

to restore confidence in the management of our government, in the prosecution of the war, and in the development of a stronger and more secure nation. We should not be providing more of a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, who have already enjoyed their fair share of tax cuts this year or for the Nation's most powerful corporations. Renewed fiscal discipline is important because we must maintain our standing in the world financial markets and ensure the solvency of the stock market.

Further, we do not know yet how much this war on terrorism will cost. We must make sure that our military personnel are well-equipped and well-trained and, as Secretary Rumsfeld has stated, this is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to be prepared to support the cost of a long war without spending erroneously at the outset.

But perhaps most importantly, we need to stimulate the economy by putting money in the hands of people who will spend it immediately. This is the true meaning of an economic stimulus.

We need to focus on ensuring unemployment relief, training and reemployment opportunities for workers laid off as a result of the terrorist attacks. We also need to help the unemployed maintain their health insurance and provide relief for laid-off workers who would otherwise slip through the cracks in the current unemployment insurance system. By providing unemployment benefits and health care coverage to those laid-off workers, we will be targeting those who are most likely to spend and, thus, most likely to help in reviving the economy.

If you give financial assistance, whether it is tax cuts or unemployment insurance, to people who can put the money in savings, they are not going to spend it; it is not going to stimulate the economy. If you provide unemployment or health benefits to a laid-off worker, they are going to spend it immediately. The rent is not discretionary. Food is not discretionary. Medicine is not discretionary. This is an effective economic stimulus.

I have introduced legislation that I believe can be an essential component of these efforts to help those affected by September 11. My bill, the COBRA Coverage Act of 2001, would provide a 50 percent tax credit toward COBRA coverage for laid-off workers. We simply cannot allow so many hard-working Americans and their families to go uninsured. We must find a way to make COBRA coverage more affordable for the thousands of laid-off workers trying to recover from the September 11 attacks.

This bill does exactly that. The COBRA Coverage Act of 2001 provides continuing health care coverage for laid-off workers at half the price. Under this legislation, laid-off workers would be eligible for a tax credit of 50 percent towards the COBRA coverage premium, receiving an immediate benefit, not having to wait till the end of

the year to claim the tax credit. Nearly identical legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators JEFFORDS, LINCOLN, CHAFEE, BAYH and SNOWE. Our bipartisan effort will ensure that American families can afford to remain insured in case of sickness or injury.

We must take the lead in ensuring that the thousands of hardworking Americans who have fallen victim to the effects of September 11 are not further set back by a lack of health insurance. We must remain diligent in our efforts to protect the American people, and that starts right here in the U.S. Congress.

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Our commitment to sound, effective government must be reflected in our ability to provide relief to laid off workers and jump start the economy during our war on terrorism.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort to make COBRA coverage more affordable for laid off workers and to offer the people of this country an economic stimulus package that actually works.

Mr. PALLONE. Reclaiming my time, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF). I do not think there is any questions that what is happening with the Republican leadership in terms of this economic stimulus package is very similar to what is happening on the aviation security issue. And that is, nothing is happening.

We know that last week when the Republican leadership put forward this so-called economic stimulus package, they knew full well it was not going to go anywhere. They were barely able to get the votes. I remember at one point at the end of votes there were more votes against it than for it. And we saw some of the Republican leaders going around and strong arming their colleagues so they could turn around a few votes. I think it ultimately passed by one or two votes maybe at the end.

We know the way the procedure works around here. If a bill passes on strictly a partisan vote and then it goes to the other body, the Senate, where the Democrats are in majority and totally disagree with this bill because of the way that is structured, that nothing is going to happen. There either never is a conference where the two Houses get together or if a conference occurs, there is no meeting of the minds.

So once again, just like with the issue of aviation security, my major criticism of the House Republican leadership and my colleagues who spoke earlier on the Republican side tonight is that they keep talking about the need to go to conference, which really means the need to delay, delay on aviation security, delay on economic stimulus. Meanwhile, the economy does not get any better and the problems with aviation security at the various airports continue.

