

North Carolina as a disaster area, making low-interest loans available to our farmers. USDA also provided for emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program lands, something our livestock producers appreciated. While this assistance is welcome, it does not come even close to meeting the losses that our farmers have suffered.

In addition, many farmers cannot afford to increase their debt burden with new loans. Farmers need more help than just new credit and comforting words; they need direct disaster payments, and they need them now so they can start a new crop year.

For several months we have been pushing for more agriculture disaster relief, along with a bipartisan group of lawmakers representing States that were affected by the drought last summer. We were extremely hopeful last year when the United States Senate voted in favor of a disaster package as part of the 2003 interior appropriations bill. Their plan would provide almost \$6 billion in assistance for our farmers.

In fact, I cosponsored a bill here in the House introduced by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) which matched the Senate's disaster bill. Unfortunately, the administration opposed these agriculture disaster plans. Instead, the President demanded that any disaster assistance be paid for by cutting the farm bill that we passed last year.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a proud bipartisan tradition of coming to the aid of States when they have been struck by natural calamities. When tragedy strikes, we do not let States fend for themselves; we instead respond as one Nation. Whether it is an earthquake in California, wildfires in the Rockies, floods in the Midwest, or hurricanes in Florida, Congress worries more about how best to help these people who have suffered and less about how we pay for it at the moment. The drought which affected my State and much of the West and East Coast deserves the same level of treatment by Congress as these other disasters.

In fact, historically, drought is one of the most costly natural disasters that have struck any region of this country. I call upon this House to show this administration that we understand what is really going on in the farm country and that we are prepared to come to their assistance in their time of need.

As my colleagues know, the Senate included in the 2003 omnibus appropriations bill \$3.1 billion for disaster assistance. Consequently, at the administration's insistence, the Senate was forced to cut education, veterans benefits, and a number of FBI agents. Now, I do not understand this. The President is proposing deficit funding for his massive \$674 billion tax plan, which will do nothing to help the economy and middle-class Americans. However, when we ask for his support for emergency spending for just 1 percent, \$6 billion, to help farmers who suffered from an

act of God and who could lose their entire livelihood, the President says no.

I urge the conference committee to reject these cuts, continue our bipartisan tradition and fully fund agriculture disaster relief as we have done in the past. The Nation's farmers are waiting and watching. Let us not disappoint them.

□ 1100

#### PRESIDENTIAL CREDIBILITY GAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, we all know that tonight the President will deliver his State of the Union Address, and that is often and is supposed to be an opportunity to reflect upon the state of the Nation, the economy, foreign policy, the potential war, and health care, which are just some of the issues that we expect the President to address this evening.

My concern, and I have shared this concern with many of my Democratic colleagues, is that the President constantly comes forward and talks about what he is going to do to address the Nation's problems, to deal with the economy, for example, to deal with health care, for example, but many times those promises are not kept in terms of what action he actually follows up with to meet the commitments that he makes.

I call it a credibility gap. Some of my colleagues on the Democratic side have taken notice of this credibility gap over the last 2 days; and I wanted to particularly mention that today because when I opened the New York Times this morning, I saw a column by Paul Krugman where he actually references a credibility problem with the President, and he talks about it in the context of not only tonight's State of the Union Address, but also in comparison to last year's State of the Union Address to basically draw out the conflict between what the President says he is going to do versus what he actually does.

I would like to quote some sections of Paul Krugman's column and talk about it because I think this is very important in the context of tonight's State of the Union Address.

The column says whether Mr. Bush is held accountable for the promises he made in his last State of the Union Address is a major issue. Krugman says that the President "assured those who worried about red ink last year that 'our budget will run a deficit that will be small and short-lived.' He offered comfort for those who remembered his father's 'jobless recovery,' which felt like a continuing recession: 'When America works, America prospers, so my economic security plan can be summed up in one word: Jobs.'

