R. 3630 allows Americans to continue to keep more of their paychecks for the rest of the year in this delicate economy. This bill also contains important reforms to Medicare and unemployment insurance and ensures this new, current spending is paid for. We cannot indefinitely pay out 99 weeks of unemployment benefits, and this bill begins phasing out these extended benefits. While I would prefer we permanently reform Medicare, this conference report ensures seniors have access to care through the end of the year by addressing physician reimbursement rates and other payment issues while laying the groundwork for permanent payment reform. We also reform federal employee benefits and will expand access to wireless broadband through this bill. These are important accomplishments worthy of support.

Because of these achievements, I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 3630. I also ask we continue our work to permanently reform both the tax code and our entitlement programs to provide Americans the long-term certainty they need, rather than continuing our reliance on piecemeal legislation.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Conference Report on H.R. 3630 "Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011." The Conference Report extends the 2 percent payroll tax cut, the Medicare SGR "doc fix" and various Medicare and Medicaid extenders through the end of the year.

There are currently 160 million workers who will benefit from a payroll tax holiday and millions of unemployed workers in desperate need of an extension of unemployment insurance. In addition it would prevent 170,000 Americans from losing their health coverage. It is in consideration of the millions of Americans that will benefit from this legislation that I cast my vote today.

Although certain improvements have been made to this bill that have made it more palatable in the name of compromise, in comparison to the version offered by House Republicans, I still believe we could have done more.

Instead of a temporary fix to the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula (SGR), commonly known as the Doc Fix, we could have had a permanent solution which would have addressed the concerns of doctors across this country and the patients who utilize their services. We cannot continue to rely upon short-term patches that arise every few months. It is time to bring certainty to our system of payment. We must act now—the cost to repeal SGR today would be $300 billion. If we wait five years that cost will double to $600 billion. Without addressing the SGR head on and instead continuing to kick the can down the road, it is only making a flawed system more costly to resolve.

Under this Republican led House measures continue to be offered that are being paid for on the backs of federal workers. These workers are responsible for aiding in crafting the legislation that we put forward in this body. They are responsible for implementing and creating regulations that ensure that our system of governance runs smoothly, that our airways, roadways, ports, and food are safe.

These dedicated civilian employees are paid less than they would be in the private sector. Their reward for these dedicated federal servants is for the Republican led House to use their pay and their benefits as a piggy bank, instead of issuing a surcharge on the wealthiest among us, a simple 1 percent increase in taxes on those who earn over one million a year. Instead, we are targeting the federal worker.

Under Republican pressure the fate of 315 million Americans will be borne by the 2 million federal civilian workers who serve them. To be clear, federal employees will be the only people paying for this bill.

Again, under a Republican led House, Republicans have continued to use federal civilian employees as a piggy bank. Which in many ways is an attack on the fabric of the middle class.

In this Congress alone the federal workforce has already contributed $80 billion to deficit reduction. This was done by freezing their pay, preventing two cost of living increases, and other measures. Which is really code for what a federal employee is making today is less than what she was making two years ago (when you adjust for inflation).

Federal workers are highly skilled, highly trained, and highly educated. We must remember that none of the laws that we pass here today will make a difference without having people around who will implement them.

My Republican colleagues appear to believe that they can continue to target federal workers without repercussions. When we are no longer able to recruit and retain the best and the brightest, then we can look to the measure pushed by my Republican colleagues. Although I support many of the provisions in this bill; I must make clear I am concerned with how this bill is constructed.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT

I will repeat again that this conference report would require new hires into the federal government to have a significantly higher portion of their wages diverted to pay for their retirement.

Even though it is very uncommon in the private sector for employees to contribute any portion of their pay toward retirement, this conference report would require newly hired federal workers to contribute 3.1 percent of their wages to pay for their pensions, a 2.3 percent increase over current levels that will cost even the lowest paid federal workers hundreds of dollars per year in take home pay. This amounts to a targeted tax on middle class federal workers like VA nurses, border patrol agents, food inspectors, and wild land firefighters. Targeting these middle class workers again as a "pay-for" when the wealthiest Americans have not been asked to contribute anything is unconscionable. Federal workers have already been asked to make significant sacrifices.

As I said before, I will say again being dedicated to this country they accepted a two-year pay freeze (for 2011 and 2012) which has been a great burden to federal employees and their families who are struggling just like everyone else in this tough economy. This sacrifice alone saved American taxpayers $60 billion.

Treating newly hired federal workers differently than current federal employees is a

very disturbing precedent. Federal agencies are only able to recruit the talent they need because, though they do not pay as much, federal government jobs are still considered good jobs.

If we go down this path of taking away key benefits from future federal employees that will no longer be true. The days of federal agencies hoping to attract the best and brightest will be over.

Taking a giant symbolic step in the race to the bottom by undermining middle class federal employees' retirement security is unfair to workers and it is bad policy.

I have repeatedly pushed for a surcharge on individuals who earn over one million dollars a year to pay for this bill. I offered legislation to that effect and in each instance, I did not garner significant Republican support. This would have protected the middle class and protected civilian workers from having to continue to bare the full brunt of the economic down turn.

Republicans once more protected the interest of the wealthiest among us. Using the benefits of future federal workers as a piggy bank, is just another example of the assault on the middle class.

There is good news in this bill, the Conference Report reauthorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program through the end of the fiscal year. I have been an ardent supporter of a TANF and although I believe more could be done. I am pleased with the compromise that was able to be reached on this point today.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Finally Republicans have begun to realize they cannot continue to target the unemployed. There are more than four unemployed Americans for every job opening. Never on record in our nation's history have there been so many unemployed Americans out of work for so long. There is nothing normal about this recession. Republicans were clearly out of touch with the needs of American families. It is about time they recognized that the American people want Members of this body to work together.

I am committed to producing tangible results in suffering communities through legislation that creates jobs, fosters minority business opportunities, and builds a foundation for the future. I believe and have been an advocate for extending unemployment insurance.

Every American deserves the right to be gainfully employed or own a successful business and I know we are all committed to that right and will not rest until all Americans have access to economic opportunity.

According to a report released by the Department of Labor late this afternoon, 3.3 million Americans would lose unemployment benefits as a result of the original House GOP bill compared to a continuation of current law. In the State of Texas alone 227,381 people will lose their sole source of income by the end of January. Under this compromise unemployment insurance programs will be extended until the end of 2012, will be gradually reducing the number of weeks, and with some adjustments in requirements.

Again, I have been a supporter of Unemployment Insurance benefits and I am not fully satisfied with all elements of this provision. Although it retains the current maximum level of 99 weeks of total Unemployment Insurance benefits through May.

I am disappointed that it will reduce the maximum to 79 over the summer, and to 73 in September—depending on a state's unemployment rate. This is a significant compromise when considering the bill the Republicans put forth previously which would have cut federal UI benefits by more than half, with the total number of weeks of unemployment insurance down to 59 weeks for most states by the summer.

I recall when making my decision about this bill, the previous bill that was presented which was a shining example of how the Republicans failed to keep their pledge to the American People. A little over a year ago, Republican leadership released to the public their Pledge to America. In which they told the American people that they would "end the practice of packaging unpopular bills with 'must-pass' legislation to circumvent the will of the American people. [Further] Instead, [Republicans] will advance major legislation one issue at a time." This is what my colleagues stated less than one year ago. So as I consider the measure before me today, I have to consider how far the Republicans have decided to come on this issue. I have no desire to gamble with the much needed assistance that the American people today.

If there is a single federal program that is absolutely critical to people in communities all across this nation at this time, it would be unemployment compensation benefits. Unemployed Americans must have a means to subsist, while continuing to look for work that in many parts of the country is just not there. Families have to feed children.

Although according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statics the state of Texas continues to have the largest year-over-year job increase in the country with a total of 253,200 jobs. However, there are still thousands of Texans like thousands of other Americans in dire need of a job.

GED AND DRUG SCREENING REQUIREMENT REMOVED

In the previous Republican package which included drug testing on those who received UI or a requirement for GED/High school Diploma receive. I am glad that by working with Democrats the Republicans were able to remove these poisonous positions.

I am pleased this measure has a more common sense approach to the unemployed, as it drops the draconian provisions which required people to get a GED and allowed a blanket drug testing. Instead, the bill before us today permits states to drug screen and test anyone who (1) lost their job because of drug abuse, or (2) is seeking a job that regularly requires a drug test. Further it codifies current state practices requiring those receiving unemployment benefits at both the state and federal level to look for a job, which is important to ensuring that people know this benefit is given to them to help them while they search for permanent income.

Rather than requiring a GED or requiring people to join an already 160,000 persons waiting list for job training. The measure before us would allow the Department of Labor to approve waivers for up to 10 states for reemployment programs. Although this represents the beginning of the journey as a step in the right direction it is not the end.

I found the drug testing element to be one of the most disturbing parts of the Republican unemployment reforms. It was an insult to the unemployed. Further, the requirement to insist that to qualify for benefits that a person has or is in the process of attaining a GED or a high school diploma would have had a negative impact on minorities who have been hit the hardest during this economic downturn.

We need job training programs that are funded rather than penalties for those who for a multitude of reasons have not attained a high school diploma or GED.

Unemployed workers, many of whom rely on public transportation, need to be able to get to potential employers' places of work. Utility payments must be paid.

People use their unemployment benefits to pay for the basics. No one is getting rich from unemployment benefits, because the weekly benefit checks are solely providing for basic food, medicine, gasoline and other necessary things many individuals with no other means of income are not able to afford.

Personal and family savings have been exhausted and 401(Ks) have been tapped, leaving many individuals and families desperate for some type of assistance until the economy improves and additional jobs are created. The extension of unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed is an emergency. You do not play with people's lives when there is an emergency. We are in a crisis. Just ask someone who has been unemployed and looking for work, and they will tell you the same.

With a national unemployment rate of 9.1 percent, preventing and prolonging people from receiving unemployment benefits is a national tragedy. In the City of Houston, the unemployment rate stands at 8.6 percent as almost 250,000 individuals remain unemployed.

Indeed, I cannot tell you how difficult it has been to alleviate the concerns of my constituents who are unemployed that there will be no further extension of unemployment benefits. It is clear that it is more prudent to act immediately to give individuals and families looking for work a means to survive. This Conference Report is reflects changes that are much better for the American people, but it is also flawed measure.

Until the economy begins to create more jobs at a much faster pace, and the various stimulus programs continue to accelerate project activity in local communities, we cannot sit idly and ignore the unemployed, the uninsured, the elderly, and those with a low income and our middle class. I am committed to rebuilding the American dream. I firmly believe that we could have done more than what is before us today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 554, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the conference report.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adopting the conference report will be followed by a 5-minute vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 293, nays 132, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 72]

YEAS—293

Alexander
Altmire
Amodei
Andrews
Austria
Baca
Baldwin
Barletta
Barrow
Bartlett
Bass (CA)
Bass (NH)
Becerra
Benishek
Berg
Berkley
Berman
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boren
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Conyers
Costa
Courtney
Cravaack
Crawford
Crenshaw
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
DeGette
DeLauro
Denham
Dent
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Duffy
Ellmers
Emerson
Engel
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Green, Al
Green, Gene
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Herger
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hochul
Holden
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Honda
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Hultgren
Hunter
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Inslee
Israel
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Jackson Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
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Kaptur
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Kelly
Kildee
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kissell
Kline
Kucinich
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
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Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
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Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
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Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
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Michaud
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Miller, George
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Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Pelosi
Pence
Perlmutter
Peters
Pitts
Platts
Polis
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Richardson
Richmond
Rigell
Rivera
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (AR)
Rothman (NJ)
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Ruppersberger
Rush
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Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
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Scott (SC)
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Sherman
Shimkus
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Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Speier
Stark
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sutton
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Turner (NY)
Turner (OH)
Upton
Velázquez
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Webster
Westmoreland
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—132

Ackerman
Adams
Aderholt
Akin
Amash
Bachmann
Bachus
Barton (TX)
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Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brooks
Broun (GA)
Buerkle
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Capuano
Cardoza
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costello
Cummings
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DesJarlais
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Edwards
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Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Fudge
Gallegly
Gardner
Garrett
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
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Gutierrez
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Harris
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Johnson, E. B.
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Lynch
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Nugent
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Peterson
Petri
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Pompeo
Posey
Quayle
Reyes
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Ross (FL)
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Ryan (OH)
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Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thornberry
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walberg
Welch
West
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woodall
Woolsey

NOT VOTING—8

Bono Mack
Brown (FL)
Campbell
Gosar
Paul
Payne
Rangel
Shuler

□ 1140

Messrs. LABRADOR, GRAVES of Missouri, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Messrs. GOODLATTE, OLSON, and HALL changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. CROWLEY, ALTMIRE and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 72, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1380

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 1380.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

□ 1140

RELATING TO THE MATTER OF REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE WATERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the chair of the Committee on Ethics:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ETHICS,
February 17, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to House Rule XI, clause 3(b)(5) and Committee Rule 9(e), and with the unanimous approval of the Committee on Ethics (Committee), I am writing to request the appointment of six substitute Members, necessitated by voluntary recusals, to serve for any Committee proceeding related to the Matter of Representative Maxine Waters (the matter) currently before this Committee.

TIMING OF RECUSAL

Prior to the end of the 111th Congress, the bipartisan leadership of the Committee/each recognized the need to hire outside counsel to complete this matter. On July 20, 2011, the Committee announced that it voted unanimously to hire Attorney Billy Martin as outside counsel to review, advise and assist the Committee in completing the matter.

A key phase of Mr. Martin's assistance is to review allegations that this Committee violated due process rights or rules attaching to Representative Waters. In addition, Mr. Martin was asked to address whether recusal of any Members of the Committee should be considered and when would be the most appropriate time for his recommendations regarding recusal.

Mr. Martin has informed the Committee that he has reviewed tens of thousands of pages of documents, and has interviewed current and former Committee Members as well as current and former Committee staff. Each current and former Committee Member and current employee, who was requested for interview, fully cooperated with Mr. Martin.

However, Mr. Martin has advised that one necessary witness has refused to appear voluntarily and, when subpoenaed to testify, communicated to the Committee that the witness would refuse to answer questions on the basis of the witness's Fifth Amendment privilege.

