This hearing will be scheduled for this Wednesday, December 12. I hope that the administration spokesman, Mr. Ramirez, his employer, the State Department, the Office of Management and Budget will explain why a law that was passed by Congress a year ago has not been implemented.

This law is environmentally sound. It is good for the taxpayers of this Nation. It solves a problem that has been with us for 50 years. What Mr. Ramirez wants to do is treat half the problem, do it more expensively and in an environmentally insensitive way. I do not understand that at all, and I am glad the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) agrees with me that he should explain this to Congress.

So we will have this oversight hearing which is the role of Congress to have. It is about time the International Boundary and Water Commission followed the will of this Congress.

CHANGING THE PRESCRIPTION COPAY FOR VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMMONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a few moments this evening to explain something that is happening to veterans that I think many Members of this House may not be aware of and would like to correct.

Currently, a veteran who receives prescription medications as an outpatient for a service-connected disability is charged a $2 copay per prescription, and the Veterans Administration is contemplating increasing that copay from $2 per prescription to $7 per prescription, a 250 percent increase in one fell swoop.

Why are we doing this? I have checked with the Chilicothe, Ohio, Veterans Hospital and talked with their CEO. He tells me that, at that hospital, the average veteran who gets prescription medications takes, on average, at least 10 prescriptions per month. If we take $7 per prescription and multiply it by 10, that is $70 a month; and then many veterans get their prescriptions for 3 months at a time. So 70 times 3 finally starts adding up to a sizeable amount of money, especially for a veteran with a service-connected disability who is trying to live on a fixed income.

It is unconscionable to me that at this time in our Nation's history, when we are paying honor to those who are fighting for us and for those who have fought for us, that we would increase the costs of prescription medications; and we are doing it at a time, quite frankly, when we are making huge, multibillion dollar tax breaks available to wealthy corporations.

Who do we care about in this House? Wealthy corporations or the men and women who have served this country honorably and who are sick and in need of medication and who oftentimes cannot afford that medication, even with a $2 copay?

I have introduced H.R. 2820, and it is a simple bill. It just simply says that the Secretary of the Veterans Administration cannot increase this copay amount beyond the $2 for the next 5 years. Surely, surely, we can find the resources to do this good thing. I am calling upon my colleagues, and I am doing this on behalf of those who have served our country, the men and women who have paid the price, given of their time, given of their bodies and been willing to give of their very lives to make sure that those of us who serve in this Chamber can do so in freedom.

So I call upon my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 2820. It is the least we can do for those who have done so much for us.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I do not plan on taking the full 5 minutes. But we have just gotten through with the defense bill and the Select Committee on Intelligence has just passed its conference report, and our Nation is at war, and above the regular amount the President has seen fit to give a $40 billion supplemental to try not only to help people in New York, people at the Pentagon, but this Nation heal itself.

Post-September 11 has seen over 700,000 jobs lost, and yet we still have 99 percent of the American people that have their jobs, but if someone is one of those of that 1 percent that has lost their job, it is critical to them. Many of the people in my own district that has happened to.

We tried to protect those jobs, and I think that we need to do more. We also need to help people temporarily. But even more important than that, Mr. Speaker, we need to stimulate the growth of the new and the old jobs through different measures, economic measures.

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Seventy-five percent of the jobs created are created by small business in this country, and I believe that tax relief for businesses will act as a stimulus that will enable those businesses to hire more people, to hire back some of those 700,000 that have lost their jobs.

We all know that a company does not just fire people because it wants to; it is because they are working with a margin. And when they start losing money, either because they are overtaxed or because of the system or something like September 11 happens, they are forced to let people go. I have people in the hotel industry that only have about a 25 percent occupancy right now. That is devastating to those industries, and this has happened across the board.

So the things we can do to stimulate the economy is, one, tax relief for those businesses. That is important in an economic stimulus package, as well as direct pay to some of those folks that need the help immediately.

Secondly, there has been a lot of debate on trade in this House, and I think very positively, both those for and opposed. But I believe whether you are a union worker or come from the private sector, our workers in this country are second to none. Given fair trade and given an equal chance, they can compete with any nation.

Some people debate and look at the trade deference. Well, ask anybody, they would rather be from a country that has higher pay, that has higher quality, that has higher technology than a country that has low pay, low technology, but yet is able to flood the markets. It just stands to reason. It is common sense.

Trade is also important to my State, California. The number one commodity in California is agriculture. Those that say they are friendly to agriculture should have no second thought on the vote that is coming to us tomorrow or the next day on the trade bill sent down by the President. The bill tomorrow will improve existing and future trade agreements. Not necessarily new trade agreements, but it will enable the President to shore up problems that many of my colleagues on the other side have brought forward, and I think in some cases rightfully so.

Mr. Carville, who used to work for President Clinton, once said, ''It's the economy, stupid.'' If we can give tax relief to businesses and stimulate jobs, if we can pass trade agreements that will help benefit our workers and shore up existing problems, I think that will help.

My constituents want three kinds of security: they want personal security; they want to be safe in their schools and on their streets; they want to be able to open up a piece of mail that does not have anthrax in it; they want economic security, to know they are not going to lose their job; and they want national security. For those things, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support both the economic package, the stimulus package that was passed out of this House, and to support the trade agreement that will be brought forward this week.