"Fast-forward a year. We now know that the 'small' budget deficit will rise above \$300 billion, and stay there. Even the administration's own, ever-optimistic budget officials now concede that we face deficits as far as the eye can see. Meanwhile, payrolls continue to decline; since the working-age population keeps rising, it's becoming ever harder for ordinary Americans to get jobs, or keep them.

"And there's a good chance things will get a lot worse; with markets sliding, consumers wilting, businesses fearful about the effects of war and oil prices rising, the pieces are in place for a full-blown double-dip recession. And the second dip would take us much further down than the first."

I think this is of a major concern to me. The President identifies that we have an economic problem, that we have an economic downturn, and he says that he is going to do something about it, but what is he actually proposing? The heart of his economic proposal or package is eliminating the tax on corporate dividends, eliminating the tax on essentially the stock market dividends.

Americans know that is not going to accomplish anything. It is not going to do anything to stimulate the economy. It is not going to put money in people's pockets or create jobs. So again, there is a credibility gap. There is recognition on the part of the President that there is a problem with the economy, but the actions that he seeks to take, unfortunately, will not correct the problem.

The President talks about homeland security. He talks about the war on terrorism, both internationally and here at home, but as my colleague from California earlier this morning pointed out, money is not going back to the States and the localities for homeland security. Money is not going back for civil defense or to help the localities or the people that were affected in New Jersey, in my case, directly by the World Trade Center. Many of our towns are complaining that they are not getting the promised funding to deal with the homeland security problem.

The President last year talked about how the deficit was going to be small, but we know that his economic plan will cause huge deficits. We are told if we implement his economic stimulus package and we make the tax cuts permanent that he proposed last year, and we have to fight a war in Iraq, we may end up with a deficit that is over \$2 trillion.

Think about what the President says about veterans. He promises to be a champion for our veterans, but he cuts funding for VA health clinics, forcing 164,000 veterans to be turned away.

He promises that he is going to expand Medicare to include a drug benefit, but instead of actually doing something now to make a difference for seniors, he blocks generic drug legislation that will lower costs for seniors and for those who want to have access to lower-priced drugs right now.

Mr. Speaker, on every one of these issues, look at what the President says tonight. In many cases it is misleading and false promises. It is a credibility gap that we are facing in terms of what he says he is going to do as opposed to what he actually does in these very troubled times.

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#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 5 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

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□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at noon.

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#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: As we anticipate the President's State of the Union Address to Congress and the Nation this evening, come let us approach the Lord with praise and thanksgiving. With all humility, let us approach the Lord.

Come, Members of the House and Senate, all who work on Capitol Hill, all Americans, come. Let us join together in honest prayer for our President, George W. Bush, our country, and the world, which watches us with great expectations.

If, in themselves, the awesome tasks of leadership in our times, the great responsibility of homeland defense and efforts to end terrorism around the world do not humble us before the Lord, let us approach the Lord on an even deeper level of faith says the Psalmist.

Trusting in the Lord's continued goodness and guidance, let us approach the Lord with praise and thanksgiving.

As Americans, let us humbly praise God for all His blessings throughout our history. Let us thank God for our three branches of accountable government, our brave military forces and the common sense of people who desire a more perfect Union, and so establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and posterity.

Forever will we praise and thank You, O Lord. Amen.

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#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

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#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RUPPERSBERGER)

come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair desires to announce that the practice of reserving seats prior to the joint session by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

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#### DESIGNATING MAJORITY MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 33) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 33

*Resolved*, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Agriculture: Mr. Combest; Mr. Boehner; Mr. Pombo; Mr. Smith of Michigan; Mr. Everett; Mr. Lucas of Oklahoma; Mr. Moran of Kansas; Mr. Jenkins; Mr. Gutknecht; Mr. Ose; Mr. Hayes; Mr. Pickering; Mr. Johnson of Illinois; Mr. Osborne; Mr. Pence; Mr. Rehberg; Mr. Graves; Mr. Putnam; Mr. Janklow; Mr. Burns; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Rogers of Alabama; Mr. King of Iowa; Mr. Choccola; Mrs. Musgrave and Mr. Nunes.