I just think it is very sad. People want action. Regardless of whether we

agree or disagree they want action and we are not getting it. We are certainly not getting it on the part of this leadership on the Republican side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I know there is only a few minutes left, but I just want to point out the contrast which you did so well on what the Republicans had in mind with this economic stimulus package. I mentioned of the \$99.5 billion in tax cuts proposed for the next year, 2002, \$70.8 billion benefits corporation, \$14.8 billion benefits affluent individuals, and only \$1.37 billion goes to workers with lower incomes who did not get the previous rebate. A lot of it is even going to finance multi-nationals so the money would not even be spent here, which is incredible to me. How can you have an economic stimulus package when you have a provision that allows multi-national corporations to defer U.S. income taxes on profits from certain offshore activities so long as they are kept outside of the country. That is \$260 million next year, \$21.3 billion over 10 years.

Now, by contrast what we did, as was pointed out with our Democratic substitute, is provide rebates or tax breaks or unemployment compensation for displaced workers or money for aviation security and other investments in public infrastructure. That would be mean dollars immediately going into the economy either because the person who gets the unemployment compensation would spend it or because we would be hiring people for these various public infrastructure necessities such as the security that we talked about earlier this evening.

I do not understand. I do not know an economist on the face of the Earth who would suggest that what the Republicans tried to pass last week would do anything significant to benefit the economy. And I do not know what we do. I think the only thing we can do is to simply come here every night as we are, as Democrats, and demand action, demand that whether it is a security issue or an economic issue that the Republican leadership take some action, work in a bipartisan way so we can actually accomplish something. Nothing is being accomplished here. We just have to continue to demand that something be accomplished in a bipartisan way that can achieve some progress in these areas. But so far we are not getting it.

Mr. Speaker, with that I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

CIVIL RIGHTS ABUSES UPON
AFGHAN WOMEN

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, the subject I was going to speak on tonight is the treatment of women in Afghanistan.

In 1996, I had the opportunity with Senator Brown on the Senate side to

co-chair a hearing on what was underway in Afghanistan and that same year I organized a hearing on the House side here as well to call attention to the civil rights abuses that were occurring in that country and to call attention to the fact that Afghanistan was rapidly becoming a national security threat to the United States, and this is something that I have been speaking on over the years, the fact that in Afghanistan the terror and the chaos and the despair has become worse and worse year after year.

However, in the wake of September 11 and that terrorist attack on that day, many Americans are just beginning to learn about the horrific treatment of women in Afghanistan. The practice there of the Taliban of restricting the rights of women has even been explained by some as being in line with traditional practices and I have to say to the contrary. It is clear that the Taliban is at odds with Islam and Afghan society, especially in its treatment of women.

Prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, women there had the right to vote, along with other liberties enjoyed by most people around the world. But when the Taliban swept into power in 1997 that organization immediately institutionalized widespread and systemic gender apartheid. A government mandate made it unlawful for women and girls to go to work or to go to school.

This edict was a devastating blow to the women and to the country. And at that time women were a vital part of the Afghan workforce. They made up 70 percent of the school teachers, 40 percent of the doctors, 50 percent of government workers. They were 50 percent of university students. And with that edict none of them could continue to work or go to school.

Women under the Taliban regime have been subjected to remarkably harsh restrictions that impede their ability to move freely, to prevent them from socializing, to prevent them from seeking medical treatment. There is in place a complete ban on women working or receiving education outside the home. And to tell you how bad this is, the reality is that for one of the organizations that helped teach women how to read and write in the home, to be a member of that organization is to face capital punishment in Afghanistan.

If a woman leaves her home, she is required to don a head to toe garment known as a burqa, which has only a small mesh screen for vision. A designated close male relative also must always accompany her wherever she goes. If so much as an ankle is not covered she can be whipped in public.

