

Now that is the biggest number I have ever seen in my life. And \$9 billion, it is hard to relate to what 9 billion or \$9,700,000,000,000 is. Well, let's try to focus on how much that really is in terms maybe we can understand. If you add up all of the major wars that the United States has been involved in since we were a country, and you put 2009 dollars to those figures, this amount of money still would not cover the cost of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the War Between the States, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the Iraqi wars and the Afghanistan wars. We would still have enough money left over in 2009 dollars to pay for the Louisiana Purchase in 2009 dollars, the Gadsden Purchase in 2009 dollars, and Alaska in 2009 dollars with money still left over. Now that is a lot of money.

It has been estimated also that this amount of money would pay for 90 percent of all of the home mortgages in the whole United States. Now we're talking about real money. Or looking at it another way, if you divided this money up with all the people on the face of the Earth, each one of them would get about \$1,500. That is a lot of money. And yet, this is the amount of money we are going to try to spend all in the name of saving the economy and saving the country.

I question, first of all, whether or not it will work. But more importantly, where are we going to get the money? We don't have the money. So we are going to have to borrow the money. And probably we will borrow the money from our good friends over in China. Oh, they're ready to lend us money and let Americans pay interest on it.

The Congressional Budget Office has done some work, it hasn't been publicized much, about the new stimulus bill, the \$835 billion bill that just passed the Senate that is coming back to the House in a conference bill maybe tomorrow, Friday or whatever. And they said even if you spend that money, that is not going to help the economy. So now we've got two problems. One, we don't have the money. And the stimulus bill may not even help the economy.

This country has done the stimulus bill thing before. This is not the first stimulus bill. It was tried right after World War II. In fact, we now have a total of eight stimulus bills that one Congress or another has passed all in the name of trying to stimulate the economy.

□ 1545

And history has shown, basically, they just didn't work. They weren't as effective as they were expected to be. So, although we have philosophical differences between this side and the other side about how to help the economy, I would submit maybe we need to step back and rather than say government's the answer in spending money

that we don't have, taking money from taxpayers who are paying their taxes and working, taking it and giving it to the government and letting the government dole it out to different special interest groups throughout the country in the effort to stimulate the economy, rather than follow that philosophy, why don't we let Americans just keep more of their own money? Do something really remarkable, tell the American public, everybody that pays taxes is going to get a tax deduction. Everybody, including corporations and small businesses.

Then, when Americans have more of their own money, they will be able to stimulate the economy by spending it the way they decide, rather than the way we decide how to spend that money. And that will give small businesses, when they have more capital, the ability to hire people to come work for them. You see, businesses, especially small businesses, are where jobs are created. They're not created by the Federal Government; they're created by the private sector. I submit we ought to try the tax cut approach.

And that's just the way it is.

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

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. FORTENBERRY) addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE KNOW WHAT THE BOTTOM LINE IS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here this afternoon as I get together with a number of the members of our class of 2006. We've now finished our first 2 years, and we're beginning the third year of our service here in Washington, and it's truly an honor and a privilege to be serving on behalf of the American people, particularly at a time when the challenges are so great.

Just to boil it down very simply, all you have to do is go home, talk to your neighbors, talk to your friends, talk to the people you go to church or synagogue with, see people at the grocery store. And what you're hearing in Washington is quite different and the people that come before our committees, that represent large banks, or people that are even coming up before this Chamber. We have a respectful difference of opinion. But I think the American people know what the bottom line is. The bottom line is they are hurting, and they are hurting in numbers like we haven't seen in our lifetimes.

I spoke to my dad the other day. My dad is 80 years old. He just had his birthday, we celebrated. It was a wonderful opportunity for our family to be together. And he grew up, he was born in 1928, so he was born right at the beginning of the Depression, but he certainly lived through the 1930s and '40s, and told me what it was like and how their family had to make do, and what it took to save for that last thing that they needed, the clothes, the hand-me-downs, all the other things they did to make do.

Well, we don't live like that today, by and large. But more and more people are forced to make very, very difficult decisions about how they're going to put food on the table, pay for their mortgage, pay for their insurance, put their kids through school, buy medicine, all the most basic things.

And I'm just going to take a quick showing of a graph here that was prepared, very interesting graph. It's from our United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. And it talks about recessions, the last few recessions we had. One was in 1990, one was right after September 11, and unfortunately, the aftermath of that, and now we have the current one.

If you just look at the lines, here's the beginning of the recession. They all start at the same place, and that's zero, at the point in which there are no new jobs created but no jobs lost, what they call the beginning of the recession. And if you take a look at the blue line, that was the one from 1990, it basically, after 10, 11 months it began turning around, actually it was 9 or 10 months, began turning around; and within about 2 years it was back to normal and on its way up in a very nice steep incline, the way we like to see growth in this country. And the people that create the growth are the people that have small businesses. These are the people we're focusing on.

The one after September 11 went on a little longer, but still you saw this big increase after a period of time, a nice spectacular increase.

Well, now we take a look at this green one. This is the one, unfortunately, we're in right now. This is the recession that started a number of months ago, and it is a line that's going almost straight down. That's the level and the depth of which we're at

right now, which is far deeper than the last two recessions.

Now, you probably heard a lot of people say that this is probably the worst it's been since the Great Depression, and it certainly seems that way. Thank God that at the present time many people are still working, but more and more people are on the edge, and more and more people are making decisions on what they can buy and what they can afford and decisions about the choices on the daily life of whether they're going to make an investment as a business owner or not. And these are the things that affect the broad base of our economy.

So it's interesting when I hear people say, well, we're going to spend this; we're going to spend that. But it's also very fascinating to me that over the last number of years, there hasn't been that kind of questioning when we're spending billions and billions of dollars every month in Iraq or other places around the world.

Well, as far as I'm concerned, yes, of course we have to worry about our national security and we're going to do what it takes to protect people in America and our interests. But you know something? It's also about time we start thinking about Americans and the lives that we lead and the roads that we live on, the schools that we build for our children, and the universities and opportunities to move our country ahead. These are the important things that we're going to have to do, and we're going to work very hard, and we've been working very hard at trying to get this going.

