

Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly do to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and restore it as soon as it may be consistent with Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and union."

President Abraham Lincoln was lastly a man who understood and cherished liberty and knew where its threats would be presented. As he said in January of 1838: "At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth in their military chest, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a thousand years of trial. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer: If it ever reach us, it must spring up from among us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a Nation of free men, we must live through all time or die by suicide."

February 12, 1809, a day the world and America became richer.

WASHINGTON, DC, IS OPEN AND SAFE AND WAITING FOR YOU

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have just come from a fair I am sponsoring, along with the D.C. Chamber of Congress, called "Ask Me About Washington." It is a service we are providing to Members and staff, along with a free lunch, that we think may be especially needed this year.

The Galleries are empty, my colleagues. There is a reason. This is an election year. They should be full. But our constituents need information and need reassurance that the barricades and the ugly security do not send a message that we are trying to tell them something: stay away; your Member of Congress does not want to see you this year.

I do not think so, but that will be the effect unless we reach out and become more proactive. The fact is elected officials never want people to stay away.

We cannot help it that the security is not as it was. It is being fixed. We sympathize with the Architect of the Capitol and the police board, but we have to do something in the meantime.

I have distributed a fact sheet that I hope Members will send to their own constituents in their constituent mail simply telling them what are absolutely unknown facts for most of them: that Reagan National Airport will be 77 percent up by March 1; telling them everything is open, and all the rest. I think my colleagues will find it informational; and more than that, I think Members will find their constituents will find that they are getting word from Washington that they have not gotten in a long time, not since September 11.

The fact is we have been winging it because we have never had anything like September 11: ad hoc decisions; this open, this closed, this barricade up, this one comes down, a new one comes up. West front steps get closed down. Now that is something we need to hear more about. That is part of the great wonderful axis of Washington created by L'Enfant himself. We need to know more about that, because there ought to be ways to open that up if we just think a little harder.

Do not think I give short shrift to security. I live here 7 days a week, my colleagues; and 600,000 of my constituents live here. We want this place safe, and in fact we do believe it is the safest city in America because this is the Nation's capitol. We know that AWACs and those F-16s are up 24-7. Our constituents do not know. My colleagues' constituents do not know, that is. They need to be told that their Members of Congress want to see them this year, the way we want to see them every year.

Honestly, I do not believe that it is beyond American ingenuity to find ways to be safe and secure and open and democratic at the same time. We have to try harder. Some of the things we need to do are absolutely simple. I have been having conversations with the White House and have suggested that if people left their Social Security numbers, the way they have to anyway if they want to visit someone in the White House, that the White House tours could be open. And I am grateful the White House has decided to open tours to student groups.

So that means we are getting somewhere just because they have begun to think harder. The White House, after a great protest from the press and others when the Christmas tree lighting ceremony closed down, decided to open it up simply by putting the same glass around the President they use during the inauguration. Some of this is not rocket science, but it does require us to think a little harder than we did before September 11.

I will have a bill that I will ask Members to cosponsor called The Open Society With Security bill, because I think we need a Presidential commission to

step back and look at how we run an open society when there is global terrorism all around us. I think such a commission would help us get our bearings so that we would not be under the pressure we are under today to make decisions as we go along.

We are doing quite well. We can do much better. The White House is doing much better. The capitol tours are open. Washington is open. Only the monument, which was closed for renovations, is not open. A tour of the Pentagon can be arranged ahead of time. But our constituents do not know that.

I want Members' constituents to come visit Washington because, obviously, that helps my economy; but my colleagues want them to come for a reason which is equally important to them. We do not want a full year in which people think that this is an uninviting place and that this is not the year to come to see their Member of Congress. It is not only an election year; it is the year after September 11. It is a year when we want to make the point that terrorists cannot close us down.

We set the example in the Nation's capitol by opening ourselves up and sending the message that the whole country should be open.

HOUSE LEADERSHIP URGED TO CONSIDER ACCELERATED DEPRECIATION IN STIMULUS PACKAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today our Nation is at war. We are in a war against terrorism. We are working to build our homeland security, and we are suffering an economic recession. Our Commander in Chief, President Bush, is demonstrating strong, resolute leadership in the war against terrorism. We must not forget that the war against terrorism will last a long time, not just months, but likely years. The war against terrorism will not end in Afghanistan. The al Qaeda terrorism network has a presence in 65 nations, and tens of thousands of terrorists have gone through their death training camps.

Part of winning the war on terrorism is also getting our economy moving again. Clearly, the terrorist attack was directed at our economy. If we look back and remember 1 year ago this month, when President Bush was sworn into office on the east front in inaugural ceremonies, he inherited a weakening economy, an economy which was getting weaker and Americans were beginning to lose their jobs. He proposed a tax cut, a tax cut he said that would put extra money in the pocketbooks of America's consumers, giving them more money to spend at home for their families' needs.

That was enacted into law in June. By Labor Day, economists were telling us the tax cut was working on getting our economy moving again. Unfortunately, the tragedy of the terrorist attacks on September 11 occurred and that tragedy cost thousands of Americans their lives. It was a terrible tragedy, but also it also gave a psychological blow to our economy, causing investors and consumers to step back from decisions they had made prior to September 11. Unfortunately, by stepping back from those decisions, it cost hundreds of thousands, and almost a million, Americans their jobs.