There is a ban on the use of cosmetics. How is it enforced? Women with painted nails have had their fingernails pulled out by the Taliban authorities.

Women must paint their windows so that no one can see inside their home. Among other restrictions, women are

banned from laughing loudly, from riding in taxis, from playing sports or entering a sport center or club, from riding bicycles or motorcycles, gathering for festive occasions, playing cards, riding public buses with men and appearing on the balconies of their homes. Even owning a kite, flying a kite or keeping a caged bird can become a criminal offense.

If a woman is accused of disobeying prohibitions, a severe punishment is often administered. Women have been whipped, they have been beaten, they have been verbally abused in the streets, but I am afraid there have been many worse Taliban abuses than that. Women who have been accused of adultery have been stoned to death. Women accused of prostitution have been hanged in public. And I think many of us have viewed the film of the women who have defied Taliban edicts who were taken into the soccer stadium in Kabul, and before audiences of men seated there publicly executed in the stadium.

A few weeks ago on CNN the anchor was interviewing a Taliban official and the anchor reporter asked why there is no more soccer at the sports stadium which the European Union helped build before the Taliban's rise. The official was so brazen to answer, "If they build us another place to hold our executions, then we will play here."

Mr. Speaker, I did want to bring this condition to the attention of the Chair and to the Members.

AVIATION SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to come to the floor tonight on the eve of consideration by the House of Representatives of the Aviation and Transportation Security bill, which is scheduled for debate and consideration tomorrow before the House.

Tonight is Halloween. It is a time when sometimes people are frightened. It is a time when goblins and ghosts and images are raised. Unfortunately, in some of this debate about aviation and airline security there has been some scaring on this Halloween eve.

I happened to hear some of my previous colleagues who spoke about the aviation security measure. And I want to say from the Republican side of the aisle, from the majority side, that each and every one of us want to pass legislation that will ensure the safety, the security of every member of the traveling public. We think it is absolutely essential that we pass the best possible legislation.

Part of being an American is being able to go anywhere you want at any time without any restrictions. And we want people to feel safe, to be able to take to the air if they choose and feel secure anywhere they have takeoff,

whether it is a small airport in a rural area, in a small state or one of the metropolitan areas or one of the major hubs.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Aviation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I have tried to work in a bipartisan manner. I have only had this responsibility for some 8 or 9 months and, of course, was thrust into the limelight by the events of September 11.

I have tried to approach my responsibility in a business-like fashion. Particularly since I took office, one of my concerns has been aviation security. I have gone around and around about issues of aviation security with FAA from, I believe, February, when I first took on this position, and from the beginning I have been concerned that we have not properly prioritized the risk that the travelling public has taken. In fact, I have had communications back and forth to the Security Director of FAA, who has now been replaced and removed, but we went back and forth in regard to the deployment of equipment that sat idle in regard to setting priorities, in regard to instituting on a more expedited basis security measures.

Unfortunately, some of that was not done as of September 11. Now it is very important that this Congress act in a responsible fashion and craft legislation that deals with not just the political questions that have made the headlines and have been the center of some of the debate, screeners and their role as in any new proposed structure as either Federal employees or private sector employees, but looking at the larger picture of aviation security.

Even going beyond that, one of the things we have done is sat down, and it is amazing. When I sat down and looked at who is responsible for transportation security, under the current structure it is almost impossible to pinpoint who has that responsibility in the Department of Transportation.

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Then we look at the other modes of transportation. Of course everyone is now focused on aviation, but when we look at highways and hazardous materials and trucking, we look at pipelines, we look at our ports, we look at any type of transportation security and we see that there is no one, if we look at a chart of organization, in charge with the specific responsibility and also the authority to move on issues of security. So that is one of the glaring examples that we all found lacking.

We find actually in the Senate proposed bill that they do create a new Deputy Under Secretary of Transportation Security in a measure that will be before the House tomorrow, and the House Republican majority proposal also has that provision. To start out, when we look at the problems of transportation security and see no one in