What I'd like to do, I've got a number of members from our class to join us. I'm going to first ask the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) to lead off here and just share with us some of your thoughts and what's going on in Connecticut.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Congressman KLEIN. Thank you for organizing this colloquy which we are, as a Congress, on the verge of one of the, I think, biggest votes of the 111th Congress. And it's important that I think we take the time to spend a few minutes to explain why the stakes are so high and what, in fact, the proposal is before us because there's a lot of bad information out there.

First of all, just to follow up on your point, This is not a normal downturn, a normal business recession. As the chart that you just showed demonstrates, the drop-off in terms of job losses in this economy and the velocity with which it's happened is something that again we have not seen as a Nation, certainly at least since the Great Depression.

Just using as a quick snapshot in the State of Connecticut, I talked to some companies which have experienced downturns in the past. Pratt and Whitney has had layoffs because the commercial aircraft market has certainly shrunk in recent months as the economy has closed down. The insurance industry has had layoffs as business has fallen off.

But I was talking the other day to a guy who is in charge of a trash collection agency, which trash tends to be sort of recession proof. He's never had a layoff in the time that his family has owned this trash hauling business that goes back decades. They just laid off 15 folks there because the volume of trash that's actually being generated in the State of Connecticut has turned down, something that he has never seen before.

The price for commodities, in terms of aluminum scrap metal, some of the other scrap that they normally, newspaper scrap that they usually resell on the market, has completely collapsed because the price for those commodities, again, has just vanished.

We have seen in the casino industry, again, an industry in Connecticut with the large tribal casinos that we have, Foxwoods casino and Mohican Sun, again, the first layoffs since those casinos ever opened. Mohican Sun cancelled an \$800 million expansion last September.

The construction trade industry in Eastern Connecticut has completely fallen apart. Electricians, sheet metal workers, carpenters, the construction trades all across the board, are home basically barely getting by collecting on benefits.

So, given that situation that we're seeing on the private sector, this pull-back that's happening, causing, again, contraction that never has been seen before all across the board, we're seeing local governments and State governments as a result feeling the ripple effect of shrinking State budgets and layoffs of teachers at every single school district, certainly in my area and I'm sure at other members.

We have a decision to make as a country about whether or not we are going to use the Federal Government's purchasing power to step in and stop this precipitous decline and keep us from falling into a further downward spiral.

Now, let's be clear because we just heard a bunch of criticisms about whether or not the government is capable of making wise choices about spending and actually creating jobs. Well, the fact of the matter is, every single day in the American economy, the Federal Government is spending money and creating work. In the defense industry, again, you can go across the board. And the gentleman from Texas who just spoke, we could go through his district, I'm sure, and certainly his portion of Texas, and look at military spending that's going on every single day and that people are collecting pay checks, whether they're building aircraft or military weapons for the Army and our ground forces, or whether they're just employing actually military personnel.

Certainly, in Connecticut where we make nuclear submarines, we build aircraft at Pratt and Whitney, the F-22, we build Blackhawk helicopters. There are people this morning working two

and three shifts that are going to work because of the customer that the Federal Government acts as to make sure that they have work every single day.

Every school district, every health care institution receives Federal funds that really determine whether or not the doors stay open.

So what President Obama is doing is using existing programs, existing formulas, whether it's Title I, special education, whether it's aid to States through Medicaid programs, which we know work because they've been in place for decades. But what he's doing is boosting the spending back to States so that we, in fact, will not allow the total collapse, both in the public sector and the private sector as this economy continues in its downward spiral.

And frankly, in the next day or so, this Congress is going to have a choice before it. A "yes" vote will be a "yes" vote for jobs. A "no" vote, which is the do-nothing Herbert Hoover approach to an economic crisis that we have before it will basically condemn millions of Americans to further joblessness, to extended unemployment and a loser strategy in terms of whether or not this country, this great Nation is going to be capable of leading the world out of a global recession.

And I think the President has put forward a balanced proposal, using both tax relief and spending programs and State fiscal assistance to ensure that we are not going to allow this mess which he inherited to become any longer and any more prolonged for working families and middle class families than we have the tools and the capability of turning around.

So that's the choice that's before us. We can act, we can save jobs, or we can do nothing and follow the failed policies of the last 8 years of the Bush administration that got us into this mess to begin with.

And someone who is from a State that's been hard hit as well, from Kentucky, is here to, I think, again, share his thoughts and his perspective from his corner of America, Congressman YARMUTH.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank my colleague from Connecticut and I'm glad to be here today to talk about something that touches every American. I think it's never been more true that, in this situation, no American remains untouched from, as we've seen very vividly, the giants of Wall Street to the citizens in Louisville, Kentucky, to the citizens in Connecticut and Florida and Ohio. Everyone is touched in every field.

Legal practices are making changes and cuts because lawyers can't even get business. And you know when lawyers can't get business, you know everybody's hurting.

But this is something that is an intriguing situation. And as I said this morning on the floor, I mean, over the past few months we've seen, as one after another of the giants of the economy have come before Congress to talk

about this situation and others, we've seen that all of them, these people we worship, these people we thought were the masters of the universe, turns out that they're all the wizards of Oz. You pull back the curtain and they're normal, fallible people who have made mistakes and who could not foresee the predicament that we've been in and, in many cases, they contributed to it.

The point of that is, that we talk about what we want to do to help, don't even say stimulate the economy or help us to recovery. I think this is a parachute plan. I think we are in free fall, and this plan is designed to serve as a parachute to give us a soft landing, because before we can recover, we've got to find bottom. And business after business that I talk to in my district and elsewhere says, you know, times are rough and we're hurting, but what we're really concerned about is we don't know if we're at the bottom.