Committee on Appropriations: Mr. Regula; Mr. Lewis of California; Mr. Rogers of Kentucky; Mr. Wolf; Mr. Kolbe; Mr. Walsh; Mr. Taylor of North Carolina; Mr. Hobson; Mr. Istook; Mr. Bonilla; Mr. Knollenberg; Mr. Kingston; Mr. Frelinghuysen; Mr. Wicker; Mr. Nethercutt; Mr. Cunningham; Mr. Tiahrt; Mr. Wamp; Mr. Latham; Mrs. Northup; Mr. Aderholt; Mrs. Emerson; Ms. Granger; Mr. Peterson of Pennsylvania; Mr. Goode; Mr. Doolittle; Mr. LaHood; Mr. Sweeney; Mr. Vitter; Mr. Sherwood; Mr. Weldon of Florida; Mr. Simpson; Mr. Culberson; Mr. Kirk and Mr. Crenshaw.

Committee on Armed Services: Mr. Weldon of Pennsylvania; Mr. Hefley; Mr. Saxton; Mr. McHugh; Mr. Everett; Mr. Bartlett; Mr. McKeon; Mr. Thornberry; Mr. Hostettler; Mr. Jones of North Carolina; Mr. Ryun of Kansas; Mr. Gibbons; Mr. Hayes; Mrs. Wilson of New Mexico; Mr. Calvert; Mr. Simmons; Mrs. Jo Ann Davis of Virginia; Mr. Schrock; Mr. Akin; Mr. Forbes; Mr. Miller of Florida; Mr. Wilson of South Carolina; Mr. LoBiondo; Mr. Cole; Mr. Bradley of New Hampshire; Mr. Bishop of Utah; Mr. Turner of Ohio; Mr. Kline; Mrs. Miller of Michigan; Mr. Gingrey; Mr. Rogers of Alabama and Mr. Franks of Arizona.

Committee on the Budget: Mr. Gutknecht; Mr. Thornberry; Mr. Ryun of Kansas; Mr. Toomey; Mr. Hastings of Washington; Mr. Schrock; Mr. Brown of South Carolina; Mr. Putnam; Mr. Tancredo; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Franks of Arizona; Mr. Garrett; Mr. Barrett of South Carolina; Mr. McCotter; Mr. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida and Mr. Hensarling.

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Mr. Petri; Mr. Ballenger; Mr. Hoekstra; Mr. McKeon; Mr. Castle; Mr. Sam Johnson of Texas; Mr. Greenwood; Mr. Souder; Mr. Norwood; Mr. Upton; Mr. Ehlers; Mr. DeMint; Mr. Isakson; Mrs. Biggert; Mr. Platts; Mr. Tiberi; Mr. Keller; Mr. Osborne; Mr. Wilson of South Carolina; Mr. Cole; Mr. Porter; Mr. Kline; Mr. Carter; Mrs. Musgrave and Mrs. Blackburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Mr. Bilirakis; Mr. Barton of Texas; Mr. Upton; Mr. Stearns; Mr. Gillmor; Mr. Greenwood; Mr. Cox; Mr. Deal of Georgia; Mr. Burr; Mr. Whitfield; Mr. Norwood; Mrs. Cubin; Mr. Shimkus; Mrs. Wilson of New Mexico; Mr. Shadegg; Mr. Pickering; Mr. Fossella; Mr. Blunt; Mr. Buyer; Mr. Radanovich; Mr. Bass; Mr. Pitts; Mrs. Bono; Mr. Walden of Oregon; Mr. Terry; Mr. Fletcher; Mr. Ferguson; Mr. Rogers of Michigan; Mr. Issa and Mr. Otter.