Today, over a million Americans have lost their jobs since the terrorist attacks on September 11, tens of thousands in the area that I represent in the Chicago area. To win the war against terrorism, we must get this economy moving again. We must give Americans the opportunity to go back to work.

I would note that this House, the House of Representatives, has twice, in October and in December, acted to get the economy moving again, passing a bipartisan economic stimulus plan and sending it over to the Senate. Unfortunately, partisan politics prevented our efforts from succeeding in getting to the President's desk and signature into law. I believe we must not give up on our efforts to revitalize this economy and give Americans the opportunity to go back to work.

During these times, some Democratic leaders have called for a tax increase. I am proud to say that this past week the House spoke loud and clear stating opposition overwhelmingly to a Democratic proposal to repeal the Bush tax cut. No economist says that we should raise taxes in a recession, but that we should bring spending under control.

I want to take this opportunity to urge our leadership, as they consider what to do next, to once again move legislation to stimulate our economy and to bring economic security for American workers. I want to rise to suggest one provision that I believe must be included in that package that we send to the President, a provision that is a strong stimulation for our economy. Many of us know it as accelerated depreciation, or depreciation reform, or expensing, or bonus depreciation.

The provision, which has strong bipartisan support in this House, provides for 30 percent expensing, giving faster or quicker cost recovery for a business that buys an asset. Think about it. When someone buys a pickup truck or a computer or security equipment, there is a worker somewhere in America who manufactures that product. There is a worker that is going to install it and service it. And of course there is going to be a worker who is going to operate that piece of equipment. Accelerated depreciation, the 30 percent expensing provision rewards investment in those kinds of jobs.

I would note the only way to take advantage of that tax incentive is to in-

vest and buy and create jobs. Many businesses back home that I know of, since September 11, are also upgrading their security and their safety measures in their plants. Accelerated depreciation will help them better afford to make their plants and places of work safer and more secure for their employees and visitors.

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Over the next few days, decisions are going to be made on how we can better help by extending unemployment benefits. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and President Bush have urged a tax credit to help the uninsured with health care insurance. That is a good idea, and I believe that should be part of that final package. But I also believe that we mean to combine the unemployment benefits and the health care benefits with incentives to invest in the creation of jobs. Accelerated depreciation of a 30 percent expensing component will help put Americans back to work.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter signed by almost three dozen Members of this House, a letter circulated by myself and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), urging our leadership to include accelerated depreciation in any package that goes to the President, and I include that for the RECORD.

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 6, 2002.

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

DEAR SPEAKER HASTERT: We are disappointed by the recent breakdown in negotiations in the Senate on a meaningful economic stimulus package. We firmly believe that Congress can help balance the desire to promote economic growth with efforts to help those workers who have lost their jobs due to the recession.

If the Senate sends the House a bill extending unemployment benefits by 13 weeks, we would encourage you to add the one major economic growth component that is bipartisan and agreed upon by almost everyone, the 30% accelerated depreciation bonus for new investments. Not only is this provision bipartisan, but it is widely supported by most businesses and business groups.

The combination of a temporary unemployment compensation and the 30% bonus depreciation proposal would provide an excellent balance between providing a helping hand to workers out of work and struggling because of the recession and the desire to foster economic growth. The most important feature of the accelerated depreciation proposal is that in order for businesses to take advantage of the bonus, a decision must be made to purchase and invest in new equipment. When businesses make these investments, employees are put back to work engineering, building, installing and operating the new products, thereby stimulating and growing the economy. This type of stimulus is exactly what the economy needs to pull out of the current recession.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you on this proposal.

Sincerely,

JERRY WELLER.
FRED UPTON.
CAL DOOLEY.

UNEMPLOYED AMERICAN WORKERS NEED ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, later this week the House will adjourn for district work period in honor of Presidents Day and give us an opportunity to go home and talk to our constituents. It is a tragedy before we adjourn, we will not deal with the problems of unemployment. Those who were unemployed prior to September 11, who have been unemployed for many, many months, those who were unemployed as a result of September 11 because of the downturn in the economy because of that tragic event against this country, but both of these categories of the unemployed need our help. They are exhausting their unemployment benefits.

Close to a million people have exhausted their unemployment benefits. Many of those who were unemployed were working in occupations that were at the margins. They were not able to build up extensive savings accounts or a rainy day fund for their family. They were not able to pay their mortgage in advance or car payments in advance. When the checks stopped, they were in trouble.

I have now listened to many of these workers in California, Indiana and New Jersey who have testified that they worked for 15 years, 10 years, 8 years, women in professional jobs at banks, truck drivers, people who worked in the dot-com industry, and now they are in serious financial trouble because they are in the process of exhausting their unemployment benefits.

Last week the Senate took the necessary step to extend it for an additional 13 weeks. Last week the House of Representatives did nothing. This week the House of Representatives will do nothing. It is incredible the insensitivity of the Republican leadership to the needs of these hard-working American families. These are people who have really, really good work records. They have been trying to provide for their families for many years. A young man who worked for Sunkist Corporation in California told our meeting that he had been driving a truck for 15 years, he was able to buy a home a few months ago, and now he is scrambling to pay the mortgage. He is invading his retirement benefits and 401(k) to try to save his house. This is not an unusual story.

There is also the issue of over 2 million people who have lost health care benefits because of unemployment. Congress has failed to respond. One of the proposals was to help them provide the payment of the COBRA benefit that allows workers to continue the employer's health insurance plan until