The witness's refusal to answer questions prevents the completion of the due process review. While Mr. Martin had advised that the most appropriate time to present his recommendations regarding recusal would be upon the completion of his due process review, he has now counseled the Committee to advance that timing and consider the recusal recommendations prior to considering the witness's refusal to testify.

As the Committee must now determine its next steps in this matter, Mr. Martin has recommended that the leadership of the current Committee/and four Members who

served on the Committee in the 111th Congress consider recusal from further proceedings in this matter. After careful consideration, these six Committee Members have requested their voluntary recusal.

REASONS FOR RECUSAL

Mr. Speaker, the record should note that these recusal requests are not based on any indication of any wrongdoing/or inappropriate partisanship by the Members. In fact, Mr. Martin has advised the Committee that, to date:

1. He has not discovered any evidence to indicate actual bias or partiality by any current Member or staff of the Committee;
2. He has not discovered any evidence that should cause a mandatory recusal of any current Member or staff of the Committee; and
3. There is no conflict which would require the disqualification or recusal of any current Member or staff of the Committee.

Instead, these recusal requests come from Members of the Committee/Who voluntarily cooperated with Mr. Martin's review, voluntarily appeared for interviews with Mr. Martin, and voluntarily produced a voluminous number of documents in their possession. The Members requested recusal because:

1. They believe that, out of an abundance of caution and to avoid even an appearance of unfairness, their voluntary recusal will eliminate the possibility of questions being raised as to the partiality or bias of Committee Members considering this matter;
2. They want to assure the public, the House, and Representative Waters that this investigation is continuing in a fair and unbiased manner; and
3. They want to move this matter forward in a manner that supports the greatest public confidence in the ultimate conclusions of the Committee.

Both the Committee and Mr. Martin recognize that recusal is an extremely rare occurrence and should not be sought without careful consideration by the Members. While the Members believe that they each can render an impartial and unbiased decision in any proceeding related to this matter, the Committee takes this extraordinary measure—in this unique circumstance—to further the best interests of the House and to permit this matter to be brought to a conclusion.

VOLUNTARY RECUSAL OF SIX MEMBERS

Therefore, Members of the Committee who have requested recusal are: Representative Jo Bonner, Representative Linda T. Sanchez, Representative Michael T. McCaul, Representative K. Michael Conaway, Representative Charles W. Dent, and Representative Gregg Harper. The Committee has unanimously accepted and approved these requests.

Furthermore, outside counsel has discovered no evidence indicating bias or partiality on the part of former Members or requiring the exclusion of any former Members of the Committee from serving as substitute Members. However, out of an abundance of caution and for the same reasons as the current Members volunteering their recusal, Mr. Martin has recommended that no Member who served on the Committee in the 111th Congress should serve as a substitute Member in this matter. In addition, for the same reasons, no current Committee staff who had previously worked on the matter will be involved in further proceedings in the matter.

The Committee has taken these steps, pursuant to House Rule XI, clause 3(b)(5) and Committee Rule 9(e). Accordingly, I request that six substitute Members of the Committee be appointed. These substitute Members will serve the Committee only for the purpose of bringing the Matter of Representative Waters to a fair and just conclusion. The service of the substitute Members will end with the conclusion of the Matter of Representative Waters. I shall remain Chairman of the Committee, Representative Sanchez shall remain the Ranking Member, and all other recused Members will continue to serve on the Committee for all other purposes.

Sincerely,

JO BONNER,
Chairman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 3(b)(5) of rule XI, the Chair announces the Speaker's designation of the following Members to act in any proceeding of the Committee on Ethics relating to the Matter of Representative MAXINE WATERS:

Mr. GOODLATTE
Mr. LATOURETTE
Mr. SIMPSON
Mrs. CAPITO
Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas
Mr. SARBANES

DIRECTING THE CLERK TO PROVIDE AUDIO BACKUP FILE OF DEPOSITION OF WILLIAM R. CLEMENS

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a resolution (H. Res. 558) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to provide a copy of the on-the-record portions of the audio backup file of the deposition of William R. Clemens that was conducted by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on February 5, 2008, to the prosecuting attorneys in the case of *United States of America* v. *Clemens*, No. 1:10-cr-00223-RBW (D.D.C.), and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 558

Whereas on February 5, 2008, William R. Clemens voluntarily appeared in Washington, DC and was deposed by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives in connection with that Committee's investigation into the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing substances in professional sports, and in Major League Baseball in particular;

Whereas the written transcript of Mr. Clemens' deposition, prepared by the Official Reporters of the House, with an Errata Sheet prepared by Mr. Clemens' counsel included as an Appendix, is the official House record of that proceeding;

Whereas this deposition and Mr. Clemens' public appearance before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on February 13, 2008, raised significant questions about Mr. Clemens' truthfulness, as a result of which the then Chair and ranking minority member jointly requested, on or about February 27, 2008, that the Department of Justice investigate whether Mr. Clemens committed perjury or knowingly made false statements in the course of the deposition or his February 13, 2008 public appearance;

Whereas the Department of Justice did in fact investigate whether Mr. Clemens committed perjury or knowingly made false statements in the course of his February 5, 2008 deposition and/or his February 13, 2008 public appearance before the Committee;

Whereas as a result of the Department of Justice's investigation, Mr. Clemens subsequently was indicted by a grand jury on one count of obstruction of Congress in violation of sections 1505 and 1515(b) of title 18, United States Code, 3 counts of making false statements in violation of sections 1001(a)(2) and (c)(2) of title 18, United States Code, and 2 counts of perjury in violation of section 1621(1) of title 18, United States Code;

Whereas the Department of Justice has requested via letter that the House voluntarily provide to it a copy of the on-the-record portions of an audio backup file of Mr. Clemens' deposition;

Whereas by the privileges and rights of the House of Representatives, an audio backup file of Mr. Clemens' deposition may not be taken from the possession or control of the Clerk of the House of Representatives by mandate of process of the article III courts of the United States, and may not be provided pursuant to requests by the court or the parties to *United States of America v. Clemens* except at the direction of the House; and

Whereas it is the judgment of the House of Representatives that, in the particular circumstances of this case, providing a copy of the on-the-record portions of an audio backup file of Mr. Clemens' deposition to the prosecuting attorneys in the case of *United States v. Clemens* would promote the ends of justice in a manner consistent with the privileges and rights of the House: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives directs the Clerk of the House to provide for use at trial a copy of the on-the-record portions of the audio backup file of the deposition of William R. Clemens that was conducted by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on February 5, 2008, to the prosecuting attorneys in the case of *United States of America v. Clemens*, No. 1:10-cr-00223-RBW (D.D.C.).

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1150

ADJOURNMENT TO TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2012

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Tuesday, February 21, 2012; when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. on Friday, February 24, 2012; and, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, February 27, 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3086

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 3086.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1964

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name from H.R. 1964, the Conservation Easement Incentive Act of 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL THERAPEUTIC RECREATION WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, recreational therapy embraces a definition of health which includes not only the absence of illness, but extends to enhancement of physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and leisure development. This caring profession touches the lives of individuals all across the Nation.

I have personally witnessed how recreational therapy provides independence and dignity in the lives of those facing life-changing disease and disability.

These services are provided by professionals nationally certified by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification as Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists. Every day, countless individuals face rebuilding lives. These individuals benefit from the compassionate and cost-effective care of a Certified Therapeutic Recreational Specialist.

Recreational therapy ultimately aims to improve an individual's functioning and keep them as active, healthy, and independent as possible. In a time when we need access to cost-effective health care, I urge all my colleagues to support the recognition of recreational therapy services provided by a CTRS specifically in satisfying the inpatient rehab intensity of service requirement.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the caring professionals of the therapeutic recreational profession for the services they provide every day.

LOSS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, it's day 7 since the loss of religious freedom for Americans guaranteed under the First Amendment. We know that last Friday, when the final rule was issued by the Department of Health, it was identical to the rule issued last September, with no further accommodations for individuals of faith.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on day 6 of the loss of religious freedom for Americans guaranteed under the First Amendment, outside the White House a Catholic priest and Presbyterian minister were arrested for protesting that loss of religious freedom when they knelt to pray for the restoration of religious freedom. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is now illegal in the United States to kneel and pray in front of the White House for the restoration of religious freedom. These Americans had to pay a $100 fine for exercising their religious freedom in front of the White House.

Mr. Speaker, you know that if they were Occupy protesters, I guess they would just put a tent over them and they would be immune from anything happening to them. But they weren't Occupy protesters; they were there to kneel and pray for the restoration of religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we don't go past day 7 of that loss of freedom.

STANDING WITH WOMEN OF OHIO

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my sisters in the State of Ohio—women elected officials, small business owners, women activists across our State—to speak out against attacks on the ability of women to get full health coverage in this country.

Imagine, we can land an astronaut on the Moon, we can target and eliminate Osama bin Laden, but we can't seem to figure out as a society how to make sure that women have full health choices in the insurance programs of our country.

It seems that some people just want to keep women in the corner and not see the struggles that they have had in preventive health care, in full choice for the medications that they take in order that they be able to live full and productive lives.

You know, our grandmother had 16 children. Several of them died. She lived to the age of 93. In those days, there were almost no medications, and more women died in childbirth than soldiers were lost in World War I.

I think the world has moved beyond closed thinking on women's health. I stand with my sisters in Ohio.

SNEAKY HIDDEN TAXES ON FLYING PUBLIC

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, for years the Federal Government keeps sneaking taxes into airline tickets. The airlines cannot put on the ticket all those hidden taxes because the law won't let them do so. For example, when you buy a product, normally you know how much the product is and then you know how much the taxes are, but not so with airlines.

Here's a typical ticket, Mr. Speaker. It starts out with $200 that's going to the airline, but the Federal Government sneaks in at least 11 taxes, raising the price to $374.95. Almost another half of the ticket is Federal taxes. That doesn't even count four more taxes they add on to the airlines.

The airline, when they make the ticket, all you see is the $374.95 because the law won't let the airlines tell the truth about the taxation of our government. When more taxes are added, the ticket price continues to go up. Congressman GRAVES from Georgia has introduced legislation to stop this nonsense.

Let's have transparency. Let's see how much those taxes are on an airline ticket. It's time we stop the hide-and-seek with taxpayer taxes.

And that's just the way it is.

THE ACTUAL AIRLINE TICKET

Original Price of Ticket is $200.00
Plus Government Taxes:
Passenger Flight-Segment Tax = $3.80
International Departure Tax (IDT) = $16.70
International Arrival Tax (IAT) = $16.70
Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) (maximum) = $4.50
September 11th Fee = $2.50
APHIS Passenger Fee = $5.00
APHIS Aircraft Fee = $70.75
Customs and Border Protection = $5.50
Immigration and Customs Enforcement User Fee = $7.00
Passenger Ticket (Excise) Tax = 7.5% ($15.00)
Frequent-Flyer Tax (on sale of right to award miles) = 7.5% ($15.00)
Cargo Waybill Tax = 6.25% ($12.50)
Total: $174.95
Total Price of Ticket Is $374.95

STANDING WITH IBEW AND IN SUPPORT OF PAYROLL TAX LEGISLATION

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand with IBEW in my district, the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, when they have challenged a company that is in fact doing poor work in our city, so much so that the city electrical inspector had to shut them down.

When are we going to be for our workers and to help them?

I rise today to indicate my support for the payroll tax legislation that just passed. It was, in essence, after long months of negotiation and pleading for the 160 million people to get payroll tax relief and to get those who are unemployed seeking work to get their due in unemployment insurance. It does have the opportunity for 99 weeks for those in districts that are suffering from unemployment.

It doesn't take any money from Medicare, doesn't raise the benefits. And certainly, it doesn't require those onerous burdens of unemployment—GED and drug testing—except in certain circumstances.

But why in the heck did we have to burden our Federal employees by taking the skin off their back to pay for this bill?

Let's respect and know that our Federal employees serve us. Let's get a better policy to be able to help Americans provide for the unemployment, and yet not put the pain and burden on Federal employees.

I oppose that and will continue to oppose that. But I'm glad that there are those who will get payroll tax relief and unemployment relief.

CONGRATULATING DANIEL QUESADA

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

Mr. RIVERA. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you to congratulate an outstanding young leader in my community, Daniel Quesada.

In December 2001, when Daniel was only 13 months old, he was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, an inherited chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system of about 30,000 children and adults in the United States. Today, Daniel is a fifth grade student at Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic School and is an accomplished runner who continuously finishes in the top at district races. Daniel continues to amaze doctors every day with how well he runs and his ability to exercise with ease.

Starting March 24, at Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah, Daniel will participate in a series of 5K races across south Florida, raising awareness for his fight against cystic fibrosis. I'm sure the south Florida community will go out and participate in this event and show support for Daniel in his battle against this disease.

Anyone interested in getting information can log on to www.runningwithdanny.com.

□ 1200

THINGS MUST LOOK RIGHT TO BE RIGHT

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the rights of women. I do this, Mr. Speaker, because we live in a world where it's not enough for things to be right. They must also look right. And it doesn't look right for us to conduct a hearing dealing with the rights of women and not, N-O-T, and not have a woman on the panel. We would not dare conduct such a hearing discussing the rights of men and not, N-O-T, not have a man on the panel.

It is not enough for things to be right. They must also look right. Some may argue that was right. I will always argue that it was not, and that it did not look right.

We must make the adjustments so that women can make decisions about their rights.

THE IRANIAN REGIME

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, in stopping a nuclear-armed Iran, 2012 will be as critical a year as ever, and that's a fact. But we here in this Chamber speak as one. With a bipartisan, unambiguous voice, we can drive the conversation all around the world, and that does mean something because the United States must lead the world. It is an abdication of our responsibility and leadership if we leave the Iranian threat to anyone else.

This Iranian regime is already the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world. They bear responsibility for killing American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. They fuel Assad's slaughter in Syria. They were behind the recently foiled assassination plot right here on American soil in Washington, D.C. Now imagine what they would do under a nuclear umbrella of their own.