□ 1600

We were off 10 percent last month. We were off 40 percent this month. We can survive that if we're not down 60 percent next month, but nobody knows where the bottom is, so we're all, in a sense, looking for a way to put a floor under this economy right now.

I know and I have listened to Members on our side and on their side and in our House and down the hall in the Senate talk about things: Well, they know what small business does and what will create jobs in small business, and these are people who have never been in the private sector in their lives. They have no clue what really creates a job in the private sector. We've heard people who cannot even balance their own bank accounts admonish the bankers of the country. So I think we need to be honest with the American people and be honest with each other and say that we're in a situation that is unprecedented, that we truly are in uncharted waters. We are trying everything we know how to do at the Federal level to salvage this economy and to get us on the right footing to stage a recovery.

Are we sure it's going to work? No. Would we all write the bill differently? I think it is true; we would all write the bill differently. We would write the bill differently on our side. They would write it differently. Even among ourselves, we would write it differently. We think some things are more effective than others, but we have to try everything we know how to do in this situation in order to be effective.

As many on the other side believe, we cannot say, oh, tax cuts are going to be the salvation. I mean, as you've mentioned, we've tried that. We tried tax cuts in the early part of this decade. Look where we are? I have talked to businesspeople, and I have asked them specifically, "Tell me if there is any tax incentive or tax break that we can provide that would make you do something that you otherwise would not do, i.e., hire people whom you don't need?"

They've said there is no such tax cut. The only thing that will help them get going again and that will make them do things that we want them to do, which is to create jobs and to save jobs, is to provide demand. That is what is sorely lacking from this economy. People don't have confidence.

They say, "If I'm going to buy a car, not now, not now. I don't know whether this company is going to be in business. I don't know whether I might be able to get it cheaper in 6 months. I don't know if the rates will be more favorable." It's the same with housing, the same with a suit, the same with a computer, and the same with a flat screen TV. There is no confidence, and we need to restore confidence.

That's why I think it is imperative that as we move toward this vote that we get some cooperation from the other side because the American people should have confidence that we are working on this together. I think we have seen a noticeable reluctance from the other side to work with us on this. I know they claim they've not had any input, which we know is not true. They've had input. Much of this bill was crafted with the other side in mind, but suffice it to say that we are all in this together. None of us is getting exactly what we want in this bill.

So I would implore everyone, and I would implore the American citizens to call their Representatives on both sides and say it is important that the American people have confidence in this plan because this is the only plan there is. Right now, it is the only chance we have, again, to give us a soft landing in this economy and to start us on the road to rebuilding.

So, with that, I thank you for allowing me this time.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Well, thank you. The gentleman from Kentucky has hit it right on the mark, the gentleman from Connecticut as well.

We are joined by Members from all over the country today. Everyone is going to have their opportunity. I think I'll just highlight one point really fast:

As we've been working on this for the last number of months, in speaking to people at home, to economists, to experts, to businesspeople from the Reagan administration or from the Clinton administration, and to everything in between, I think the great thing about this opportunity is that we've gotten a very broad perspective, and the message has been very clear. There is no silver bullet. There is no one answer that is going to solve this in terms of creating consumer demand and confidence. You're going to have to try a number of things—be bold. Move it along because we're hemorrhaging—so we can get things stabilized as quickly as possible.

The great thing is that 90 percent of the jobs being created are private-sector jobs. The private sector is going to drive the economy. As Mr. COURTNEY clearly said, the private sector is stim-

ulated at a time like this by the government's doing things that are good for us, whether it's enhancing school buildings, broadband technology, things like that.

We are joined by the gentlewoman from Ohio, from our Midwest, from the heartland, and she has just been a great leader on so many of these issues affecting families and small businesses. So, if you could, certainly give us your insight from the Ohio perspective.

Ms. SUTTON. Well, I thank the gentleman, and I thank you for organizing this today on the floor.

It is just so critical—and you have heard it here from every speaker thus far—that we get this bill passed. The reason for that is we need to get the American recovery going.

I come from Ohio. I arrived in these halls, and it was shortly thereafter that, as I walked down the halls, people started saying to me when they saw me coming, "Jobs, jobs, jobs." The reason they said that is, from the day I arrived in Congress, I have been fighting for economic opportunities for the people whom I am so honored to represent, and I know that that need extends beyond Ohio.

As you have heard, this bill—but it bears repeating—will create and will save up to 4 million jobs. We will be doing things like rebuilding America. It will make us more globally competitive. We are going to give 95 percent of American workers an immediate tax cut that they desperately need. We will invest in roads, bridges and mass transit, flood control, clean water projects, and other infrastructure projects that all need to be done. This is work that has to be accomplished for many, many reasons, not just because it will, in effect, also stimulate our economy.

But if you're going to make massive infusions and investments in America, doesn't it make sense to invest in doing the work that needs to be done that will benefit the good of our whole and that will also strengthen our Nation's going forward? That is what this bill does.

It also contains unprecedented accountability measures. So important. So important. We've all seen the news, and those in Congress have watched with amazement as we've seen irresponsible behavior in the expenditure of funds that are taxpayer funds. We're all very disgusted by some of what has happened with the first tranche of the TARP funding. So these accountability measures under this new administration are critically important to restoring the trust of this Nation and of the people whom we are so, so fortunate to represent.

We have heard also about this bill and its scope. The truth of the matter is this is not about being a Democrat, and this is not about being a Republican. We just need a bill that will work for the American people. There is room for everybody who wants to help. Now, it is true that we won't all get everything we want into this bill, and I

won't go into the things for which I am dismayed may or may not ultimately end up in this bill.

The fact of the matter is it creates those jobs, jobs, jobs that the people in Ohio and across this country so need. As for the support of this bill, as I said, it's not about being a Democrat, and it's not about being a Republican. It has broad support across this country.

Sometimes we get wrapped up with what goes on here, but you know, it's from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, from the National Association of Manufacturers, from the Associated General Contractors of America to Representatives like MIKE CASTLE, who is a Republican from Delaware, who said, "I am always concerned when the Republican party takes a negative position on something that should be moving forward." Now, I'm not sure that's a statement of support, but I do know that that is something that he said about some who may not be willing to act yet even though we need so much done.

