

Pete Laney, David Farabee, I appreciate what they have done. Texas will be a better State because of the actions that they have taken on behalf of the people of Texas; and hopefully all of the legislature, both sides of the aisle, will come to their senses and will stop letting Washington determine how the Texas legislature should be run. Texans can take care of Texas.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 53 DEMOCRATS OF THE TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today in the U.S. House and say congratulations to our heroes, our 53 heroes in Texas of the Texas House of Representatives. They are fighting for some basic principles, the heroes of democracy. Texas Democrats have used the last tool provided to them. For so many of them from the Texas House to agree to walk out demonstrates the depth of their commitment, the strength of their purpose, and the nobility of their cause.

This is not just about a map. It is about a democratic process, participation in the rights of the minority to have a voice in the process. Republicans in Texas need to learn that having power and using it wisely are not the same thing. Rather than waste time on divisive redistricting schemes pushed on by the Washington Republican leaders, Texas Republicans should have focused on the truly pressing business before the Texas legislature and before Texas, such as issues of balancing the budget, such as the issues of encouraging economic growth, such as the issues of enhancing educational opportunities both for public education and higher education, as well as providing health care access to our children and families.

As Texans, we recognize that we have the largest number of uninsured in Texas, and we recognize that we need more resources. We ought to be trying to solve those issues rather than doing what is being done now.

So I want to take this time to congratulate them in putting their personal interests aside. These 53 Democrats, members of the Texas House of Representatives have said enough is enough. "Basta." United, these brave Texans have hailed and created and made move and have inspired all of Texas to do the right thing.

I want to take this time to recognize the newspapers and the editorials that have been in their favor. When we look at the Houston Chronicle editorials, the San Antonio editorials. And if I can, I will read the San Antonio Express-News editorial which summed it up when they said "... the House has pushed through a variety of measures that have more to do with the enthu-

siasms of ideologues than with the good of the State. A totally inadequate State budget is the most egregious sin."

"Coming in a close second is the blatantly partisan congressional redistricting scheme . . . concocted up by White House political guru Karl Rove and U.S. Representative TOM DELAY . . ." the Express-News indicated.

Taking these cues from the majority leader's office here in Washington, Texas Republicans want to deny Texas voters the choice they have to make. They want to impose a congressional quota. Texas voters said no, and now Texas Democrats say no.

If we look at my particular district, I am given close to 20 or 30 additional counties. At the present time I represent San Antonio and south; and if we look at the map, my district is completely wiped out and given to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA), who will go now all the way to Austin. My district from San Antonio was stretched 600 miles to the borders with New Mexico and takes 40-something thousand people from El Paso. If we look all the way from San Antonio all the way down to El Paso, over 600 miles. So when we look at those types of interests and we look at what has been done by the maps, we know that they are maps basically for purposes of grabbing power.

The law says that the States have an obligation to draw their lines during the process of the census. If the State chooses to do this now, it will set a very negative precedent. It will basically say that anytime someone else takes power and decides to gerrymander or knock off someone because they choose to get angry with them, they can redraw the lines at any time during the decade and come back and be able to change their lines so that someone else will not win.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the members, especially those that I am really proud of, especially Representative Carlos Uresti, Representative Puente, Representative Guillen, and Representative Villarreal, and Representative Kino Flores.

#### HONORING THE 53 DEMOCRATS OF THE TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have heard over the past 1½ to 2 hours a number of Members come to the floor of the House and cite a prestigious and prominent group of Americans known to us as the Texas Dems 53, Texas Dems 51, just plain brave Texans, heroes and heroes and simply Americans.

The issue may be confusing because I might imagine that it becomes isolated as a finite, narrow political debate. But today in discussing this issue, I encour-

age individuals who are inquiring about this process to read the Madison papers to understand the process of debate that was the very underpinning of the Constitutional Convention that helped design this Nation and this democracy. If they would do that, they would understand that, in fact, those who are standing about the process that does not work in Texas are actually brave and important components to the history of this State and the history of this Nation.

It is extremely important to recognize that these individuals, 53 Democrats, have tried over and over again to be collegiate and collaborative in working on behalf of the interests of the people of Texas in the shadow of a war that was fought to promote the ideals of this Nation. Is it not shameful that these Democrats coming from all over the State of Texas, rural, urban and otherwise, is it not important to note that all they wanted to do is to represent their constituents?

On the question of the budget in Texas, they wanted to add amendments to protect those children who are being cut, 270,000 of them being cut, if the Members will, from the children's health insurance program. They wanted to stop the abusive restructuring of Medicaid so that less and less people could utilize the services. They wanted to make sure that we continued the access of the graduates of 2003 to the institutions of higher learning by funding those institutions of higher learning at higher percentages. Mr. Speaker, they wanted to do their job.

But yet, what was fostered upon them was an ugly redistricting map that could not be called anything but a grab of power, a denigration of the Voter Rights Act of 1965, a disrespect of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and an absolute coup d'etat as it relates to power in America. As so stated by the leader of this particular body, majority leader, we are in power in Austin, we are in power in Washington, there will be no compromise.

So those of us who are attempting to work on behalf of this State wondered why this kind of meat, if the Members will, cutter was used to draw the district, and frankly here is why. This is a district, the kind of district that we could almost imagine that the courts will find ridiculous. Here is the fifth ward of Texas where Barbara Jordan was born. We can see how it dips down into a totally unrelated district, catches it so it can go all the way here and become a district. Why? No one knows. But this is the ninth district; and it used to have NASA, hardworking people like the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) and of course his predecessors that have worked so hard to ensure the funding for NASA that Lyndon Baines Johnson originated on behalf of America.

