to three-quarters of them are employed. Our plan for financial assistance in the form of tax cuts and tax credits would allow millions and millions of Americans who work at minimum or low wages or small employers who are the largest employers, and most of those people who do not have health insurance are not covered but they do work, we are providing in this tax relief package a responsible action. It is reckless in my opinion not to provide those working men and women with at least a minimal chance of getting some health coverage.

So somehow we have a difficulty between determining what is reckless and what is responsible. I think what the Republicans, the majority and myself, have done is a responsible action. I think we have a history of a President and a party who has dealt in reckless business. I think the examples are clear and the financial statements speak for themselves.

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT TAX CUT PROPOSALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLIVER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Speaker, it is sort of irony that I should be following the gentleman who just spoke because I am going to be speaking about the same thing. That was not specifically planned, but I am glad that it comes out that way.

Mr. Speaker, we are told this week that the main business of the Congress is proposals which have now passed both the House and the Senate to provide for an $800 billion tax cut. Any time the Congress is thinking about tax cuts, it behooves everyone in America to hang on to their wallet, to sit up and take notice, to pay very close attention to who is being given tax breaks and why. But also how that differs from who the proponents are saying is going to get the tax breaks.

This week is no exception at all. The Republican leadership says that their tax cut is for the middle-class. For the middle-class in America, working Americans. For the middle-class. Well, that is clearly not true if we look at what has passed the House and the Senate. The House passed its bill 2 weeks ago. And starting at the wealthiest end of Americans, at Bill Gates, at the wealthiest end and come down to an annual income of $300,000 a year, that 1 percent, just over a million Americans who have incomes between $300,000 a year and Bill Gates, that richest 1 percent is on average going to get $54,000 of tax breaks. It turns out to be 45 percent of the total of all the tax reduction being proposed goes to the 1 percent of the wealthiest Americans.

If we take 6 million Americans, 5 percent starting at the top of the scale down to $125,000 a year, I think it might be instructive to remember that every single Member of the Congress, every Member of the House and every Member of the Senate has income greater than $125,000 a year, that 5 percent will average $15,000 a year in tax cuts and gets 61 percent of the total reduction.

Mr. Speaker, if we start at the other end and come all the way up, all the way up from the lowest income American to people making under $125,000 a year, all 95 percent of them, all 120 million taxpayers, they will receive less than the 1 percent whose income is over $300,000 per year. It turns out that those people, who include the broad middle-class including from $25,000 a year to $65,000 a year under the House-passed bill, would get less than half as much in total tax reduction as the 1 percent richest portion of the population.

Let me put that in slightly different terms. If we were to take 100 people that we know, one person whose income is over $300,000 a year and the rest whose income comes from that point, and we have $100 to give out in tax reduction, 100 people and $100 in tax reduction, that one wealthiest person, that single one is going to get $45. Forty-five of the dollars that it is possible to give out under the circumstances. Ninety-five people, the 95 starting from the lowest income up to incomes that covers the broad middle-class, they are going to get a total of $39 divided among them.

If we look at it in terms of families, a family making $50,000 a year would get less than $1 a day in tax reduction. A family making $50,000 a year, two people working, second jobs whatever it happens to be but under $50,000 a year, at $50,000 a year they would get less than $2 a day in income. Yet the person who is making $1 million a year, that person would get $70,000 in that year, $200 a day in tax breaks.

The Senate-passed plan is a little bit different. The wealthiest 5 percent in the Senate plan gets almost the same amount as the 95 percent, the 120 million people whose income is less than $125,000 a year. And, again, I would urge my colleagues to remember that the portion of the population that is getting most of the tax break includes every Member of the House and the Senate of the United States. I have to ask, does anyone think that that is a fair way to distribute tax reduction in this country?
COMMISSIONER OF MINING

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2488. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to sections 105 and 211 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2000.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 2488) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to sections 105 and 211 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2000, and requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. ROBIN HUNTSMAN, Mr. COLE, and Mr. MOYNIHAN, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed bills of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1497. An act to extend the funding levels for aviation programs for 60 days.
S. 1488. An act to authorize the minting and issuance of Capitol Visitor Center Commemorative coins, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 100–458, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) to the Board of Trustees of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development, for a term ending October 11, 2004.

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Richard A. Gephardt, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to Section 501(a)(2) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (112 STAT. 2681–210), I hereby appoint to the National Commission on Terrorism:
Ms. Juliette N. Kayyem of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Yours Very Truly,
RICHARD A. GEPHARDT.

THE REAL COST OF TAXING MINING INTERESTS

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address the claim of some of my colleagues that gold mines get a free ride because they do not pay their fair share of Federal royalties. Well, when considering a Federal tax increase on the mining industry, we must always remind my tax and spend colleagues to take into account the adverse effect of such a tax increase on state and local tax revenues as well.

There is a direct correlation between increasing mining royalties or taxes and the reduction in mining activities. Federal royalties are deductible from the income base on which many of these State taxes are levied. This results in an even less tax dollar amount for State and local governments. Even a small increase in royalties would cost State and local governments hundreds of millions in tax revenues every year.

Mr. Speaker, it becomes very clear that when a Federal royalty is not in the best economic interests of this country or the mining industry, we should avoid it.

Abraham Lincoln had the great foresight when he said, “Tell the miners for me that I shall promote their interests to the utmost of my ability, because their prosperity is the prosperity of the Nation, and we shall prove in a very few short years that we are indeed the treasury of the world.”

NORTH KOREA ACCUSED OF DRUG DEALING

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, needing cash to run their government, the government of North Korea has been accused of selling heroin and cocaine. I am not kidding you. Reports say that North Korean agents were arrested by international police possessing 80 pounds of cocaine and $100 million worth of methamphetamine that was sponsored for sale officially by their government.

Now, if that is not enough to trigger your concern, an analysis shows that an 8 percent gross royalty would cost State and local governments hundreds of millions in tax revenues every year.

Mr. Speaker, it becomes very clear that when a Federal royalty is not in the best economic interests of this country or the mining industry, we should avoid it.

Abraham Lincoln had the great foresight when he said, “Tell the miners for me that I shall promote their interests to the utmost of my ability, because their prosperity is the prosperity of the Nation, and we shall prove in a very few short years that we are indeed the treasury of the world.”