Governor Charlie Crist appeared with President Obama to talk about the plan and about the hope that it offers for this great country. Charlie Crist said, "This is a time when our country needs all of us to pull together." We have all heard before that we come here on different ships, perhaps, but we are all in the same boat now on this thing. It's about jobs, jobs, jobs for Americans and Floridians. The list goes on.

There are people of both parties who are working diligently to try and get us to a place that will allow us to pass this bill because action delayed is very, very costly as you have already heard here today. Even if you have not heard it today, you have seen it because you've seen it in your neighborhoods; you've seen it on the streets where you live; you've seen it in your neighbors who are losing their homes; you've seen it in your friends who are losing their jobs.

This is a great country. What this bill is really about is our making a massive investment in this country and in the people who live here. So let us get this bill passed. I am looking forward to it. I invite all to join us in that effort who have that opportunity. Let us put Americans back to work, doing things that America needs to have done.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you very much. The gentlelady from Ohio has hit the nail on the head, and I think we agree with everything you said. It really is about Americans first. It is about putting aside every bit of the politics. There is a time for jousting and a time for debate, and there is a time for action. This is the time for action. The next couple of days will be a signal to the American people, to our business community, to our consumers that we are ready to turn the corner.

With that, I would like to turn it over to the gentleman from New York State (Mr. ARCURI) and get his perspective, please.

Mr. ARCURI. Thank you. Thank you for organizing this today and for the advocacy that you do on behalf of not only your constituents but of all Americans.

I would like to just associate myself with the words of my former colleague from the Rules Committee, Ms. SUTTON. I think no State has been hit as hard as Ohio has over the years, and I think her remarks certainly ring true for all of the country, including my district that I represent in upstate New York.

As the economy falls deeper into recession, economists tell us that we must act quickly and that we must act boldly. That is exactly what the House did last month when we voted on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. We must—and I repeat this—we must send a final bill to the President's desk this week. Every day that we wait and every moment that we hesitate come more and more layoffs to regular people. These are working people in our backyards. These are people who we go to church with on Sundays. These are people who we work with and who we see at the supermarkets. These are people who we know are losing their jobs. Let me just talk a little bit about that because, to my way of thinking, nothing is more important and nothing is more significant than trying to help the people who have lost their jobs.

In my district, I represent about eleven counties, all or part of eleven counties, actually, in upstate New York. Broome County, which is where Binghamton is located, has an unemployment rate of 7.1 percent. Almost 7,000 people are unemployed there. Tioga County has 7.2 percent. In Herkimer County, it's 7.7 percent. In Oneida County, it's 6.7 percent. Nearly 7,500 people are out of work in Oneida County. In Cayuga County, it's 7.4 percent. In Chenango County, it's 8.2 percent. In Otsego County, it's 7.3 percent. In Seneca County, it's 6.9 percent. In Ontario County, it's 6.8 percent. In Tompkins County, it's 4.7 percent, and in Cortland County, it's 9.1 percent.

These are real people. These are more than 35,000 people in my district in upstate New York who are out of work. This is why we need to stop talking, why we need to stop debating and why we need to put a bill on the President's desk.

Last year, more than 2.6 million jobs were lost here in the United States, and economists warn us that without immediate action here in Washington those numbers will and can be significantly higher in 2009. In fact, we have already seen a significant jump in the number of job losses over the last 3 months. The numbers that I just gave you were for December. That's the frightening thing. They were for December when employment is supposed to be lower as a result of people going to work at the holidays.

What will the numbers be like in January? Congress must support an

economic recovery package that creates and saves 3 million to 4 million jobs over the next 2 years.

You know, I want to talk about something. I was in my office, listening to my colleagues just a little while ago. I don't like to point fingers, but there was a point when I just had to respond. They talk about the deficit's being \$9.7 trillion. They're right. It's very high. But where have they been? We've been talking about that deficit for years. We've been talking about the problems of spending, spending, spending. Yet they continue to vote for it.

The thing that troubles me so much is that they had no problem at all in voting to build roads in Afghanistan, that they had no problem in voting to fix the water systems in Iraq and that they had no problem in voting to build schools to help educate children in Iraq and in Afghanistan. That is noble, but you know what? It is just as important to educate and to make sure that our children have the very best schools, that our roads are safe, that our bridges are safe, and that our water systems work. This stimulus plan not only will employ 3 or 4 million Americans, but it will restore the infrastructure in this country to the degree that it needs to be. It will help to fix our education system.

Domestic spending is important. How is it that people on the other side of the aisle have absolutely no problem whatsoever in voting for funding for foreign countries, and yet, when it comes to domestic spending, they stand up here and poke fun at it and say it's not necessary? I would submit it is critically necessary to this country, that it is critically necessary to our future and that it is critically important to the 35,000 people in my district who are out of work.

□ 1615

We cannot afford to wait, as some of my Republican friends suggest. Economic experts have warned us that the longer we wait, the more difficult it will become for the economy to turn around. The time for talk is over; the time for action is upon us.

Madam Speaker, we cannot afford to delay. Congress must act this week to begin the long process of saving and creating jobs.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I appreciate the personal experiences and personal observations from your district. I think we share that same experience from all of the people we're talking to. And as we had in the Financial Services Committee today, we heard from a lot of the large New York banks, and they talked about how the fact that—if you listen to them, that they're lending, they're doing this, they're doing that. I don't understand why it's not translating to our communities. I mean, if you believe what they're saying, it sounds like everything is okay.

And we know the lifeblood of the economy is credit, consumer credit, people being able to buy automobiles

or consumer goods or student loans, things like that—and not to mention small businesses that needed just to invest in their small businesses to keep their business going. It's not happening. And that needs to change, and that's part of this goal of fixing the economy, stimulating it, and getting the financial system fixed.