All of a sudden now, this has moved out of the traditional communities of interest and moved into a district totally unrelated and happens to belong

to the majority leader of this body. Interestingly enough, the 18th congressional district has had the downtown community, a synergism of communities of interest. Now the 18th district, the historic district that saw Mickey Leland and Barbara Jordan and other great leaders come out of, no longer exists in its historic origins. The downtown is eliminated, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to find out why a meatcutter was taken to this for personal interest apparently.

So I simply want to thank Stanley Toliver who called all the way from Ohio to applaud us and give us a good idea to again support these great heroes; and I again want to support, Mr. Speaker, as I close, Representatives Thompson, Coleman, Noreiga, Jessica Farrar, Joe Moreno, Kevin Bailey, Scott Hochberg, and all the other 51, 53 that are standing tall. Never give up.

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#### JOBS AND GROWTH TAX PLAN TO PRODUCE JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, every time that I walk into this Chamber I am awed and I am overwhelmed, when you think of the history that has taken place here in this Chamber, in this hall, and the speeches that have also been proclaimed and stated within these walls.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, I heard some really eloquent speeches as well, some spectacularly eloquent speeches, some of them criticizing the job proposal that this House has passed, the job proposal plan that the President has proposed.

I also heard, Mr. Speaker, some great examples of not letting the facts get in the way of the rhetoric. I have seen some wonderful examples here as to how to just disregard the facts and let us go forward with the rhetoric and hope that you can confuse people, Mr. Speaker.

But the American people, Mr. Speaker, are not easily confused. The Jobs and Growth Tax Act, which is really based on the jobs and growth plan that we passed last week, is a comprehensive approach to creating jobs. We heard criticism after criticism after criticism of that plan; but what you

will notice is that not once, not once, was a proposal spoken about, an alternative proposal, that created jobs. No. They criticized the plan that creates jobs, and, in its stead, proposed absolutely nothing. Again, the American people witnessed that here tonight.

Yet the plan that we passed provides, for example, tax relief to American families and immediately eliminates burdensome and unfair taxes that provided huge obstacles to economic growth and job creation.

The gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) worked awfully hard to get through this House a plan that will create over 1.2 million jobs throughout the entire country by the end of next year. This was a specific proposal, not rhetoric. That is a specific proposal that this House passed. It creates, as a matter of fact, 45,000 new jobs in the State of Florida that I represent; next year, 45,000 jobs. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we heard no other proposal; just criticism, criticism of a plan that creates 1.2 million jobs.

This plan that we passed that our dear friends in the minority love to criticize, and, yet, I repeat, have nothing to show other than criticism, this plan would put \$550 billion in economic stimulus and job creation in this country.

Then I heard something that I keep hearing time and time again, and it must be something that the Democratic Party's PR machine has told them to repeat time and time again, again regardless of the facts. They keep saying, oh, the plan that the House passed, the President's plan, cuts taxes on the rich.

Let us again speak of the facts. I know that my dear friends on the Democratic side hate when you bring up the facts. They do not like the facts to be used. They do not want to permit the facts to confuse the rhetoric. But I think it is important to bring up some of those facts.

The rich? Cut taxes on the rich? Twenty-three million small business owners will benefit from tax rate cuts in order to stimulate job growth; 23 million small business owners are going to have their taxes cut. Those are not the rich, those small business owners. Again, the facts, Mr. Speaker.

The tax cut, for example, on dividend income and the capital gains tax cut will provide relief for the 50 percent of Americans who have invested in the stock market and 70 million Americans who own homes. Those are the facts.

Yet what we have heard tonight, all the criticism, all the critiquing of the President's plan, of the plan we passed, with nothing else, no proposal, no alternative proposal, is just criticism based on innuendo, not based on the facts.

Again, the President's job and growth plan, what we passed here in the House, will provide 1.2 million jobs next year. Those are the facts, not the rhetoric.

The energy bill that the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) spoke of

here last week with me on the floor of this House will provide 750,000 new jobs. But yet both those initiatives our friends from the minority party object to; and they object to them but have no decent, good proposal, as opposed to what we have done. This is a good plan, because it does provide jobs.

I was wondering, I see that the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) is here; and, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman. Maybe he can try to shed some light on some of the facts, not on just empty rhetoric, some of the facts: why it is important that we do not just sit idly by and hope the economy gets better; why it is important to incentivize this economy; why it is important to go forward with the President's plan, with what this Congress passed, to make sure the millions of Americans can find good jobs; why it is important to not just sit back and pretend that things are okay, they are going to get better, and the solution is maybe to raise taxes; why it is important that we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the gentleman can shed some light as to some of the rhetoric that has been heard before here tonight which does not conform with the facts.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I wholeheartedly agree with what the gentleman is saying. This focus should be on jobs. Our focus as a Congress should be on creating jobs.

A lot of what we have heard earlier today is talk about extending unemployment, and we certainly have. Our hearts go out to those that are unemployed. But if you talk to those that are unemployed, what they really want is a job, and that is what we have to talk about, that is what we have to act on, that is what we have to create.

They have not talked a lot earlier in their discussions on the floor about what they are going to do to create jobs. As the gentleman mentioned, they do not have a plan to say here is how we are going to create jobs.

Our plan that we did pass last week will create, according to estimates, 1.2 million jobs. I know a little bit about jobs. I spent 20 years in the business world creating jobs, keeping people employed; and I know what are some of the things that can help encourage that and what are some of the things that can hurt that. So our focus needs to be what can we do as a government to nurture an environment that creates jobs.

The gentleman spoke of the energy bill. That is clearly part of it. The gentleman spoke about many of the provisions in this bill, in this bill we passed for jobs and growth, which will indeed create jobs and growth.

The economy has suffered. We went through a period where we had not only a bust in the telecom bubble, but soon following that, 9/11, which set the economy back, and the threat of terrorism and the concern with our efforts to free