This is why we, this Congress, and this administration must anticipate what comes next. We must clearly establish that containment has no place at the table. Such a policy places us at the mercy of a madman, and it would unleash unparalleled consequences the likes of which the world has never seen. This is what's at stake.

THE FAILED TRANSPORTATION BILL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as Congress adjourns for the week for the Presidents Day Recess, I'm hopeful that Members will go back to their districts and talk to them about the failed transportation bill that has mercifully been pulled back from the floor.

My Republican colleagues decided, for the first time in history, to put forth a partisan transportation bill, never had a hearing, that would have gutted transit. It would have reversed 20 years of transportation reform. It would have even eliminated the wildly popular Safe Routes to School program.

I would hope that they go back and they talk to their contractors, their local government officials, parents, and the PTA to understand why those programs are important, why that bill is flawed, why America deserves a better, bipartisan, visionary transportation bill to rebuild and renew America and put our people back to work.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF SONNY WILLIAM HRABE

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, it's not difficult to believe that our Florida colleague, CONNIE MACK, could become a grandfather. But what is shocking is that our youthful and beautiful California colleague, MARY BONO MACK, has become a grandmother.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to announce to the House that yesterday, to MARY's daughter, Chianna, was born Sonny William Hrabe, who, in fact, is the grandson, also, of our late colleague, Sonny Bono. And what is interesting to note is that, while this 8-pound, 4-ounce baby boy was born on February 16, February 16 was the date of his grandfather's birthday, and February 16 was the date of Sonny Bono's father. So Sonny William Hrabe's great-grandfather and grandfather share the exact same date, February 16, the birthday that he has.

So congratulations go to the parents, Chianna and Mark, and, of course, to all of our colleagues and our friends and the Bono Mack family. And we look forward to having a chance to meet Sonny William sometime soon.

''GIT 'ER DONE''

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, let me speak to transportation and what we're doing in Congress on the Republican side. The other side of the aisle, the Democrat majority, had responsibility over transportation, and huge majorities for 4 years and control for 2 years of the White House, the Senate, the House of Representatives.

This week the President signed it into law, and we got it done. As the Cable Guy says, we're going to ''git 'er done.'' And we're getting her done.

But you wouldn't know that the FAA bill was signed into law by the President. He signed it in the dark. He failed to send me even a bouquet of flowers or candy on Valentine's Day when he did it. He didn't want the American people to know that we succeeded in getting legislation that is responsible for 10 percent of our economy done, and we got it done without tax increases, cutting $3,700 subsidies for airline tickets. We're going to do the same thing with the transportation bill because it will put people to work and it will lower energy costs.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's more, as Paul Harvey said, there's the rest of the story, and that's part of the story I came to tell you and the rest of the country and the Congress.

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, a lot of things going on in the Middle East, a

lot of things needing to be addressed at this point. I have grave concerns about the manner in which this administration is handling the things in the Middle East, maybe continuing with the policy on international affairs of this administration, which is, apparently, from what we see them doing, if you've been an ally to the United States, if you have been our friend, if you have fought with us, if you have had friends and family that fought with us and lost their lives, then this administration's message is we're going to throw you under the bus and we're going to negotiate and help your enemy and our enemy.

So it almost looks like the best thing to do for people in the United States that want help from the Federal Government: move to an island, declare war against the United States, and then this administration will send you all kinds of money and help, buy you an office in Qatar, all kinds of things we're willing to do if you're an enemy.

One of the latest things to be occurring, this week we're hearing reports from Egypt, after this administration, through an ally with whom agreements had been signed, negotiations continue to be ongoing with Mubarak in Egypt. The man certainly wasn't a Teddy bear by any stretch of the imagination, but he had had some success in keeping some semblance of peace with Israel.

And yet this administration was quick to tell Mubarak, as our ally, he had to get out. Kind of the way that President Carter failed to support another guy that was not a nice man, but the Shah in Iran. And the Carter administration also welcomed the return from exile of a man commonly called the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Carter administration welcomed him as a man of peace. As a result of that, Americans have lost lives and will continue to lose lives. There was nothing intentional in that fiasco by the Carter administration.

□ 1210

They meant well. They intended good for the country and the Middle East. They just simply didn't know what they were doing.

Right now we're seeing reports this week that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt—who certainly made clear from their actions they're not our friends. They are certainly not a friend of Israel. They've been making noise for some time that they did not intend to recognize Israel, they did not want to keep the peace treaty with Israel. In fact, there is an article from February 14, 2011, by Dean Reynolds from CBS Interactive that points out that Egypt's influential Muslim Brotherhood—this was supposedly before the Arab Spring even—never supported the Camp David Accords, and a leading secular politician, Ayman Nur, says they should be renegotiated.

The people that this administration has been so out front and welcoming, sending people over there—those that have been able to get out and come back that aren't being held by this obviously anti-American government that has taken shape—are indicating, at least those in the administration, gee, we've got to send a bunch of money to Egypt, we're going to try to buy them off and buy their allegiance. I've been saying for many years now every term since I've been here something that should be clear to all Americans: When it comes to all this money that we throw at people around the world that hate our guts, that want to see the United States brought down, places where they laughed when 3,000 Americans were killed on 9/11, we're sending them money. The thing I've been saying ever since I got to Congress is: You don't have to pay people to hate you. They will do it for free.

I've had a U.N. voting accountability bill that I've filed in each Congress. It got over 100 votes at one point, and hopefully that will continue to grow. The bill is very simple and it follows the adage that I have been saying for all these years: You don't have to pay people to hate you. They'll do it for free.

The bill is very simple. Any nation that votes against the United States' position in the U.N. more than 50 percent of the time would get no money, no assistance of any kind from the United States. These countries are autonomous, they're independent, and they're free to make whatever decisions they wish, but if they are going to be anti-American and be against all of the human rights positions that we hold dear, whether it is for religion or gender—as we see women's rights being abused so badly around the world in countries we're pouring in money, as we see in areas in the world where we have poured in hundreds of billions of dollars, and yet they are doing all they can to eliminate churches—some have been successful—to persecute Christians and Jews, yet we continue to pour in money.

Since we've seen the position of this administration being anti-religious here in recent days, it's starting to come together and make more sense that this administration is simply being consistent. We admire consistency; but when they want to send money to countries that persecute Christians and persecute those who want to worship freely, I guess that is consistent with what has been done in the President's ObamaCare bill and the latest pronouncement that Catholics just needed to set aside their religious beliefs because they were inconsistent with what the President wanted done.

We've got an article here from February 18, 2011. This headline from Reuters says: Peace Treaty with Israel is Up to the Egyptian People.

This was a year ago:

Spokesman for Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood responds to U.S. National Intelligence director, who said he assumed Brotherhood was not in favor of maintaining peace treaty with Israel.

Well, that's a nice thing for this administration to plant in the head of the Egyptians, the Muslim Brotherhood taking control in Egypt, that, gee, we kind of just assumed you wouldn't want to support the treaty with Israel.

Well, that allowed the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to say, you know what, gee, we thought you were going to be upset with us if we didn't support the treaty with Israel, but thanks for letting us know that your assumption would be that when you helped us take over that we wouldn't support Israel being there.

Great move. That was the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper. He said this regarding the Muslim Brotherhood:

> I would assess that they are not in favor of the treaty.

What kind of diplomatic fiasco is that?

We go to September 12, 2011. This September 12, 2011 article one day past the 10-year anniversary of 9/11, and the headline reads, Muslim Brotherhood: Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty Needs to be Reviewed.

The subtitle: Muslim Brotherhood tells regional Asharq al-Awsat daily peace treaty is of great importance; says Israel generally does not honor the agreement.

Then they quote Mahmoud Hussein, the group's secretary general, as saying:

> And like the other agreements, it needs to be reviewed, and this is in the hands of the parliament.

There are others in which some in a position of power in Egypt have called for the complete elimination of any agreement with Israel. There are those who have said, let's put it up to a national vote, and since the Muslim Brotherhood is all about Israel no longer existing and since the Muslim Brotherhood has taken a slim majority in the government there in Egypt, then it would seem that it's likely their position would prevail.

In all of those years, the one crowning glory that the Carter administration can point to, the Camp David Accords, this administration has even thrown the Carter administration under the bus, just like they have some of our allies like the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, like those who were loyal to Americans in Iraq, like the Kurds in many ways in northern Iraq, like Israel, for example, in the manner in which we've treated them publicly.

It was May 2 years ago that this administration did what some thought was unthinkable, that this administration or any administration would never do, they voted with all of Israel's enemies in demanding Israel disclose their weaponry, particularly nuclear weapons, any that they have. We had never done that before.

For those that bother to look in the Old Testament or the Jewish Bible—the Old Testament to some of us—you can read the account of Hezekiah welcoming leaders from Babylon. Isaiah

was sent to Hezekiah and asked—he knew the answer, but he asked Hezekiah, what have you done? In essence, Hezekiah, King of Israel said: These wonderful leaders—of course this is a Texas paraphrase—these wonderful leaders came over from Babylon and I showed them all our treasure and I showed them all our defenses, our armaments.

□ 1220

In essence, Isaiah basically said, You fool. Because you've done this, you'll lose the country.

Now, it has been hard for some administrations that took the position in thinking, Gee, if you're just completely open, as Hezekiah was, about our defenses and what all we have, if you bring people on and let them review your nuclear submarines, if you let them see the abilities we have, if you bring them into our military bases and show them how we operate, and if you show them our tactics, that they'll just all of a sudden fall in love with us, and that it will make us stronger.

The lesson throughout history, including the one Hezekiah and his sons had to learn the hard way, is that you don't show your enemies all your defenses. You don't climb into political relationships with those who want to destroy you, with those who want to destroy your best friends. It's not a good message.

In an article from Fox News, it reads:

Al Qaeda on the rise in Syria has a ''marriage of convenience'' with Iran, U.S. intelligence director says.

I would think that was pretty obvious. I'm glad someone with our intelligence department has been able to figure that out. Hopefully, they'll be able to figure that out with regard to Lebanon. Hopefully, our intelligence department will be able to figure that out with regard to Iraq; that the leader in Iraq has shown hostility to this government and to the people in this government.

It's to the point that when five of us were over there, a bipartisan group, we had a couple of questions that Maliki did not particularly appreciate, one about, hey, there were people who were assuring us back in 2001, 2002, 2003 that if we came and got rid of this terrible dictator who hated the United States named Saddam Hussein, that because Iraq was so oil rich, that once we were able to turn the country back over to the Iraqi people after wresting it away from a totalitarian dictator who killed and abused and tortured Iraqi citizens, Iraq would be so grateful once the oil got to flowing that they would help ameliorate some of the vast amounts of treasure that Americans spent to allow them to elect their own leaders, to allow them to elect a leader like Maliki.

He was deeply offended, it appeared, as he was when I brought up Camp Ashraf and the maltreatment—in fact, the killing—of residents of Camp Ashraf, who were Iranian refugees. The concern was the United States had promised the residents of Camp Ashraf, the Iranian refugees in Iraq, that we would make sure they were protected. When Maliki's government took over from us, he, himself, promised Camp Ashraf residents that he and his government would make sure they were safe. Maliki promised the United States that he would keep them safe.

Yet, apparently, the pressure from Iran and the fear that Iran has instilled in the leadership in Iraq, particularly in Maliki, is so profound that since he knew President Obama had made clear we were pulling out completely and that we weren't going to be around to protect them, to help them, and that we were getting out completely and that we were not going to be around to make sure that our investment of American lives and treasure was not wasted—we were pulling out, leaving everything to him, going to leave everything to chance despite the investment—Maliki showed no gratitude. In fact, he showed hostility.

In fact, when our group of five bipartisan Members of Congress was flying out on one of the luxurious C–130s—I am prone to sarcasm. The C–130s are no better than they were when I was in the Army 30 years ago. You're sitting on web seating just like the paratroopers used back then—and still use—and the back end opens down. They're the same C–130s. We were flying out, and we got word by radio that Maliki's government had told us that our group of five Members of Congress was no longer welcome in his country. The man seems to have thrown in with Iran.

I know we have some brilliant intelligence officers. I've interacted with some of our intelligence community. I'm quite impressed with the intelligence of many of our intelligence officers, and I am hopeful that the intelligence at the lower levels of our intelligence agencies will eventually affect those in top positions in our intelligence agencies so they will begin to realize what others have known for a very long time.

In Afghanistan, I understand President Karzai is not terribly pleased with the position that some of us have taken, but some of us are not terribly pleased with the positions of the Karzai Government in throwing in—well, at least in accommodating—the Taliban, in accommodating those who are supplying the Taliban, and in the Taliban itself, as it continues to plot and kill Americans.

But, in fairness to President Karzai, when you look at his situation, President Obama has made clear that the United States is completely getting out of Afghanistan, and that we're going to leave them just as we did Iraq, just as the Democratic Congress demanded in 1974 from Vietnam. We were going to leave our allies, those who had fought with us and assisted us, who had lost family, friends, treasure to support our position because they were enemies of our enemy. This administration was going to leave them high and dry, and this administration has already shown in Iraq that that's what happens.

So, from President Karzai's position, he has got to be sitting there, going, They're about to leave. The Taliban has gotten stronger and stronger with Pakistan's supplying and assisting them. The United States Government will not be here to protect me. Gee, maybe I'd better start being nicer to the Taliban and the radical elements in the Pakistan Government because that's who's going to determine whether I stay in power or not.

I found out in a meeting with some Afghan officials from the Northern Alliance—and then I've done subsequent research since—that the Government of Afghanistan has about a $12.5 billion budget. They, themselves, collect enough revenue—taxes and whatnot—in Afghanistan that they're able to supply about $1.5 billion of their $12.5 billion budget. The rest comes from other countries, and most of that is from the United States.

It was interesting traveling around Afghanistan before New Year's and after New Year's and going to forward operating bases, talking to some of our troops. We've got some terrific folks on the ground over there, but there is a problem. Those of us who majored in history know and those of us who have bothered to read any history have learned that that is a tough area in which to be an occupier as a foreign country. Foreign countries occupying or trying to occupy in Afghanistan don't do very well. It's not a place we ought to be occupying.