We have a gentleman, Mr. WALZ. We really appreciate your being here and being part of the explanation and the experience that you've had up to this point. I know you've been hearing from your people back home. We were just talking about it over the weekend.

And why don't you share some of that with us.

Mr. WALZ. I thank the gentleman from Florida, and I thank you for leading this conversation.

I think the American public, what they're seeing is they're seeing a cross-section of this country. Listening to the gentleman from New York, listening to the gentlewoman from Ohio, from Connecticut, from Kentucky, talk about what they're hearing amongst the people. And I can tell you when we go back home—and I live in a small house in Mankato, Minnesota, in southern Minnesota. The house in front of me has been foreclosed for a year and a half. The property value on my house has dropped about 50 percent. We're seeing that across the country.

The pinch of this economy coming down and the frustration amongst the American people is palatable. You can feel it. They are frustrated, and they are angry. And the questions they are asking is this: "How come it seems like I'm working harder and getting further behind, and when I turn on the television, somebody else is taking a trip to the spa? Somebody else is getting a private jet? Somebody else is getting something for failing when I seem to be making the right decisions? I'm paying my mortgage. I'm trying to save money to send my child to school, and I'm not asking for the lottery. I'm not asking for a ten-bedroom house. I'm asking to try and achieve the American dream."

And I think it's important to remember, we're as frustrated as you are. The Members you hear speaking today come from that. This is the people's House. This is where the voice of regular Americans is expressed.

Before coming to this House, my job in May of 2006, I was teaching high school and had done it for 20 years and never made more than \$50,000 a year. I have proudly served our Nation in the National Guard, but I asked the same questions, too. How are we not getting further ahead? When I talked to someone about trying to get my two small children, Hope, age 8, Gus, age 2, how do I save for college? I said, "Well, then I will have to sell my house and live in a box because that is impossible for us to do that."

The lifeblood and the ladder to success of the middle class was the ability to educate our children, to get a good

public school education, to go to a good trade school or to a good college to try and move up. Those things are becoming further and further from us.

And the frustration that is felt in this country is because we have a system that did not respect those things, that did not put things in place to help the middle class. We were told if we helped and gave tax cuts to the wealthiest, wisest amongst us, they would rain down on us all of those blessings to get us there.

Well, what's happened is the average worker has lost \$2,000 in real salary over the last 10 years. We are working longer hours. The American people deserve better. They are the most productive, most innovative people in the world. The middle class that built this country is now feeling the pinch. This piece of legislation is the down payment on putting things back in balance.

We're not against a free market. You will hear people come in here and talk about it. But there is no free market when those at the top are benefiting from everything, when those at the top are not being held to the same standards as those who are actually doing the labor.

And this piece of legislation and the gentleman—we've heard from many of them—I heard the gentleman from Kentucky talking about this being a parachute. My colloquialism, coming from a land of 10,000 lakes, is it's a life preserver. And that's what it is.

This isn't going to get us to where we need to go. What's going to get us is people standing in this people's House and hearing these Members talk about the truth, talk about where the issues are, make real sacrifices. Don't ask the American people to believe talking points. Don't regurgitate the same old stories to them. Tell them where the economy is at. Speak to them as President Obama spoke to us about where we need to go, and then have the courage to say, "If it's not working, we need to readjust."

This piece of legislation is going to be about \$1,000 for 95 percent of the public. It's going to refund education and make sure that we're doing the things we need to do to build for the future. It's going to start moving us off our dependence on foreign oil and the tyranny of oil that drags us into conflicts we have no business in. Those are the types of things we can adjust. We can bring this back in, and we can debate in this House how we get there. Very valid points. I can tell you this deficit troubles me deeply.

But the fact of the matter is right now the private sector is not creating jobs. The private sector doesn't have capital, and we were slowly spiraling down. More layoffs, more people that are going to go hungry, more people that are going to depend on the government to get things that they don't want to. These are proud people. They want to work hard, be compensated fairly, and do the things that they

enjoy doing with their families trying to move forward.

This piece of legislation can do that. I say it time and time again—I heard the gentleman talk about it from New York—you stand here long enough and you listen to this long enough, and you will hear people re-talking about the issues and trying to frame it in a certain way.

The fact of the matter is this: our economy is not working correctly. The middle class is feeling the brunt of this. We are bleeding jobs, and we are slowly pulling things down making it more difficult for the middle class to achieve the American dream. This piece of legislation stops the fall or throws the life preserver, yet let's us readjust, get a handle on health care costs, make it easier to invest in education, make sure people are rewarded for doing the right thing—not for simply speculating—and get back to innovation and entrepreneurship.

So the gentleman from Florida, I want to thank you for continuously hosting these discussions, for gathering people from across this land, for making sure the people's representatives stand here and speak what's happening in southern Minnesota, what's happening in Connecticut, what's happening in Ohio, and to get the American public to understand this is not about politics; this is not about games; this is not about who's winning the House and how we can drive down support of the House. You people have a 14 percent approval rating.

Here is what I'm here to tell you. If we have a 14 percent approval rating, our Democracy is in trouble. We must speak the truth, we must be bold, we must move this legislation, and we must find solutions for the American people. That's what our purpose is. That's the greatness of this country. And the gentleman has brought together people who express that from across the country.

With that, I appreciate the gentleman's time.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank you for your passion and your expression of what's going on in Minnesota.

I think we're seeing that the same situation is going on in all 50 states. For those of us who lived during recessions before, some recessions were tied to real estate, some were tied to manufacturing, different parts of the country. But you know something? People from every corner of this country are feeling this right now, which is why we have to act now. Do the right thing. We'll adjust as we go along. But every economist has told us that this is the right combination: some tax cuts, some investments, but all towards the future.

I want to express my appreciation to the President who has expressed it this way because I think he's right on the mark.

What I'd now like to do, if I could, is introduce my friend, the gentleman from Connecticut, who's been a great

leader also on small business incentives and making sure small business has all of the opportunities to grow, and we know this is the moment for that.