Committee on Financial Services: Mr. Leach; Mr. Bereuter; Mr. Baker; Mr. Bachus; Mr. Castle; Mr. King of New York; Mr. Royce; Mr. Lucas of Oklahoma; Mr. Ney; Mrs. Kelly; Mr. Paul; Mr. Gillmor; Mr. Ryun of Kansas; Mr. LaTourette; Mr. Manzullo; Mr. Jones of North Carolina; Mr. Ose; Mrs. Biggert; Mr. Green of Wisconsin; Mr. Toomey; Mr. Shays; Mr. Shadegg; Mr. Fossella; Mr. Gary Miller of California; Ms. Hart; Mrs. Capito; Mr. Tiberi; Mr. Kennedy of Minnesota; Mr. Feeney; Mr. Hensarling; Mr. Garrett; Mr. Murphy; Ms. Ginny Brown-Waite of Florida; Mr. Barrett of South Carolina; Ms. Harris and Mr. Renzi.

Committee on Government Reform: Mr. Burton; Mr. Shays; Ms. Ros-Lehtinen; Mr. McHugh; Mr. Mica; Mr. Souder; Mr. LaTourette; Mr. Ose; Mr. Lewis of Kentucky; Mrs. Jo Ann Davis of Virginia; Mr. Platts; Mr. Cannon; Mr. Putnam; Mr. Schrock; Mr. Duncan; Mr. Sullivan; Mr. Deal of Georgia; Mrs. Miller of Michigan; Mr. Murphy; Mr. Turner of Ohio; Mr. Carter; Mr. Janklow; and Mrs. Blackburn.

Committee on International Relations: Mr. Leach; Mr. Bereuter; Mr. Smith of New Jersey; Mr. Burton of Indiana; Mr. Gallegly; Ms. Ros-Lehtinen; Mr. Ballenger; Mr. Rohrabacher; Mr. Royce; Mr. King of New York; Mr. Chabot; Mr. Houghton; Mr. McHugh; Mr. Tancredo; Mr. Paul; Mr. Smith of Michigan; Mr. Pitts; Mr. Flake; Mrs. Jo Ann Davis of Virginia; Mr. Green of Wisconsin; Mr. Weller; Mr. Pence; Mr. McCotter; Mr. Janklow and Ms. Harris.

Committee on the Judiciary: Mr. Hyde; Mr. Coble; Mr. Smith of Texas; Mr. Gallegly; Mr. Goodlatte; Mr. Chabot; Mr. Jenkins; Mr. Cannon; Mr. Bachus; Mr. Hostettler; Mr. Green of Wisconsin; Mr. Keller; Ms. Hart; Mr. Flake; Mr. Pence; Mr. Forbes; Mr. King of Iowa; Mr. Carter; Mr. Feeney and Mrs. Blackburn.

Committee on Resources: Mr. Young of Alaska; Mr. Tauzin; Mr. Saxton; Mr. Gallegly; Mr. Duncan; Mr. Hefley; Mr. Gilchrest; Mr. Calvert; Mr. McInnis; Mrs. Cubin; Mr. Radanovich; Mr. Jones of North Carolina; Mr. Cannon; Mr. Peterson of Pennsylvania; Mr. Gibbons; Mr. Souder; Mr. Walden of Oregon; Mr. Tancredo; Mr. Hayworth; Mr. Osborne; Mr. Flake; Mr. Rehberg; Mr. Renzi; Mr. Cole; Mr. Pearce; Mr. Bishop of Utah and Mr. Nunes.

Committee on Science: Mr. Smith of Texas; Mr. Shays; Mr. Weldon of Pennsylvania; Mr. Rohrabacher; Mr. Barton of Texas; Mr. Calvert; Mr. Smith of Michigan; Mr. Bartlett of Maryland; Mr. Ehlers; Mr. Gutknecht; Mr. Nethercutt; Mr. Lucas of Oklahoma; Mrs. Biggert; Mr. Akin; Mr. Johnson of Illinois; Ms. Hart; Mr. Sullivan; Mr. Forbes; Mr. Gingrey; Mr. Bishop of Utah; Mr. Burgess and Mr. Bonner.

Committee on Small Business: Mr. Combest; Mr. Bartlett of Maryland; Mrs. Kelly;