□ 1230

So I hear some, like some in this administration, it sounds like they're throwing up their hands saying, Well, let's just get out and let happen whatever is going to happen, because they know occupying forces don't do well. They're right about that. But by simply withdrawing without using some intelligence and some lessons learned from history means that we may have to fight the Taliban again. And it may, again, be after a massive loss of American lives. And perhaps the next time it will be when they're armed with nuclear weapons where they can kill hundreds of thousands instead of thousands.

Of course, if you read the communications that were intercepted about 9/11, they were hopeful there for a while that there would be maybe 50,000 people in the Twin Towers that were going to be killed, they hoped were killed when the planes crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City. They didn't care about innocent American lives or all those foreign visiting folks that were in the Twin Towers. They could care less. They wanted to make a point, and make a point by killing tens of thousands.

Well, with the inappropriate strategy of this government, of this administration, the Obama administration, we

could end up having this Nation pay a far greater price than has even been paid to date.

Unfortunately, there are consequences for bad decisions. It is important that we select proper leadership in this country. Anybody that reads through the book of Hosea will find a verse—and I had never had it jump out as it did until a few weeks ago. And there are different translations, but I like the translation in which the communication from God to Hosea was:

> He was angry with the people of Israel because He said they had chosen leaders who were not God's choice.

There needs to be a lot more praying in this country as we select our leaders, as we select our national leaders for President, for his administration, for those who are elected to Congress, for those who are elected to the Senate, for those who are elected in State and local elections, and a lesson for us in Congress that we elect, within Congress, the proper leaders because, as the Founders believed, we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights.

One-third of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were not just Christians; they were ordained ministers. One of them has a translation of the Bible—one of the signers of the Declaration—which still can be found in print today. These people understood the lessons from history, and they did not want to make those mistakes.

Here we have, from February 13, an article by Patrick Goodenough entitled, ''Hamas Leader Promises Iran Never to Recognize Israel.''

Now, we've had some in this country, in this administration, who have indicated privately, you know, we don't really have to worry; Sunnis and Shias hate each other. They're never going to come together. So that can help keep one from getting too much power because there is that conflict. Well, because, in small part—but the small part is growing into a larger part due to some of the actions and inactions of this administration—Shias and Sunnis are coming together.

So here you have a Hamas Gaza leader, Ismail Haniyeh, delivering a speech at a rally in Tehran, Iran, last Saturday, marking the 33rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. He's speaking, and behind him are the portraits of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and his predecessor Ayatollah Khomeini. Here he is in the Gaza Strip as a leader of the terrorist organization Hamas, and he's speaking on behalf of Iranian leaders. We are bringing Shia and Sunni together, like people 10 years ago would never have believed possible, by the ineptitude of what's happening in this administration.

But, the article points out:

> Amid growing speculation of a split within the top ranks of Hamas, Iranian leaders at the weekend urged the terrorist group's Gaza leader to continue its campaign of violent resistance and pledged continuing financial support.

This from a terrorist group of leaders who are pledging to support the terrorist Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip. And the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei told the Gaza Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, people do not expect anything except endurance from Palestine's resistance.

It's time to wake up to what's going on with this administration and their help for groups that hate America, that hate Israel.

Here's an article from February 12, which says, ''Muslim Brotherhood Lawmakers: U.S. Aid to Cairo Assured.'' Well, isn't that special. He's gotten an assurance from this administration, as he told Al-Hayat, that if the U.S. cut aid to Egypt, it would be a violation of the 1979 peace accords. They've indicated they're not interested in keeping the 1979 peace accords.

Here's an article from February 13, ''Muslim Brotherhood Warns U.S. Aid Cut May Affect Egypt's Peace Treaty With Israel.'' But apparently they're getting assurances—hey, we're going to make sure you keep getting money from us. You hate our guts. You hate Israel. You want Israel gone. So, you know, hey, we're going to keep supporting you.

And, in fact, in another article from February 13 of this year, the headline reads, ''Obama Proposes $800 Million in Aid for 'Arab Spring.'" Well, we've seen what the Arab Spring has done. If you were a Christian while Mubarak was in power, there was some persecution, and it wasn't pretty. But now, all semblance of any efforts to allow Christians to worship freely in Egypt is gone. We saw a headline last year that the last public Christian church in Afghanistan had to be closed. We continue to pour in aid.

Here is a February 8, 2012, headline, ''Pentagon Counters Dim Assessment of Afghan War.'' Then there's another article, ''The Afghanistan Report the Pentagon Doesn't Want You to Read,'' by Michael Hastings. There's one by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, ''Truth, Lies, and Afghanistan: How Military Leaders Have Let Us Down.'' Here's one from February 10, 2012, ''Roads to Nowhere: Program to Win Over Afghans Fails.''

In talking to some of our troops in forward positions in Afghanistan, some were a bit down, particularly those who have been training Afghans to farm, because we are sending around $3 billion for nothing but projects in Afghanistan, including these types of farming projects, so the people can make their own way.

□ 1240

Yet we were told they were training the Afghans, they have been training the Afghans; but the billions of dollars the United States Government, the Obama administration has sent to Afghanistan to help them develop farming projects, at least in this one region, has never gotten past the corrupt regional government.

So the projects where they could use these farming skills that are being taught don't exist, and they are not anticipated to exist. We set up a corrupt government in Afghanistan. And I don't know how honest anybody in the Karzai regime was before they got there, but there should be a lesson that can be learned from King David, the only person mentioned in the Bible to have had a heart after God's own, that when there is no accountability, even the best among us can do terrible things.

So when you set up a government in Afghanistan and we, the United States, supported their constitution that said sharia law ruled, that meant there were not going to be any more Christian churches in Afghanistan, and now there're not. Not publicly. And Jews have had to flee from Afghanistan. The last report I read said there was one publicly acknowledged Jew in Afghanistan.

With all of the blood and treasure we shed to eliminate the Taliban, the Taliban has now come back, and now this administration has announced to the world and to the Taliban, Look, we will release all of the people we have in detention that have murdered American troops, we will let them come back. They can keep murdering when we let them go. We'll even buy you a wonderful office in Qatar if you'll just come talk to us.

That is the kind of proposal that everyone has heard, and that's what has allowed Taliban leaders, as one of them did in Afghanistan earlier this month, to announce to all of Afghanistan in their largest television station that, look, we're about to be in charge as soon as the American Government leaves.

So here's the deal. The American Government is—they basically acknowledge we've whipped them, they've lost. So they're doing everything they can to get us to negotiate. So here's the situation. If you have not been totally supportive of the Taliban here in Afghanistan, they say, then it's time to come to us, ask forgiveness, and ask for our providing safety for you. Because if you don't, when we take over, as soon as the U.S. pulls out, you know, you're in trouble. And the result could be the death penalty.

There is a way around totally abandoning the investment we had for a peaceful Afghanistan without a powerful Taliban. It's common sense. You see it throughout history. What you do is support friends who are enemies of your enemy. The Taliban is our enemy. We know that the Taliban can be defeated because they were when we had less than 1,500 American troops in Afghanistan, Special Ops guys, incredibly trained, and some of our best intelligence officers over there from our intelligence agencies, obviously not top intelligence officials because these guys were really competent. And they

whipped the Taliban, had them completely on the run. And then we kind of took our eye off the ball in Afghanistan and started looking at Iraq, and the Taliban has made a resurgence, and they have become powerful again in Afghanistan.

In meeting with leaders from the Northern Alliance—even though Secretary Clinton and former Secretary Albright did what they could to keep us from meeting because, apparently, when this administration throws our allies under a bus, this administration wants them to stay under the bus. Some of us believe if somebody has been our ally, has helped fight our enemy, then they need to remain our friends. These are Muslims. These are our friends, and their enemy is our enemy. And I'm told by some of the military, American military leaders, that the Northern Alliance has plenty of weapons; but they don't have all the weapons that they had when they defeated the Taliban before. We do not have to stay in Afghanistan. But if we do not want to have to come back and fight the Taliban again, the thing to do is rearm and reempower the enemy of our enemies.

Afghanistan has never been strong and never had a strong central government. What made us, in our arrogance, think we could force a strong centralized government that would work in that country? It is a very tribal nation. In the northern area, this administration wants to call our allies, our former allies warlords, war criminals, blood on their hands. They were fighting for us and with us. So in this administration's effort to manipulate the U.S. media, they leak all kinds of stories about how terrible our allies were. They're fighting terrible people. They're fighting people who were training others to come kill thousands and thousands of Americans. These are not nice people, and war is not a pleasant thing.

The Northern Alliance leaders had two asks: one, help us get a constitution amended so that we get to elect our regional leaders. Each province in Afghanistan should be able to elect their local governors. Each province should be able to elect the mayors of the towns within that province. Let them select their own police chief. Let them do as the United States came together to do, not so much in 1983 with Articles of Confederation, but in 1987 with our U.S. Constitution that allowed people to elect local government officials, State government officials, and national officials.

We have a constitution that has been set up in Afghanistan that basically lets the Karzai administration appoint the regional governors, the mayors. They select the police chiefs. That is a system fraught with corruption. No matter how honest anybody is going in, including President Karzai, how in the world could you stay honest and above corruption when you have set up a system that lends itself to corruption?

Well, that's what's happening. So it doesn't seem so much to ask, let the Northern Alliance, as every other area of Afghanistan, elect their local leaders, elect their governors, and then those regional areas become strong again.

And then just as States fuss when the Federal Government of the United States tries to get too powerful, as we've seen with ObamaCare, let's empower those regional provincial governments in Afghanistan to be powerful enough to call down their national leaders when they are corrupt. Let's empower them to fix their own problems, and you don't have to have massive numbers of American troops to do that, but you do have to be smart in the way you deal with a country that has lots of your enemies that want to kill you.

So they asked, let us elect our local, regional leaders. Give us enough equipment where we can defeat the Taliban again, for you and for us.

Now, in meeting and talking to people in Afghanistan, they knew, as did the Baluch leaders in southern Pakistan, that the Taliban is being supplied and equipped with armaments. IEDs that are dismembering and killing our soldiers in Afghanistan are being supplied through the southern area of Pakistan.

□ 1250

This is an area of Pakistan that hadn't been Pakistan until 1948 when international leaders arbitrarily took pencils and just drew boundary lines, and they included most of Balochistan in with Pakistan. The Balochistanis did not want to be there. They have a very mineral-rich area that is supplying Pakistan with most of their minerals. And yet the Pakistan Government is so badly mistreating the Baluch people. They raid, they torture, and they terrorize the Baluch people in southern Pakistan.

And if Pakistan is going to so terribly mistreat our Muslim friends in southern Pakistan, in the Balochistan area of Pakistan, then it's time to push for an independent Balochistan that will be a nation of Muslim friends of the United States, and we will remain their friends because their enemy is our enemy, and we won't have to sacrifice American troops, American lives, and massive amounts of American treasure like we have been doing. You simply empower the enemy of our enemy and let them do the work for us.

That is the solution. That would be in keeping with holding dear the American lives that have been lost in fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. That would be true to our beliefs and our desire only to fight those who want to destroy what we are and who we are. That would truly honor those who have given so much in honor of this country.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I have a friend, Mr. MO BROOKS, here. I yield back the balance of my time so Mr. BROOKS can be recognized.

PAYROLL TAX DECEPTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANSECO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) is recognized for the remainder of the hour, 15 minutes, as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the House today, H.R. 3630, the so-called ''payroll tax holiday,'' passed. Later it passed the United States Senate, meaning it passed the United States Congress. But on the House floor today, I joined 91 other Republican budget hawks, each of whom shares my concern for the financial stability of our Nation and a risk of a Federal Government insolvency and bankruptcy. Each of us budget hawks voted ''no.''

In December of 2011, Alabama Senators RICHARD SHELBY and JEFF SESSIONS and I voted ''no'' on the deceptively named payroll tax bill. I am pleased today that I was part of a united Republican delegation from the State of Alabama to vote ''no'' on H.R. 3630.

ROBERT ADERHOLT, Republican from Haleyville, voted ''no.'' SPENCER BACHUS, Republican from Birmingham, voted ''no.'' MIKE ROGERS, Republican from Anniston, voted ''no.'' MARTHA ROBY, Republican from Montgomery, voted ''no.'' And JO BONNER, Republican from Mobile, voted ''no.''

On the Senate side, Alabama Senator RICHARD SHELBY voted ''no,'' and Alabama Senator JEFF SESSIONS voted ''no.'' Each of these individual Congressmen and Senators voted ''no,'' again because they share a deep-rooted concern for the financial stability of our country and the impact this legislation can have on that.

In sum, I voted against H.R. 3630 for a variety of reasons, but I'm going to mention three. First, H.R. 3630 disproportionately targets and burdens American Federal workers, takes their hard-earned money and diverts it to those who don't work for it. That's not fair, and that's not good policy.

Second, America's seniors have asked me to protect Social Security and Medicare benefits because they paid for and earned them during their working lifetimes. Americans support Social Security because everyone contributes their fair share to their own Social Security retirement benefits. Social Security is not welfare. Social Security is an earned entitlement.

H.R. 3630 undermines Social Security's and Medicare's foundation by threatening 10 percent funding cuts totaling $120 billion per year, which will, if continued beyond this fiscal year, breach America's commitment to our elderly and will force significant Social Security and Medicare benefit cuts. We cannot expect the benefits while cutting the revenue that provides those benefits.

Third, and most importantly, the name ''Middle Class Tax Relief,'' which

is on the title of H.R. 3630, is deceptive and it is false. There is no tax cut. Rather, Mr. Speaker, I want the American people to understand that it is 100 percent a loan. Let me delve into that a little bit deeper. But as I do so, let me mention this: in the private sector, if a commercial institution had done what Congress did today, it would constitute flagrant violations of truth in advertising, truth in lending, and deceptive practice statutes. But as we all know, Washington is all too often immune from such constraints. H.R. 3630 is false advertising and deceptive because it is not a tax cut. H.R. 3630 is a loan that risks America's solvency and which the American people must pay back with interest.