So why don't you give us some expression on that issue.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you very much, Mr. KLEIN, and I always enjoy hearing our friend from Minnesota speak on the floor.

Mr. KLEIN, let me talk about one small business in particular. Let me talk about Angelo's Deli in New Britain, Connecticut. Angelo's has been serving the people of New Britain, where my great-grandparents came to work decades ago, for 60 or 70 years. Now, Angelo doesn't own the place anymore.

Now, for the last 20 years, it's been owned by a guy by the name of Joe Tropea. Joe is not a political guy, doesn't get involved in political fights very often; but he sees as clearly as any business owner out there—small, medium, or large—what's happening to this economy.

Joe's holding on. He's doing all right. But he's having to cut back hours. He's starting to think about layoffs. This is a business that has been doing business in New Britain for decades, for decades, and is feeling the crunch right now along with everybody else.

Now, why is that? Well, sometimes when people think of Connecticut, they just think of the big houses along the coast where all of the investment bankers, folks coming back and forth from New York live.

Well, in New Britain, Connecticut, before this recession began, our employment rate was 11 percent. It was 11 percent to start. It's up to about 12 or 13 percent right now. Why? Because as Ms. SUTTON has talked about so many times on this floor, we have allowed the kind of jobs that built up New Britain, Connecticut, and Waterbury, Connecticut, and Meriden, Connecticut, to filter out of this country because for the last 8 years in particular, we have had no strategy to try to build our manufacturing base in this country. We were weak already before we lurched into this economic downturn. Jobs have been really hard to come by for a long time in New Britain. Now it's getting to a crisis point.

And the folks that have been coming in for weeks and weeks and years and years to Angelo's Market aren't coming in any longer. The folks who used to come in for a sandwich every couple of weeks are now coming in once every month. The people who used to come in every day are now coming in one day a week. And this story can be told over and over and over again.

And so the important parts of this bill to Joe Tropea and Angelo's Market are the parts that start inspiring consumer confidence again.

Now, we may not know all of the keys to unlock consumer confidence, but we know that if we start putting money back in people's pockets—and

the right people's pockets—we can start to make them feel good about spending again. That's why 30, 40 percent of the stimulus bill is dedicated to tax cuts but targeted tax cuts to middle class families and to small businesses like Angelo's Market.

That is part of what is going to start getting people to spend again, start getting people to walk into places like Angelo's Market again and get this economy moving again.

A lot of attention has been given to this spending provision of the bill or that spending provision of the bill. Those are important parts. But a large part of this bill is dedicated to putting money back into the pockets of hard working Americans for them to begin to feel the confidence in this economy that's been lacking for too long.

But what also matters to Joe is getting jobs to people of New Britain. Nobody's going to come in and spend money in his business or anybody else's business in New Britain if the unemployment rate in that city continues to lurch upward to 14 and 15 percent.

So that's why the 4 million jobs that are preserved or created in this bill are so critical to Joe and the thousands of other business owners in my district.

And it's also why he cares about the provisions of this stimulus bill that apply to State government because right around the corner from Joe is the Connecticut Works Office, the arm of the State government that retrains and trains workers for the next economy.

If the State of Connecticut continues to face a \$6 billion 2-year budget deficit, as it does, it is going to be forced to cut jobs at our worker training programs, to eviscerate the very safety net that's going to help people who are losing jobs find new ones. It makes absolutely no sense to take money away from States that they're going to use to try to train and retrain workers as this economy transforms itself.

So Joe and other small business owners like him look to what the Republicans are proposing as an alternative. And when they look to this retreat of Bush economics, when they look to the alternatives sponsored by the Republicans, which, in essence, seems to amount to an excuse to simply perpetuate the policy of the Bush administration where tax cuts seem to be the exclusive domain of the people at the upper 1 or 2 percent of the income echelon, he knows that does nothing for him. He knows that for the businesses that line West Main Street in New Britain, that that policy hasn't worked for the last 10 years, and it is not going to get us out of this recession. It's not going to get people coming back into his shop. It's not going to create jobs again.

As President Obama has said over and over again, we cannot use this economic recession as an excuse to go back to the policies that have not worked up until now.

So I think it's incumbent upon all of us to spend our time, as we try to chart

a course forward, spend time in those small businesses that are trying to survive, that are trying to figure out a way forward.

The tax cuts in this bill for middle class families, the money to go help States keep that safety net strong, and the 4 million jobs that will be created or saved are instrumental to our economy at large, but are important to small business owners like my friend Joe across this country.

□ 1630

So I thank my friend from Florida for bringing us together today. I think you're hearing different versions of the same story. To borrow Ms. SUTTON's words, it's jobs, it's jobs, it's jobs.

Ultimately what gets people feeling good about this economy, back spending again, is a sense of security about their own job and the knowledge that their neighbors and their friends and their families are going to have their jobs preserved as well.

This stimulus bill gets us there. It is not the salvation, but it puts us on that road.

I thank Mr. KLEIN very much for giving us the time this afternoon

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman from Connecticut, and I think we all have a number of Angelos in our communities, whether they're little bake shops or barbershops or supermarkets or florist shops or little machine shops. I grew up in a variety store. My dad worked 6 days a week, like most of our parents did. And I worked with him alongside, like a Woolworth type of little local store, and he taught me about what it takes to make a budget, and I think most Americans understand that right now when we know that we have to get jobs back on target here.

I'd now like to add another State to the mix here. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES), if you can give us your understanding and your thoughts, I'd like to yield to Mr. SARBANES.

Mr. SARBANES. Well, I thank the Representative from Florida for convening us to talk about this incredibly important stimulus package.

The Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act is our opportunity to put America back to work in the short run and to invest in things that make sense in the long run, and I really look at that package through four different lenses.