In this regard, the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Committee on Taxation reports revealed two troubling aspects of H.R. 3630: first, according to the CBO's and JCT's estimates, enacting H.R. 3630 would change revenues and direct spending to produce increases in the deficit of $101.1 billion in fiscal year 2012—$101.1 billion in fiscal year 2012—and we are already 4 or 5 months through with this fiscal year. So that gives you an idea of what it's like for the remainder.

Further, H.R. 3630 would direct the Office of Management and Budget to exclude the budgetary effects of H.R. 3630 from its scorecard of balances under its Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010. So what is H.R. 3630 doing? Well, it's instructing the Office of Management and Budget to not count the deficit impact of this legislation on its full scorecard of balances.

In sum, the Congressional Budget Office report confirms that every penny of the so-called ''tax cut'' must be paid back with interest. Now, where I come from, if you're given money that you have to pay back with interest, that is called a loan; and that is exactly what the American people will have to do.

My parents taught me about debt. Debt never rests. Debt is working against you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year for however many years it takes you to pay it off in full. Too much debt enslaves you. Your creditors and your debt become your masters, and you become their servant.

This is what debt does to every American family, and it is doing that slowly but surely to America. As you all know, we blew through the $15 trillion mark in November of 2011, and sometime this year we are going to blow by the $16 trillion debt mark. That debt is not free. There is no free lunch.

According to the CBO report, H.R. 3630 racks up debt at the rate of over $12 billion per month in FY 2012. Now, if I had a printed copy of H.R. 3630—but the speed of this place sometimes does not empower you to have that—according to the CBO report, if we were to have printed H.R. 3630 on sheets of gold—which we probably should have done because it costs American taxpayers roughly $500 million per page in additional debt burden and payments—that's the cost of that bill per page.

□ 1300

Why would Washington do this to America? What is Washington's motive for this deception? Why don't we call things what they are? Why don't we call a payroll tax a payroll tax rather than a Social Security and Medicare funding tax, which is what it really is? The answer is simple: poll data, pandering to voters, and the 2012 elections.

Why does Washington use the phrase ''payroll tax'' rather than what so-called ''payroll taxes'' are—Social Security and Medicare funding taxes? Because polls show voters don't understand what the payroll tax is, but by golly they know what Social Security and Medicare funding taxes are. Yet, 100 percent of the so-called ''tax cuts'' in H.R. 3630 are cuts to Social Security and Medicare funding taxes. In other words, Washington politicians use the phrase ''payroll tax'' because they know using the more accurate phrase ''Social Security tax'' would cause American voters to rise up to protect our Social Security and Medicare system.

Worse yet, H.R. 3630 deceives America's working families into believing they are reaping a windfall when in fact they are being saddled with a burden, a burden that will hamstring our children, grandchildren, and America's future with another layer of heavy, taxing, onerous debt. What Washington won't tell the American people is that H.R. 3630 is another debt-busting bill that further empowers China and other American predators to become our master while enslaving America and the American people with generations of oppressive debt burden payments.

Mr. Speaker, America yearns for leadership, leadership that involves adult, mature conversations with American voters about the financial condition we are in and what H.R. 3630 is really about.

There are simply too many in Washington who pander to voters in an election year for political gain. H.R. 3630, Mr. Speaker, I would submit, represents the worst of Washington, not the best, and not what the people deserve.

I cannot speak for other Congressmen, but as for me, today I and 90 other Republican budget hawks stood strong for America's future. We voted to kill H.R. 3630, stop the deception, stop pandering to voters, and save America from another mountain of oppressive debt that threatens us with insolvency and bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Tate, one of his secretaries.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3630) ''An Act to provide incentives for the creation of jobs, and for other purposes.''.

PEAK OIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, when I looked at the television this morning and at that little crawler across the top of one of our stations, I noticed that oil was $103 a barrel—$103 a barrel and we're in a recession. What's happening here?

So I've got a chart here that goes back a few years—in fact, it ends in, what, 2008. There we have oil at something less than $100 a barrel. But if you extended this chart out just a little bit, you would see that it had jumped up to $147 a barrel, and that's of course aided by the housing bubble collapse. The economy came tumbling down and the price of oil dropped down to something under about here, $140 a barrel. Now it has crept back up slowly, slowly, as supply was not able to keep up with demand, until we now have oil at $103 a barrel and we're in a recession.

This is an interesting chart because it was maybe predicting something that we were sure was going to happen at some time or other, but we weren't sure when it was going to happen, and that's a phenomenon called peak oil. Peak oil is that highest production that you can achieve for a country—it occurs in a country, it occurs in a region, it occurs in the world. That peak for us occurred in 1970.

Today, in spite of all that we have done in the most creative, innovative society in the world, the United States, today we produce half the oil that we did in 1970, and we've drilled more oil wells in our country than all the rest of the world put together. Well, here we see that the two entities which do a really good job of tracking the production and consumption—which are the same; we don't have any big stores anywhere of oil, so the consumption is the same thing as the production of oil—and they looked like they had plateaued. They had been going up and up and up. Every time we needed more oil, we could produce more oil. But we ran out of our ability to do that. And as the production stagnated and the demand kept going up, wow, look what happened to the price. It really spiked in the price, and it went up to $147 a barrel.

We weren't sure then that this might not have been just a little ripple in the upswing of production of oil, but we

now know that it wasn't, that the caption up there is right, ''Peak Oil, Are We There Yet?'' Apparently so, as you will see subsequently.

This is an interesting chart and a very new one. This was produced by Deutsche Bank and their economist there. It is looking now not at the production of oil, but at the rate of increase. The little left-hand bar here I think is quite optimistic—I hope that that happens. I doubt that that will happen as we will see in a few moments. But they're looking at an increase in production of about 5 billion barrels a day. The world has been stuck now for 5 years at 84 million barrels of oil a day, and this looks at increasing that production by 5. This is capacity by the way, this is capacity at any price. This is how much more you could produce no matter what the price was. Obviously you could produce more oil if it's $200 a barrel because you could develop fields that you can't develop at $100 a barrel, and you'll produce more oil if people are willing to pay $7 a gallon for their gas rather than $3.80 a gallon for their gas.

So this is their optimistic projection of what capacity increase could be, and this is a reality of what demand will be. This is the increase in demand—not total demand, because we still are the biggest consumers of energy in the world. But our demand rate is not going up. As a matter of fact it's fallen off a bit. We used to import 21 million barrels a day, that's one-fourth of the world's oil. Now we're importing I think about 18.5 million barrels a day. That's nice that we became more efficient, because the Chinese, in their economic growth, needed more oil. And the fact that we're using less has made more available to them because they're increasing about 6 percent a year in their use of oil.

Well, what this shows is that there is a 20 percent deficit here. This is capacity at any price. If we went full bore—just producing oil everywhere we could produce it—their prognostication is that by 2015 we're going to have a 20 percent shortfall in supply, even if we maximize capacity by having very high prices for oil.

Now the next chart will show you why I think this is an optimistic assumption of what will happen. Let me show you this chart.

There are two charts here. The first one of these, the top one, appeared in 2008, the bottom one appeared in 2010. This is the International Energy Agency, it's the world energy outlook. This is a creature of the OECD in Europe. We have a kindred organization, the EIA, the Energy Information Administration, which is a part of our Department of Energy. And I don't have them with me, but they have very similar charts that are saying essentially the same thing.

The top chart they had on their Web site in 2008, let's take a look at that. It's really a very interesting chart. This bottom dark blue here—if the chart was very long and it went way over to the far wall over there back 100 years ago when we started using oil, it would have started at zero. And every time we needed more oil, we could pump more oil, and so it just kept rising and rising and rising.

□ 1310

And now here we are at a total liquid fuels of 84 million barrels a day. Not all of that is usable in your gas tank. The top one here is natural gas liquids that will increase. We found a lot more natural gas. The price has dropped now to about $3.

The green one here, which is small now and projected to grow, and that will grow, that's unconventional oil. That's oil that you get from things like the tar sands in Alberta, Canada.

But, as you notice here, they're predicting a fairly precipitous drop-off in production from the fields that we're now pumping. This is crude oil currently producing fields. Up until now, every time we've needed more oil from those fields, all we had to do was to suck a little harder in the wells and the oil came up. What they're predicting here is that that won't be true for the future, that the world is now going to experience the situation the United States has been in since 1970, that is, no matter what you do, production of oil will drop off from the fields that you're now pumping.

The dark red here is enhanced oil recovery. That really should be a part of the bottom one here because it's just squeezing a little bit more oil out of the fields you're presently pumping by putting live steam down there, or CO_2 down there or seawater. Saudi Arabia uses a lot of seawater to force their oil out. It's easily separated after you've gotten it to the surface.

Now, they're predicting that by 2030, on this chart, that we'll be producing 106 million barrels of oil a day, up from the 84 million barrels of oil that we are producing today. In order to do that, with the production dropping off from the fields that we are pumping now, we're going to have to get oil somewhere else, and there are two somewhere elses that they're talking about.

One of those is this light blue, and that's developing fields which we have now discovered which are too difficult and expensive to develop, even with oil at $100 a barrel, like a big find in the Gulf of Mexico that was under 7,000 feet of water and 30,000 feet of rock. But at some price—and I heard $111 a barrel, that sounds pretty precise—that at $111 a barrel, they could begin developing that field.

Then the red here, the bright red is fields yet to be discovered. These are fields we haven't discovered yet, but we will discover them, and they're projecting that we'll be able to develop those fields.

So we have these two big wedges in here that will keep the production of oil going up from the 84 million barrels a day now for liquid fuels to 106 million barrels a day in 2030.

Now, 2 years later, the same organization did another prognostication, and that's the one on the bottom here. This time they go out to 2035 instead of 2030. They go out 5 years further, and now they have reduced their expectations from 106 million barrels of oil a day to just 96 million barrels of oil a day. As they look at the prospects out there, they are persuaded that we're not going to be able to reach that 106 million barrels a day, so now they're prognosticating, 5 years later, only 96 million barrels a day.

The top two curves here are exactly the same thing. They've flipped them, and they've changed the colors. The top one here now is unconventional oil, and the second one is natural gas liquids. Notice here that, even taking the enhanced oil recovery and putting that little wedge down here with the production from the fields currently producing, they have a really precipitous fall-off. They're looking at those 2 years later and say, Look at them. Wow, they are really decreasing in production faster than we thought they were, so we're going to have even less oil than we thought we would have. So now they have two huge wedges.

If you look at this line, this heavy dark line here, that's the liquid fuels that can go in your gas tank, and that's barely moving up, isn't it? It's just about flat there, and they keep it flat by having these two wedges that are really, really large. By 2035, what, three-fourths of all the liquid fuels that we're producing are going to come from fields that we're producing nothing from now.

Now, I want to go back to the previous chart where they had this prognostication about the growth of 5 billion barrels a day by '15. This goes clear out to '35 and they're only up to 96. But we need to note that that was capacity no matter what the cost, and that may be true. That may be true that could you get there, but, you know, we'd not like to see oil at $200 a barrel, would we? Our economy would not respond very well to that.

By the way, if you go on their Web site, you may have difficulty finding the lower chart. Some have told me it's not there at all, and you won't find the upper chart. It's a little embarrassing to have these two charts side by side showing how much your predictions changed in just 2 years, from '08 to '10.

The next chart kind of puts this in perspective of the world, and this is a very interesting chart, and it's one—you know the old saying, a picture's worth a thousand words. Boy, this says it, doesn't it?

This is the world according to oil, and this is what the world would look like if the square miles of terrain on a country were equal to the amount of oil they had; what would the world look like?

You see here that Saudi Arabia is dominating the world. They have 22 percent of all the reserves in the world. We're not really sure that's what they

have; that's what they tell us they have. But, you know, they won't open their books. None of these OPEC countries—and you see they have the lion's share of all the oil reserves. None of them will open their books, and we don't really know for sure how much oil is there, but we do know that they're still pumping large amounts of oil. And that's what they say they have, and so that's what the chart here depicts.

I want to take just a moment to commend our military. They're taking some flak recently for what they're doing. I think that they're doing exactly the right thing for several different reasons.

They're moving as quickly as they can from fossil fuels, from oil to alternatives, and they're doing that for a couple of very good reasons. One is, if you can avoid transporting that oil, if you can use the—create the alternatives nearer to where you are using them, you will avoid a huge cost in both treasure and lives, because a significant number of the people killed in these wars are killed in the convoys that are bringing fuel.

I understand that the weight of the fuel that they bring is—about 70 percent of everything they haul to the warfront is fuel. It reminds a little—I understand that in the canal boats on the C&O Canal that about 70 percent of what they carried was food for the mules. And so it hasn't changed a lot, has it? We still—this energy source is about 70 percent of all the weight that we carry.

So I want to take just a moment to commend our military for doing exactly the right thing. They are really forward-looking. For the moment, you know, you may pay a little more for the alternatives, but, you know, since the liquid fuels from conventional sources just aren't going to be there in the future without something happening that almost nobody who's knowledgeable in this field thinks will happen, they're doing exactly the right thing, and I want to commend them for what they are doing.

They are recognizing that the world will inevitably—inevitably—transition from fossil fuels to renewables. The first person that articulated that—although it would seem that anybody would understand, since the Moon isn't made of green cheese and the Earth isn't made of oil, that the fossil fuels are finite and one day they will be gone.

But the first person that I know of who really recognized that, a prominent person, was Hyman Rickover, who made the statement, in the 8,000-year recorded history of man, the age of oil would be but a blip. He had no idea how long it would last, but he said how long it lasted was important in only one regard: The longer it lasted, the more time we would have to find an orderly transition to alternative sources of energy.

Our military is doing exactly that, and they are not totally understood by everybody. And I just wanted to commend them for their foresight and their tenacity in pursuing these programs.

Let's just spend a couple more moments with this chart because it is so meaningful.

Here we are, the United States. We're this yellow color because we use a lot of oil per capita, and we're that size because that's all the oil we have. We represent reserves of about 2 percent of the reserves in the world and we use 25 percent, maybe a whisker less than that now, of oil in the world, and we import about two-thirds of what we use.

Our number one importer, by the way, is Canada, and they have less oil than we, but they don't have very many people, so they can export. The number two importer was Mexico, but now they have fallen to number three and Saudi Arabia is now our number two importer.