The first is that it's going to save jobs. It's going to save a tremendous number of jobs, just the State stabilization portion of this bill. What many people don't appreciate is that all across the country States right now are making their budgets. They are constitutionally obligated under their State charters to balance those budgets. If they don't get the assistance that is represented by this stimulus package, they're going to have to make Draconian cuts to their budgets. That means police officers losing their jobs,

safety officers, fire officers and others, teachers. All the people that make the economy work, that make these States function are going to be potentially in jeopardy. So the first element of this that's so critical is that we're going to save hundreds of thousands of jobs across this country.

The second lens to be applied is that we're going to create new jobs, and that's going to be done both directly and indirectly. Directly it's going to happen, for example, through these infrastructure projects. That is going to put a lot of people to work. It's going to create a lot of new jobs, and it's also going to invest in things that we need to be doing.

We need to be repairing our bridges and our tunnels and our highways. We need to be improving mass transit. All of that can happen as a part of this stimulus package, but it's also going to create jobs indirectly because it's investing now in a green economy. It's investing in new energy technologies that are going to create the next generation of jobs in this country, and that can happen very quickly.

So, again, it meets this prescription of having two impacts: one, to create jobs in the near term; two, to invest in things that we want to do anyway in this country.

The third important element of this, of course, is to stimulate demand more broadly, and that can be done through the tax cut component of the bill. There is significant tax relief that is being offered to the working families of America. Ninety-five percent of the working families across this country are going to receive a tax cut. That means more money in their pocket. It means they can go out and they can purchase the things that they need, not purchase in excess which unfortunately was what has been happening in recent years, but to go out and purchase the things that they need and to stimulate the economy in that fashion.

And the final piece of this, which in my mind is almost the most important, is that it's going to help people get through this very, very difficult economic period that we're in. We are facing a grave situation in this country, and there are many people that are living on the edge. There are many people that have fallen over the edge.

This bill includes needed resources to support Medicaid programs across the country, to extend unemployment benefits and unemployment insurance to people who have lost their jobs. There are a lot of people that are suffering. There are a lot of families that are hurting right now across America, and one of the goals of this legislation is to help them get through this very difficult period.

Yesterday, I was with Secretary Salazar, the new Secretary of the Department of the Interior. We did an event at the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge, which is located in my district in Maryland, to highlight the upgrading of facilities that can occur at that

wildlife refuge in the near term using some of this stimulus resource. It's going to create jobs there. It's going to upgrade those facilities, which is a long-term investment in our wildlife refuge system across the country. So there are many different objectives that are being satisfied as a result of this investment.

A hundred thousand jobs in Maryland are projected to be saved or created as a result of this legislation. That is too critical for me and the other Representatives of my State to look away from. That's why we're going to so strongly support this bill.

And in closing, let me say that President Obama is not going to lead us out of this economic recession, and this Congress is not going to lead us out of this economic recession. What we are going to do is we are going to give the American people the tools and the opportunity and the hope so that they can lead us out of this economic recession. I am so confident that if we put our hopes and dreams into the American worker and we give them the tools to do the job, they're the ones that will lead us through this thing. And that's what this stimulus package is all about: giving the American worker the resources, the opportunity, the tools to lead us out of this difficult, difficult economic time.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman from Maryland.

You're absolutely right, and if we think about it, we're approximately 3 weeks from the inauguration of President Obama, and right now, we're on track for a historic Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act that he laid out principles before, during and after that inauguration. And I think all of us are very dedicated as Americans to making sure that we get it right.

It's not a question of how much time it takes to pass the bill. It's a question of getting it right, and I think that after weeks and weeks and weeks of getting experts and lots of people from back home and up here to help us understand what we need to do, the combination of the right tax cuts, the right investments will help us get it right.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to yield back to the Chair, and I want to thank you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) will control the remainder of the hour.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, we have a few minutes left in Mr. KLEIN's hour that he's allotted for discussing the Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and I think a lot of the speakers who have already had a chance to weigh in are going to kind of give their final closing arguments.

Again, we are hours away from the decision that's before this country, about whether or not to support President Obama's effort to turn this economy around, and I think it's so important, again, for the facts really to have an opportunity to be heard before that vote takes place.

Back in Connecticut, the head of The Carpenters Union, Chuck Appleby, once said at a hearing we had the other day on the need for infrastructure investment that the best social program is a job. A job provides people with wages. A good job provides people with wages and benefits, but even more importantly, it gives people dignity and confidence in themselves and their future, and that's what's missing right now.

We have seen an economy that's lost 3.6 million jobs in the last 13 months, and people are just hunkering down and pulling back because of a legitimate fear about not knowing where the future is headed and whether or not that future has a place for them. And President Obama gets that, and that's why this measure is aimed directly at stopping that hemorrhaging and making sure that we inject not just investment but also confidence back into the American economy.

I'd like to yield again for his final comments to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank my friend from Connecticut, and all of our districts and all of our States have similar problems, but I'd like to just in closing bring reality once again to the American people.

In my district of Louisville, Kentucky, my mayor faces a \$20 million shortage in his budget. He's trying to exact concessions from firefighters and police officers and sanitation workers.

My school district, one of the 20 largest school districts in the country, has a \$32 million deficit they're facing this year. He's looking at the prospect of laying off teachers and important staff and thereby jeopardizing the education of the children in my district.

In my State of Kentucky, the governor is facing an almost \$500 million deficit this year, and vital human services are having to be cut.

These are not because our State or our school district or our city is being mismanaged. In fact, they are being managed extremely well. The economy has just come to that situation in which everyone is suffering, and unfortunately, we in the Federal Government are the last resort.

This is a kitchen sink approach, I concede. We don't know for sure that it will work, but it is the only plan on the table right now. I think the best minds available have come to the conclusion that this is what can help us begin the road to recovery and providing jobs and a higher standard of living for our citizens.

That's why I strongly support this and urge my colleagues on both sides to vote for it. As my colleague from Maryland said, I know the American people will join us in the shared sacrifice and the shared effort it will take to restore the American economy. And I am not a pessimist. I am an optimist, but it is important that we instill and restore confidence in the American people by what we're doing. I think this plan is the right way to do it, and I look forward to voting for it.

Mr. COURTNEY. I thank Mr. YARMUTH for demonstrating what the stakes are in this vote that's coming up again in a few short hours.

Again, for closing comments, I'd like to yield to the gentlelady from Ohio, Congresswoman SUTTON.

Ms. SUTTON. I thank the gentleman from Connecticut and all of my colleagues who have risen here today to talk about what is so important for this country.

It's been said so well, but it bears again, as I've mentioned, repeating. Time is of the essence, and so here we are 3 weeks and 1 day from President Obama's inauguration, and we're on track to reach agreement on an historic Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We know it's going to create millions of jobs. We know that it is going to help 95 percent of American workers with tax cuts. It will begin the process of transforming our economy, and it contains that necessary unprecedented accountability and transparency.

But in its simplest form, in its simplest summary, this bill is all about restoring the promise of the middle class, restoring the promise that this country is founded on and has grown to greatness because of. You know, this is about our workers, and this is about our businesses. This is about our States and our communities and all the families and the people who live there.

It has components about health care. It has components about putting people to work, building things, our infrastructure that we all know is crumbling and has resulted in tragedy. And my good friend from Minnesota knows that all too well, as we watched that bridge crumble and lives were lost.

This is a great, challenging time for this country. But we do have opportunity in this moment, and this bill is the beginning of it because this is our beginning on the path back to restoring the promise of the middle class.

Mr. COURTNEY. I thank Congresswoman SUTTON for your, again, eloquent, colorful plea for manufacturing jobs and the middle class of America.

Here to bat cleanup and to finish the colloquy that has lasted over the last hour, again, is our good friend from Minnesota, Congressman WALZ.

Mr. WALZ. I thank the gentleman, and again, it's a privilege for me to speak with each of these Members who represent this great country: 435 congressional districts, 300 million Americans, all with a dream that this country, by working hard, by making good choices, you can achieve those things that are not asking for the world, maybe have a home, be able to own that, be able to have a job that pays a living wage, be able to send your kids to college and see them live that dream. That's what we're asking for, and as the gentlewoman said, now is the time for opportunity.

All of us grew up in this Nation hearing the stories of whenever it got tough, the perseverance of the Amer-

ican spirit survived. Whether it was Valley Forge, whether it was Gettysburg, whether it was the deepest, darkest days of segregation in this country, we come out the other end.

□ 1645

Well, the American people need to know this chapter is not yet written. The end is not guaranteed. We have come to be somewhat complacent that it will work its way out. We need leaders like President Obama. We need the American public to stand up and say, We can get this right.

And, as the gentlewoman from Ohio said, I am optimistic. In southern Minnesota, we are leading the way in wind production. My district is the home of the Mayo Clinic. We are going to find a cure for the diseases that cause so much anguish in this country. We have groups like the Hormel Institute, public-private partnerships teaming together to find the cures for cancer, for diabetes, for other things down the road.

Those innovations will bring this country back. Those innovations will take us off this dependency on cheap imported goods while American jobs are outsourced and a living wage is crushed down. We heard that the auto industry failed because people made a living wage.

Those are the type of things that aren't solutions. They are talking points for politics. The group of people who got here today, here's what they care about: Making sure the voice of the people in their district is heard, making sure that we have a level, fair playing field, and we reward work and creating something. That is what we are asking for. This piece of legislation moves us in that direction.

I thank the gentleman for his passion and the gentlewoman from Ohio and all others who gathered. We're all in this together. The opportunities are there. But the time to do something is now. This piece of legislation is it.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. WALZ. If we have a few seconds left, maybe we can squeeze in final comments from Congressman SARBANES. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. I think I have about 45 seconds. I just wanted to say this. I have been here 3 years. I don't know how long my career in this body will be. None of us do.

I am convinced that this is the most important vote I will ever cast on an economic measure that faces our country. And I will have to explain that vote for many years to come. And what I will say to people is, I did what I thought was right. And I think it is the right thing to do to pass this, for the American worker, for families across this country who are suffering, for people who just want a job so they can contribute. And that is why I am going to support the Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

SUDAN SPECIAL ENVOY

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

Mr. WOLF. I rise today to call on the Obama administration and Secretary of State Clinton to appoint a special envoy for the genocide that is taking place in Darfur. Senator BROWNBACK and I were the first Members of Congress to go to Darfur. The genocide continues, and yet there's almost the sound of silence.

This is a photo that SAM and I took of a village that had been bombed and the janjaweed come riding in on horseback. This is the janjaweed. They ride in, the Antonov bombers come over, they drop bombs here on these Russian-made bombers, then Soviet Hind helicopters come in and gun the people down. Then, the janjaweed people like this on horseback or camel come in, they rape the women, they burn, they torch the villages, then move on.

Now, President Bush put a lot of time in this effort. Unfortunately, it was not concluded. But I want to commend the Obama administration for appointing a special envoy for the Middle East, former Senator Mitchell and also former Ambassador Holbrooke, for a special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. But why not a special envoy for the people of Sudan and for Darfur?

We call on them in a letter that went out today, particularly, and also asking Secretary Clinton to, when she goes to China, to publicly and privately urge the Chinese to help bring about the end of genocide.

The Chinese have the largest embassy in Khartoum. They sell the weapons, the guns and all, to the Khartoum government, that are later given to the janjaweed to then continue this effort.

Five years of genocide. And, Secretary Clinton, when she was a Senator, voted, I'm sure, for the first Brownback amendment that designated this activity in Darfur as genocide.

So, in closing, Madam Speaker, I commend the administration for Mitchell in the Middle East. But when the people of Darfur are looking, they say, Special envoy to the Middle East, special envoy to Pakistan. Why not? Why not?

I urge them today, before the end of this month, hopefully, even before the end of this week, a special envoy to help the people of Darfur.

CONDITIONS IN THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to join you again this evening and to talk about the subject that is certainly on