A very interesting experience in Mexico, a fisherman by the name of Cantoral kept bringing his nets into the national oil company saying, Your spilled oil messed up my fishing net; you need to give me a new one. PIMEX is the national company, and so they would give him a new net. He kept bringing them in. They said, Gee, we didn't think we spilled that much oil. Where are you finding this oil? He said, Come, I will show you. And it was kind of bubbling up out of the ocean, and they drilled there, and for a number of years they had the second largest field in the world in terms of production, second only to Garwar, which is the granddaddy of all fields. It's been pumping now for half a century in Saudi Arabia, and I still think it pumps something like 5 million barrels a day, which is about what we pump from our country, and that's from a single field in Saudi Arabia.

The European Union, Europe, is a bit bigger than we are in terms of economy, and let's see if we can find them on the map. Well, there's Norway. It looks pretty big compared to some of the other countries, and here they are with essentially no oil production, totally dependent on liquid fuels from this part of the world.

□ 1320

But even more alarming is looking over there at India and China; 1.3 million people in China and a billion people in India, and look at the little bit of oil that they have. Here is India; here is China. While collectively they have about as much oil as—less than the United States because we have a big chunk of our oil coming from Alaska up here.

Recognizing this reality, the Chinese are now buying oil all over the world. Not only do they buy oil; they also buy goodwill. What do you need? A hospital? Roads? A soccer stadium? I asked the State Department, you know, we have only 2 percent of the oil in the world, and we are using 25 percent of the oil in the world. How come we aren't buying oil all over the world?

Well, you don't really need to own the oil. It really makes very little difference who owns the oil because the person who comes with the money—and its dollars now, and let's hope it stays dollars or we have a big problem—they go to the global oil auction and they buy oil at the going price. Today it was $103 a barrel.

So I asked the State Department why is China buying oil and we're not buying any oil. They said, We don't think China understands the marketplace. Well, at that time I think China was growing at 16 or 18 percent. There was some, I think, some presumptive indication that a country that's growing at 16 or 18 percent kind of understands the marketplace.

So why would China be buying oil?

Let me suggest something—I hope I'm wrong: China has 900 million people in rural areas that through the miracle of communications know the benefits of an industrialized society; and they're saying, Hey, guys, what about us, because they are not sharing in the benefits of an industrialized society. If China can't bring some modicum of the benefits that accrue to a citizen in an industrialized society, they see perhaps their empire unraveling, much as the Soviet empire unraveled, and so they are bending every effort to make sure that they have adequate resources for these 900 million people and the other 600 million people who are in urban areas.

At the same time that China is buying up oil all over the world, they're very aggressively building a blue water navy. A brown water navy is what they're concerned about as protecting their coastal area, and it serves them quite well, by the way; and it is cheaper and more quickly developed. But they're very aggressively building a blue water navy and access-denial technologies that will keep us away if they wish to.

I hope the time doesn't come when the Chinese say, Gee, I'm sorry but it's our oil. And it will be their oil, and they bought it, and we can't share it because right now it doesn't matter who has the oil. It's shared in the global oil auction.

Well, so this map indicates that the future is fraught with some possibilities of some pretty meaningful geopolitical tensions; and, again, I want to commend our military for their foresight recognizing this reality and the reality that oil is $103 a barrel. By the way, when oil goes up just a dollar a barrel, it makes a big dent in what they can do. They can provide less health care, they can have less people, have less R&D, buy less of platforms when oil goes up because energy is a huge part of the cost of the military. So, again, applaud the military for their foresight and what they're doing.

This is a chart that was predicted in 1956. Here we were in 1956 in the United States. At that time we were the king of oil. We were pumping more oil. We were using more oil. We were exporting

more oil than anybody else in the world. Texas had a bigger chunk in that oil, you see, than the rest of the United States here.

On the sixth day of March, 1956, an oil geologist by the name of M. King Hubbert, and I've got his actual curve here in the next chart in just the next moment, made a prediction in 1956—here we are. Get the picture. The United States, king of oil, biggest producer, biggest consumer, and biggest exporter. He is saying in 14 years, by about 1970, we're going to reach our maximum oil production, and no matter what we do after that, oil production is going to go down. How could he predict that?

What he had done was to notice the production and exhaustion of individual oil fields. By 1956 we had enough of those that he could see there was kind of a bell curve kind of up and then down as you were developing, exploiting, and pumping those fields out.

So he rationalized, gee, if I could add up all the little oil fields that we will have in our country, then I will get one big bell curve and I can predict when it's going to peak. He did that and said it's going to peak about 1970. Sure enough, right on target, it peaked in about 1970.

Now, we shortly found a huge amount of oil in Alaska. Oh, by the way, the top one here is natural gas, liquids again, and we were just learning how to use those, and so they were a meaningful part of our energy availability.

There was a little blip in the slide down the other side of Hubbert's peak with this enormous supply of oil from Alaska for awhile. I don't know what exactly it is today, but a fourth of all of the oil production in our country came from Alaska. Then the fabled discoveries in the Gulf of Mexico; and we see them down here, and they hardly made a ripple in the slide down the other side of what's called Hubbert's peak.

Now, here's a curve. This is kind of a chart that a statistician, I guess, would use. Here we are 1970, and Hubbert said we're going to be sliding down the other side, and Hubbert's peak is the little triangles with the yellow in them. The actual lower 48 production is the green, and the total production adding in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico is the red. Of course, he didn't include Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico. It was only the lower 48.

A statistician might argue that these two curves are different. I think the average citizen looking at it would say, gee, I think M. King Hubbert got it about right, didn't he.

The next chart is a very good prediction of where we are and the challenge, which is recognized by our military.

This is where we get our energy from today. And this is 2004. It hasn't changed a whole lot since 2004. But coal, this much. Natural gas—natural gas is going up a little more. That's getting bigger because it's now really cheap, and it's pushing some of coal out, and some people are afraid of nuclear, may squeeze a bit of that out. Here's petroleum, about 40 percent of all of our energy.

Here are renewables.

Now, as Hyman Rickover indicated, one day these two things, renewables and nuclear, are going to fill this whole circle. It is inevitable. It's not tomorrow, by the way, and we are not running out of oil. We have more oil to pump than all the oil that's been pumped in all the history of the world. What we're running out of is our ability to pump this oil as fast as we would like to use it.

Here is a gross breakdown of the renewables. Solar, wow. Look at how small it is there. Wind is growing now, and these two things might be a bit bigger now if we updated this chart. But the important thing here to note is hydroelectric; that's been there for a while. Biomass, and that's primarily burning waste and paper mills and things like that and much of that is not new technology.

Geothermal, that's true geothermal, tapping into the molten core of the Earth. That could be bigger. It should be bigger. Whenever we can do that, we really need to take advantage of that. That's essentially an inexhaustible source of energy.

But this shows us the challenge that we face. We really are up to this challenge, and a part of this, this is green. Now, people who are green-focused, they say we need to be doing more. This is for a couple of reasons. Some because of the carbon footprint, and others because they say, gee, the fossil fuels just aren't going to be there. No matter what your premise is, the solution is exactly the same thing.

So rather than criticizing each other's premise, I would hope we would lock arms and march forward to go to more renewables.

Here is our last chart, because our time is about up today. Five years ago, I led a codel to China. Nine of us went to China, and we spent about a week there, and we went there to talk about energy.

□ 1330

I was stunned—we all were stunned—because China began its discussion of energy by talking about post-oil. Wow. Of course, it would be a post-oil world. I mean, Rickover predicted it. Gee, everything is not oil out there. One day, it will come to an end. Yet this is not tomorrow. This is probably 100, 150 years from now. So this is a really long-term policy. Everybody we talked to—and it wasn't just the energy people—everybody we talked to talked about this post-oil strategy, and here are the five points:

One, conservation: the cheapest oil you will get is the oil you don't use.

Two, domestic sources of energy.

Three, diversify those sources as much as you can.

Number four will surprise you.

Four, be kind to the environment.

They know they aren't, but they have these 900 billion people who are requiring the benefits of an industrialized society, so they're choking on coal-fired power plants that they build one of each week. They're building, I understand, 100 nuclear power plants, and I'm sure they will retire the coal-fired plants when they get them.

I will close with the fifth point.

Five, they are pleading for international cooperation.

If you think about it for just a moment, we have a real problem here. If the United States really gets serious about conservation and efficiency and about saving energy—and we'd better—some will argue, wow, that will just empower the Chinese more because then they're going to use that energy that we make more available and cheaper, and they're going to compete with us economically, and that's not a good thing.

So from a selfish perspective, unless everybody does it, nobody is going to do it, which is why the Chinese are pleading for international cooperation, because they know that it's not going to have as happy an ending if we don't have international cooperation. Yet while they plead for international cooperation, they have plan B: What if it doesn't happen? We buy up oil in the world, and then we have a navy big enough to make sure that we have access to that oil in the world.

We are the most innovative, creative society in the history of the world, and I can see America once again an exporting country, and it should be green technology. Much of what we're now importing from China and from other places in the world we created here, and then it migrated over there for production. That's why every 15 hours we have another billion-dollar increase in the trade deficit. I want that thing reversed, and I think we can reverse that by recognizing that we have a huge challenge—following the lead of our military and going to renewables as efficiently and as quickly as we can.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112–77)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Joint Economic Committee and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

One of the fundamental tenets of the American economy has been that if you work hard, you can do well enough to raise a family, own a home, send your kids to college, and put a little money away for retirement. That's the promise of America.

The defining issue of our time is how to keep that promise alive. We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do very well while a growing number of Americans barely get by, or we can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules.

Long before the recession that began in December 2007, job growth was insufficient for our growing population. Manufacturing jobs were leaving our shores. Technology made businesses more efficient, but also made some jobs obsolete. The few at the top saw their incomes rise like never before, but most hardworking Americans struggled with costs that were growing, paychecks that were not, and personal debt that kept piling up.

In 2008, the house of cards collapsed. We learned that mortgages had been sold to people who could not afford them or did not understand them. Banks had made huge bets and doled out big bonuses with other people's money. Regulators had looked the other way, or did not have the authority to stop the bad behavior. It was wrong. It was irresponsible. And it plunged our economy into a crisis that put millions out of work, saddled us with more debt, and left innocent, hardworking Americans holding the bag.

In the year before I took office, we lost nearly 5 million private sector jobs. And we lost almost another 4 million before our policies were in full effect.

Those are the facts. But so are these: In the last 23 months, businesses have created 3.7 million jobs. Last year, they created the most jobs since 2005. American manufacturers are hiring again, creating jobs for the first time since the late 1990s. And we have put in place new rules to hold Wall Street accountable, so a crisis like this never happens again.

Some, however, still advocate going back to the same economic policies that stacked the deck against middle-class Americans for way too many years. And their philosophy is simple: We are better off when everybody is left to fend for themselves and play by their own rules.

That philosophy is wrong. The more Americans who succeed, the more America succeeds. These are not Democratic values or Republican values. They are American values. And we have to reclaim them.

This is a make-or-break moment for the middle class, and for all those who are working to get into the middle class. It is a moment when we go back to the ways of the past—to growing deficits, stagnant incomes and job growth, declining opportunity, and rising inequality—or we can make a break from the past. We can build an economy by restoring our greatest test strengths: American manufacturing, American energy, skills for American workers, and a renewal of American values—an economy built to last.

When it comes to the deficit, we have already agreed to more than $2 trillion in cuts and savings. But we need to do more, and that means choices. Right now, we are poised to spend nearly $1 trillion more on what was supposed to be a temporary tax break for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Right now, because of loopholes and shelters in the tax code, a quarter of all millionaires pay lower tax rates than millions of middle-class households. I believe that tax reform should follow the Buffett Rule. If you make more than $1 million a year, you should not pay less than 30 percent in taxes. In fact, if you are earning a million dollars a year, you should not get special tax subsidies or deductions. On the other hand, if you make under $250,000 a year, like 98 percent of American families do, your taxes should not go up.

Americans know that this generation's success is only possible because past generations felt a responsibility to each other, and to the future of their country. Now it is our turn. Now it falls to us to live up to that same sense of shared responsibility.

This year's Economic Report of the President, prepared by the Council of Economic Advisers, describes the emergency rescue measures taken to end the recession and support the ongoing recovery, and lays out a blueprint for an economy built to last. It explains how we are restoring our strengths as a Nation—our innovative economy, our strong manufacturing base, and our workers—by investing in the technologies of the future, in companies that create jobs here in America, and in education and training programs that will prepare our workers for the jobs of tomorrow. We must ensure that these investments benefit everyone and increase opportunity for all Americans or we risk threatening one of the features that defines us as a Nation—that America is a country in which anyone can do well, regardless of how they start out.

No one built this country on their own. This Nation is great because we built it together. If we remember that truth today, join together in common purpose, and maintain our common resolve, then I am as confident as ever that our economic future is hopeful and strong.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February, 2012.*

THE FACTS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC RECORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate you being here with me on a Friday afternoon and for you providing the time.

I tell you, I couldn't have asked for anything better than to have the President's economic message read right before I came down here to the floor, because I have exactly that same thing on my mind.

It is shocking to me—and you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that it was less than a month ago that the entire U.S. House of Representatives was sitting here in this Chamber, that the entire United States Senate was sitting here in this Chamber, the Supreme Court and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and that the President was standing right here, not 5 feet from where I'm standing today—not 5 feet in front of you, Mr. Speaker—giving his State of the Union speech. What struck me about that speech is that I could have given almost word for word the exact same one.

□ 1340

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the rhetoric in this country, the rhetoric's the same. Very little divides Republicans and Democrats. The President said in the economic address that the clerk just read, ''We need to make choices.'' We need to make choices about who we are and what we're going to do.

I happen to have behind me, Mr. Speaker, the President's budget. I left the plastic on this one. I have another one that I've poured through. And in fact, for folks who are back in their offices, Mr. Speaker, I would recommend instead of cutting through the plastic to go ahead and go to www.omb.gov. That's the President's Office of Management and Budget. The entire Federal budget that he has proposed is there on the Web site for all Americans to see.

It's not a small project to put together, the United States budget, and I applaud the President for taking that step. Of course the United States Senate, Mr. Speaker, 200 yards from where we stand right now, hasn't produced a budget in over 1,000 days. And in fact, the majority leader over there, HARRY REID, said just last week that he's not going to do it again this year. We have time, Mr. Speaker. We have a common set of numbers on which we could base it, and he said, I'm not going to do it. It's not necessary. A reporter said, But it's the law. He said, It's not important; I'm not going to do it. A reporter said, But your Democratic Budget Committee chairman said he's going to mark up a budget in the Budget Committee. And Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID said, Well, they can do what they want in the Budget Committee, but I'm not bringing a budget to the Senate floor.

Mr. Speaker, I have got in my breast pocket here the rule book by which this United States of America is supposed to run, the United States Constitution, this document by which all of our decisions are judged. One of the only things this document asks us to do here in the U.S. House of Representatives is to pass a budget each and

every year. The Budget Act of 1974 asked that same thing of the House and of the Senate. Propose that budget. And the President has done that. To his credit, he's proposed a budget.

But he said in his message that was read moments ago, ''We have to make choices.'' And what you will find, Mr. Speaker, if you go through this budget, as I know families are across this country—folks are curious about what the President is proposing—you will find a budget devoid of tough choices. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pages in my hand, Mr. Speaker, devoid of tough choices.

The President said in his economic address that you read moments ago, that the clerk read moments ago, Mr. Speaker, this is a make-or-break moment for the middle class. Nonsense. Nonsense. This is a make-or-break moment for America. This is a make-or-break moment for this experiment that we call our Republic. This is a make-or-break moment for all of the values that we share as an independent people.

This is not a make-or-break moment for the middle class; this is a make-or-break moment for every single person who calls America home. And if we are going to preserve our Republic, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to protect the opportunity society for which America has become known, we have to make tough choices.

Mr. Speaker, have you thought about it? Because it's plagued me since I was sworn in last January. I have only been here as a Member of Congress a little over a year. What about the old mantra, ''Send me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses longing to be free.'' What about that, Mr. Speaker? ''Your tired, your poor, your huddled masses longing to be free.'' Why aren't the doors of America flung open to every freedom-loving person on this planet? And I know the answer. Because in the days of America when that was the mantra of the land, this was an opportunity society. You came and you succeeded by the power of your ideas and the sweat of your brow. Some folks succeeded, and some folks failed. Failure is a part of all of our lives. If you are not experiencing failure, you are not trying hard enough. If you are pushing yourself to your extremes, you are going to find you will come up short sometimes. You are going to learn from that, and you are going to do better next time.

But, Mr. Speaker, while a safety net is important to America, a safety sponge that sucks you down into it and prevents you from ever escaping and being free is not the principle on which this country was founded. And day after day after day, we let our country go further in that direction.

Let's talk about the economic record that was just discussed in the President's economic address, Mr. Speaker. This is what the President said almost 2 years ago today. In February of 2010 he said this: Jobs will be our number one focus in 2010, and we're going to start where new jobs do, with small businesses. He's absolutely right. More than half of all the jobs that get created in this country get created by small businesses. That's where the entrepreneurship is. That's where the hiring excitement is. That's where the new ideas come from. We love our Home Depots. We love our Deltas. We love our UPS's and our Wal-Marts. But that's not where the job growth comes from. The President is absolutely right. Job growth comes from our small businesses. And 2 years ago almost today, Mr. Speaker, the President knew it. The President knew that if we were going to get this economy back on track, we have to start with the folks who hire. We have to start with the folks who are able to put Americans back to work, our small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this is a chart that actually came from the General Services Administration, one of the agencies that the President oversees. But it was published in The Wall Street Journal. It was titled ''Rising Regulation.'' Let me show you what we see here. You can't see it, Mr. Speaker, but this chart goes from 1995 to 2011. And what it shows is the number of published final rules that cost American businesses more than $100 million a year. That's what it takes in this country, Mr. Speaker. Before we consider a rule, a really powerful rule, before we consider a rule really detrimental to this country, it has to cost $100 million. I would tell you if it costs $1 million, it's important. I would tell you if it costs $10 million, it's important. But our measuring stick says $100 million.

This is what we see: on average, about 80 such rules a year. Now I'm a small government conservative from the great State of Georgia, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you, 80 major rules like that a year are sapping freedom from individuals, sapping freedom from communities, sapping freedom from States, and that's too many. But that's kind of what we have as an average over the past 15 years.

But look what happens, Mr. Speaker. The day that NANCY PELOSI gets sworn in as the Speaker of the House, the day President Obama gets sworn in as President of the United States, the number of major rules costing the American economy more than $100 million a year skyrockets, skyrockets. And by ''skyrockets,'' Mr. Speaker, I mean doubles from the level that President Clinton was imposing. Understand that. This isn't a Republican/Democrat issue. This is an individual philosophy issue. The individual that's in the White House matters. The individual that's in the Speaker's chair matters. Those individual philosophies translate into policies. We had a Republican Congress, a Democratic President, and we continued at about a historical average in terms of proposing new rules and regulations. But when we elected NANCY PELOSI to the Speaker's House, when we elected President Obama to the White House, we see the number of major regulations skyrocket. And who do you think pays for that, Mr. Speaker? We do, as the American consumer. Everybody in America pays for that when they go to buy goods at the shop. Or they may pay for that when their job leaves America and travels overseas. They may pay for that when the product they used to be able to buy is no longer manufactured because a new rule or regulation has put that product out of business.

My mom said that about 100 watt light bulbs the other day. She had been hoarding them. We are one of those hoarders, I confess. We need those 100 watt light bulbs. We went to the store and couldn't find them. They were put out of business by a regulatory burden. The President knows he needs to start with small businesses to create jobs. That's what he says. But what he does is preside over the most onerous regulatory burden increase that our Nation has seen in decades.

This chart is particularly troubling to me, Mr. Speaker. It's a measurement of the ease of starting a business. The United States used to be fourth. Today we're 13th. OECD countries, folks looking around the world, Where can entrepreneurs succeed? Where can new ideas succeed? Where can economies grow, be changed, be vibrant? The U.S. has fallen from 4 to 13. Let me tell you who's in front of us on the world stage now, Mr. Speaker: Macedonia, Georgia—the country, not my home State—Rwanda, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Armenia.

□ 1350

These are the countries, based on a static list of economic models of rules and regulations and opportunities for economic success, places where it's easier to succeed in today than in America. That's outrageous, Mr. Speaker. The President knows that if we are going to create jobs in this country, we have got to start where most jobs do, with small businesses. That's what he says. But what he does is preside over a decline of opportunity in this country that puts us now below Macedonia, Saudi Arabia, Rwanda, and Belarus on the world economic stage.

Mr. Speaker, from the Department of Labor we see entrepreneurship in America has reached a 17-year low. Entrepreneurship in America is at a 17-year low. Business startups are at the lowest level since data was first collected in 1994; business startups at the lowest level since the data began to be collected at the Department of Labor in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't a chart about business success. We all know that starting a business is hard. If you've been out there and you've tried to do it, you've probably had more failures than successes. It's hard to grow a business. This isn't about businesses succeeding. This is about Americans who are willing to try. The number of

Americans willing to try has fallen to a 17-year low. And I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is this a measurement that Americans have changed or is this a measurement that the business climate in America has changed?

We are the same proud, independent, hardworking, family-loving people that we have always been when these numbers were started in 1994. We are those same people as a country, Mr. Speaker. But the environment in which we live, the economic marketplace in which we operate, that's changed. That's changed, Mr. Speaker. Since 1994, you see the regulatory burden on small businesses. As we now move to a 17-year low in economic activity, Mr. Speaker, you see our regulatory burdens are at a historic high. That's not a coincidence. That's causative.

Mr. Speaker, faced with these challenges, the President has presented his budget. And I'll say it again. I said it when I opened, but I want to say it again. I appreciate the President taking on that leadership role. It's a role that the law requires that he take it on, and so he takes it on.

That would distinguish him from the United States Senate, where the law also requires that they take it on but they ignore that responsibility year after year after year after year. And the reason they do, Mr. Speaker—and I don't mind sharing this with folks. Folks know it. Folks back in their offices watching, they know why. Because a budget is a moral document. You can't publish hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pages without telling the American people how you feel about the challenges facing our Nation.

As I said in the beginning, this document tells me the President feels powerless to confront any of the problems facing our Nation because not a single tough decision is made in this entire budget. But at least he put that out there for the American people to see; not so with our colleagues on the Senate side.

This is what happened in the President's budget, Mr. Speaker. He claims $4 trillion worth of deficit reduction. And again, I want to give him credit for that. There used to be a time when folks would send budgets to Capitol Hill and brag about how much more money they are spending each year. When the President wants to sell this budget to Capitol Hill, he's bragging about how much less he's spending than previous budgets. He says he's reduced the Federal budget by $4 trillion over the 10-year window. Kudos. Kudos. Except that's not exactly how the numbers shake out.

Mr. Speaker, of the $4 trillion that he claims credit for, $2 trillion has already been passed into law. You'll remember this new freshman class that you and I are a part of, Mr. Speaker, we came in here and we passed the 2011 appropriations bills. We passed the 2012 appropriations bills. We passed the Budget Control Act. We implemented $2 trillion worth of changes to the Federal budget, $2 trillion over a 10-year window, moving us back towards black and away from red.

The President claims credit for those $2 trillion that are already signed into law, that are already being implemented, that are already the practice under which the Federal Government operates. He claims credit for those in this new budget. I understand why he wants to, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think that's being honest with the American people. I think we owe the American people more transparency than that.

So let me say to you, about $2.03 trillion of the $4 trillion he claims: already the law of the land.

Down here, Mr. Speaker, we see another $850 billion in savings that he claims. I am labeling this the war gimmick. And I know ''gimmick'' is a value-laden word. I might have been in a bad mood when I labeled it that way, but I think it's accurate. So $850 billion, Mr. Speaker, the President says he's saving the American people. Why? Because wars that were never going to happen, dollars that had never been requested, troops that had never been deployed are, in fact, not going to be deployed. Hear that. This is $850 billion over the 10-year window, war savings, he claims. Money that was never asked for, never appropriated, never going to be appropriated, and would have had to have been borrowed had we needed it. It's not saved money, Mr. Speaker. It's fictional money that was never out there, and the President claims credit for it. Why? Because he needs it to get to his $4 trillion figure.

Down here we have debt service gimmicks, Mr. Speaker; money that we would have borrowed but we're not going to borrow because of changes made in the budget. Again, just to be clear, so far we've looked at $2 trillion already enacted, $850 billion never requested. We're now claiming debt service savings, savings the President is saying the American people are not going to have to pay on debt service on all of these pots of money that we were never going to have to pay debt service to begin with, Mr. Speaker, because they were never the law of the land. These dollars were never going out the door. We saved these $2 trillion in enacted legislation. We never passed legislation to spend this $850 billion out the door, yet we have another $300 billion in debt savings.

Again, is it good news for the American people that we're not going to have to pay that extra $300 billion in interest? It's good news. Don't let me be the one to tell you it's not good news. It's just good news; it's just good news because of what this House has already done, because of laws we have already passed, because of decisions we have already made. Not one penny of that comes from any new decision made in these hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of pages, Mr. Speaker. Not one penny.

This chart, Mr. Speaker, lays it out. I had to blow up the tip there. You might be able to see just a little bit of green here.

This dotted white line, Mr. Speaker, is the debt of America. The debt, the borrowing that we have all done from our children and grandchildren. You and I were not here in this House when that happened, Mr. Speaker, but we are responsible for it, just like every other American family is responsible for it. We have to pay it back, just like every other American family has to pay it back. Sixteen trillion dollars today, headed over the 10-year budget window that the President has proposed towards $26 trillion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I have here is a dotted white line that shows what current law is, current law. I have a red bar, a red graph that shows you what the President is proposing. This is what you'll see.

The President is proposing that our debt increase in 2013, increase in 2014, increase in 2015 and '16 and '17 and '18 and '19 and '20 and '21. And then, Mr. Speaker, you're not going to be able to see it, but way out here—and I've blown it up just so folks can see it back in their offices—you'll see a little bit of green because those tough decisions, those tough decisions made in these hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of pages about how to solve the American debt burden happen—just this much, but happen—in the year 2021. 2021, Mr. Speaker, is when this budget, for the first time, begins to save the American people some bit of debt burden over current law.

□ 1400

We can do better, Mr. Speaker. The President said this is a make-or-break moment for the middle class. This is a make-or-break moment for America. We can do better, and we must.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about why it is this budget doesn't make any tough choices, you can see it here on this chart. This was actually a chart coming from the Wall Street Journal just a few days ago. It talks about where the money comes from that pays the American bills, the burden here, the moneys that we owe. It talks about where those dollars go. On this side where the dollars come from, you'll see, Mr. Speaker, about half of it comes from individual income taxes, and about a trillion dollars in annual receipts come from Social Security, Medicare, and retirement receipts. We see a little bit down here for corporate income tax, for excise income taxes, and from duties. This is where the money comes from. But look at where the money goes. And this is important, Mr. Speaker, because when we talk about making tough decisions, when we talk about confronting the mountain of debt that's building, when we talk about doing things that will make certain that the lives that our children will lead will be more prosperous than the lives that we have led, we have to go after those issues that matter.

These orange colors here, Mr. Speaker, is what we call discretionary spending. That's spending that we've taken a trillion dollars out of thus far going forward. It's defense spending in this pie piece, nondefense discretionary spending, and then that takes us to this giant red area, Mr. Speaker. This giant red area has three things in it. The big pie piece is Medicare and Medicaid. That's where the money goes. Money in this country that the Federal Government spends goes to pay health care costs—Medicare and Medicaid, $1.5 trillion this year. Social Security, folks have been paying into Social Security all their life, they dad gum have a right to get that money back. The bill we passed today begins to redefine that commitment for the first time, and I'm concerned about that, but $820 trillion going to Social Security.

And then $250 billion—$250 billion—Mr. Speaker, goes to pay interest on the debt. Now, just to put that in perspective, let's go back, Mr. Speaker. We've got defense spending, we've got Medicaid and Medicare spending, we've got Social Security spending, we've got interest on the debt, and in this pie piece, we have everything else—everything: Our courts, our highways, our environment, our homeland security, our immigration and our parks—everything else.

We spend half as much, Mr. Speaker, half of that amount that goes to everything else, we spend on interest payments alone. Half of the amount that this country spends on everything except Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, interest on the national debt, national defense—everything else we spend half that amount on interest payments alone this year, when interest rates are at their lowest level in a century. Mr. Speaker, what do you think is going to happen when interest rates are no longer at their lowest level in a century? This bar is going to eclipse everything. So what can we do?

I'll tell you what we can do. The money is in Medicare and Medicaid. The money is in Social Security. Mr. Speaker, I'm in my 40s, we must—we must—come to people in my age bracket and say, no more. You will not get what your parents got. You've got to say that to me. You will not receive what your parents received. You've got to say that to me.

Will there be a safety net? There will. Can we provide certainty to folks that it will be there? We can. But if you talk to anybody in their 40s, Mr. Speaker, they'll tell you that they expect those programs to be long bankrupt anyway. Why? Because they are. So these are the tough decisions that we have to make: What are we going to tell the next generation? How are we going to protect these benefits from the current generation?

And, Mr. Speaker, this budget does none of that. Not a word, not an idea, not a proposal. There is nothing in the President's 2013 budget that even hints at the direction he would propose that America go to confront these financial challenges.

Do you think we can dodge these challenges, Mr. Speaker? Do you think we can just put these things out of our head and pretend they don't exist?

This is what we're looking at, Mr. Speaker. I wish you could see this. What we have here is the debt in this country as a percentage of GDP, as a percentage of our total economy. We look at places like Greece where the debt has grown so large. This was the debt as the percentage of our economy in World War II—in World War II, Mr. Speaker, when things had gotten so tough and we were having to ration rubber, ration steel, ration sugar and ration salt, when the country had come together to fight a common foe around the globe, this was our debt as a percentage of our economy.

Here we are today, Mr. Speaker. We're not rationing rubber. We're not rationing sugar. We're not taking those common steps of sacrifice because we think our economy is about to go over the cliff. But it is. And this red line, Mr. Speaker; if we continue with this blue budget that the President has sent to us that makes no tough choices about our future, this red line is the debt that's coming. This is what the law of the land spends on behalf of your family, and mine, and every other American family, Mr. Speaker—and spends our Nation into oblivion.

The truth is it's never going to get as bad as this chart. The Congressional Budget Office which does the projections, their computer actually breaks down about halfway through that red line and says that there's just no way the economy can continue to function under these circumstances. America will no longer exist.

So the good news is, Mr. Speaker, it's not really going to get to the end of that line. But that's the challenge that confronts us, and that's the challenge that this budget avoids.

But that's not why you and I ran for Congress, Mr. Speaker. We ran for Congress to make a difference. To a man and a woman in this freshman class, Republicans and Democrats alike, Mr. Speaker, I have not met one that came here because they thought it was a nifty looking business card. I haven't met one that came here because they couldn't do anything else and they thought, why not I run for Congress? To a man and a woman, every Republican and Democrat I've met in this freshman class came to this body because they want to save America from certain demise—certain demise. It's not possible demise. It's not maybe kind of demise. It is certain demise.

And so what we did as a body, Mr. Speaker, when the Senate wouldn't act, when the President couldn't act, what we did as a body is pass the prosperity budget, which is this green line which changes the course of America.

Mr. Speaker, there are two ways to change the course of America. You can change the America that we have always had into something different. That's where current law is taking us. Or you can reclaim the America that we have always dreamed of, that our parents, our grandparents, and our great-grandparents passed down to us, sacrificed for. We can reclaim that America by making tough decisions.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make those tough decisions. And with the American people behind us, we will succeed. I thank you for the time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Tuesday, February 21, 2012, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5039. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc (RR) RB211-Trent 800 Series Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2011-0836; Directorate Identifier 2010-NE-38-AD; Amendment 39-16898; AD 2011-26-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5040. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc (RR) RB211-Trent 800 Series Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2011-0836; Directorate Identifier 2010-NE-38-AD; Amendment 39-16898; AD 2011-26-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5041. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada (Bell) Model 407 and 427 Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2011-1035; Directorate Identifier 2011-SW-038-AD; Amendment 39-16817; AD 2011-15-51] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5042. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; International Aero Engines Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2010-0494; Directorate Identifier 2010-NE-20-AD; Amendment 39-16884; AD 2011-25-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5043. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; BAE SYSTEMS (Operations) Limited Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2011-0911; Directorate Identifier 2010-NM-248-AD; Amendment 39-16883; AD 2011-25-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5044. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Lycoming Engines, Fuel Injected Reciprocating Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2007-0218; Directorate Identifier 92-ANE-56-AD; Amendment 39-16894; AD 2011-26-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5045. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc (RR) RB211-524 Series Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2009-0162; Directorate Identifier 2004-NE-19-AD; Amendment 39-16803; AD 2011-18-21] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5046. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2011-0649; Directorate Identifier 2011-NM-076-AD; Amendment 39-16882; AD 2011-25-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5047. A letter from the Senior Regulations Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Transportation for Individuals With Disabilities at Intercity, Commuter, and High Speed Passenger Railroad Station Platforms; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket: OST-2006-23985] (RIN: 2105-AD54) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5048. A letter from the Senior Regulations Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments: DOT Amendments on Regulations on Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations (RIN: 2105-AD60) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5049. A letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Parents Eligible for Burial (RIN: 2900-AO12) received January 31, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

5050. A letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medical Foster Homes (RIN: 2900-AN80) received January 31, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

5051. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Damages received on Account of Personal Physical Sickness [TD 9573] (RIN: 1545-BF81) received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5052. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Restitution Payments under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 [Notice 2012-12] received January 26, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5053. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Revenue Ruling: 2010 Prevailing State Assumed Interest Rates (Rev. Rul. 2012-6) received January 13, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5054. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting OMB's final sequestration report for fiscal year 2012, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 904; (H. Doc. No. 112—87); to the Committee on the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SMITH of Texas: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 1433. A bill to protect private property rights; with an amendment (Rept. 112–401). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. RIBBLE):

H.R. 4071. A bill to amend title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 to provide that the provisions relating to countervailing duties apply to nonmarket economy countries; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida (for himself and Mr. STUTZMAN):

H.R. 4072. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve employment services for veterans by consolidating various programs in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 4073. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to accept the quitclaim, disclaimer, and relinquishment of a railroad right of way within and adjacent to Pike National Forest in El Paso County, Colorado, originally granted to the Mt. Manitou Park and Incline Railway Company pursuant to the Act of March 3, 1875; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BROUN of Georgia (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. COBLE):

H.R. 4074. A bill to amend section 1951 of title 18, United States Code (commonly known as the Hobbs Act), and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TURNER of New York (for himself, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. PALAZZO):

H.R. 4075. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for qualified elementary and secondary education tuition; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts:

H.R. 4076. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to add a rule of construction relating to certain payments to an employee of a mortgage originator; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 4077. A bill to authorize the Secretary of State to pay a reward to combat transnational organized crime and for information concerning foreign nationals wanted by international criminal tribunals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. COBLE, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. MARINO, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. ROSS of Florida, Mrs. ADAMS, Mr. QUAYLE, Mr. AMODEI, and Mr. CARTER):

H.R. 4078. A bill to provide that no agency may take any significant regulatory action until the unemployment rate is equal to or less than 6.0 percent; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself, Ms. WATERS, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO):

H.R. 4079. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require recipients of grants and other assistance from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the provision of housing and other services for homeless veterans to comply with codes relevant to operations and level of care provided, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ACKERMAN:

H.R. 4080. A bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to acquire a statue of ''The Unknown Slave'' for permanent display in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself and Mr. WEST):

H.R. 4081. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to consolidate and revise provisions relating to contract bundling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. HIGGINS (for himself, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. BACA, and Mr. HINCHEY):

H.R. 4082. A bill to amend title VII of the Social Security Act to require the President to transmit the annual budget of the Social Security Administration without revisions to Congress, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. ENGEL):

H.R. 4083. A bill to amend title V of the Social Security Act to extend funding for family-to-family health information centers to help families of children with disabilities or special health care needs make informed choices about health care for their children; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TIERNEY (for himself, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. WELCH, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 4084. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish a national usury rate for consumer credit card accounts under open end consumer credit plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. OWENS, Ms. HOCHUL, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. OLVER):

H.R. 4085. A bill to amend the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 to extend and improve the milk income loss contract program; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. BASS of New Hampshire, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. CARTER, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. HARPER, Ms. FOXX, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. BENISHEK, and Mr. LANDRY):

H.J. Res. 104. A joint resolution disapproving a rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to Temporary Nonagricultural Employment of H-2B Aliens in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOSWELL (for himself, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. BOREN, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa):

H. Con. Res. 103. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the effective Federal tax rate paid by the President and Vice-President of the United States, and Members of the House of Representatives and Senate, should not be less than the effective Federal tax rate paid by middle class Americans; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. KING of Iowa):

H. Con. Res. 104. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the people of Baluchistan, currently divided between Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, have the right to self-determination and to their own sovereign country; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. PITTS (for himself, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SHULER, Mr. WOLF, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. CARTER):

H. Res. 556. A resolution condemning the Government of Iran for its continued persecution, imprisonment, and sentencing of Youcef Nadarkhani on the charge of apostasy; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H. Res. 557. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the current property tax deduction on private residences should not be further restricted; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DREIER:

H. Res. 558. A resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to provide a copy of the on-the-record portions of the audio backup file of the deposition of William R. Clemens that was conducted by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on February 5, 2008, to the prosecuting attorneys in the case of United States of America v. Clemens, No. 1:10-cr-00223-RBW (D.D.C.); considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H. Res. 559. A resolution calling for the release of United States citizens being held by the Government of Egypt; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. BURGESS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. YOUNG of Florida):

H. Res. 560. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GINGREY of Georgia:

H. Res. 561. A resolution recognizing the National Association of Journeymen Linemen and the profession of Journeymen Linemen and the contributions of these brave men and women to protect public safety and expressing support for designation of April 18, 2012, as National Journeymen Linemen Day; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. BALDWIN:

H.R. 4071.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4072.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 4073.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2, relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. BROUN of Georgia:

H.R. 4074.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution: ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. TURNER of New York:

H.R. 4075.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the United States:

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States

The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the forgoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts:

H.R. 4076.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 1, Clause 3, and Clause 18.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 4077.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas:

H.R. 4078.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution, and Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, including, but not limited to, Clauses 1, 3 and 18.

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 4079.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The bill is authorized by Congress' power to ''provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States'' pursuant to Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ACKERMAN:

H.R. 4080.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4081.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution, which provides Congress with the ability to enact legislation necessary and proper to effectuate its purposes in taxing and spending.

By Mr. HIGGINS:

H.R. 4082.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 4083.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TIERNEY:

H.R. 4084.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WELCH:

H.R. 4085.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power To . . . make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

H.J. Res. 104.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution, which says ''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . .''

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 104: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 210: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 324: Mr. BOREN.

H.R. 420: Mr. CRENSHAW and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H.R. 481: Ms. WOOLSEY and Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 494: Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 505: Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 591: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 592: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 605: Mr. TURNER of Ohio.

H.R. 708: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 718: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 894: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 930: Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 1004: Mrs. BLACK.

H.R. 1179: Mr. PETRI, Mr. QUAYLE, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. ROHRABACHER,

Mr. GERLACH, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. MCCARTHY of California.

H.R. 1404: Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 1418: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 1483: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1488: Ms. SPEIER and Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 1511: Mr. SCHOCK and Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 1589: Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 1639: Mr. WALSH of Illinois.

H.R. 1681: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 1781: Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 1860: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1955: Mrs. CAPPS and Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 2233: Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 2245: Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 2288: Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 2404: Mr. DINGELL.

H.R. 2505: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 2529: Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. WALSH of Illinois.

H.R. 2569: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 2595: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 2669: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2689: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. STARK, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 2697: Mr. HERGER and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 2888: Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 2902: Ms. BASS of California and Ms. RICHARDSON.

H.R. 2957: Mr. FILNER, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. MORAN, and Mrs. MALONEY.

H.R. 2969: Mr. ROSS of Arkansas and Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 2970: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 3046: Mr. RANGEL, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 3066: Mr. COBLE.

H.R. 3074: Mr. HULTGREN.

H.R. 3086: Mr. COLE, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr FILNER.

H.R. 3283: Ms. HAYWORTH.

H.R. 3337: Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. STARK, and Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 3365: Mr. LABRADOR, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 3506: Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 3510: Mr. ROSKAM and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 3513: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. FILNER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3533: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 3545: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H.R. 3551: Mr. LAMBORN and Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

H.R. 3596: Mr. SARBANES.

H.R. 3612: Mr. GUTIERREZ and Mr. MANZULLO.

H.R. 3627: Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. ROSS of Arkansas, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 3661: Mr. PETERS .

H.R. 3695: Ms. LEE OF CALIFORNIA and Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 3709: Mr. AMASH.

H.R. 3712: Mr. REYES, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 3713: Mr. BISHOP of Utah and Mr. MARINO.

H.R. 3770: Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 3798: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CLARKE of Michigan, and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 3814: Mr. BOUSTANY and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 3826: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 3881: Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 3894: Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. RUSH, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. DOLD, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 3994: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 4000: Mr. SCHILLING and Mr. CONAWAY.

H.R. 4010: Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H.R. 4018: Mr. GERLACH and Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 4032: Mr. TOWNS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PETERS , Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 4040: Mr. STIVERS, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. BASS of New Hampshire, Mr. DOLD, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. KIND, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. PASTOR of Arizona, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. REYES, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. SIRES, Mr. WATT, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 4062: Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California.

H.J. Res. 78: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.J. Res. 83: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.

H. Con. Res. 102: Mr. STIVERS.

H. Res. 474: Ms. NORTON and Mr. CICILLINE.

H. Res. 552: Mr. KILDEE.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 1380: Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 1964: Ms. JENKINS.

H.R. 3086: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.