

us nothing that essential to reviving the domestic economy of our country.

Yeah, we got the slogan for tonight. It is not "It Is the Economy, Stupid"; it is jobs. And not "stupid," I respect our President. It is jobs. It is not the economy, Mr. President; it is jobs, Mr. President.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus for giving us the opportunity to lay out a road map, if you will, for this Nation as we prepare to hear the President's State of the Union address.

And I might say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I am told and I have heard that many view this as a state of the world because he is the commander in chief and the leader of the free world, commander in chief of the most powerful Nation in the world. And the world watches tonight.

So, my first concern with respect to the optimism that I hope we hear tonight is that he will restate for the world that we are a country of freedoms, protecting both our civil liberties and civil rights, and that we will not intend or pretend to govern from a position of fear, that we will continue to mourn those who we lost on 9/11 but that we will go forward embracing the freedom of this Nation and reemphasize our civil liberties.

And so that we can address Attorney General Ashcroft to the extent that we began to reinforce the civil liberties of Americans as opposed to take them away, to ask the questions about an enemy combatant without the opportunity to have access to counsel, to wonder why the Transportation Security Administration will begin profiling all Americans who are traveling on domestic flights, and are an outrage, to begin to address the questions that our rights should not be taken away but they should be enhanced. Library books need not be the cause of suggesting someone is a terrorist.

And the civil rights of Americans reinforcing affirmative action, believing in the right to privacy, must be stated tonight. The Congressional Black Caucus has worked for a very long time on a real racial profiling bill, one that would prevent racial profiling. We ask the President to speak tonight about the need to sign hate crimes legislation which we have been working on for now over almost a decade.

And then when it comes to election reform in this year, it is crucial that we add to the election reform legislation a tracking system, a paper trail, so that when we go to the 2004 election, when many jurisdictions have gone to the electronic process, we will not have the crisis of 2000 when we turn people away but, more importantly, when votes were not counted. Now that we have the electronic process, let me say

to you that it certainly is a travesty that we have a situation where we cannot even track how the votes were cast.

I hope he will promote the Peace Corps and that encourage, in the next fiscal year, extra support for the Peace Corps, the face of America, and make sure that we do not assign one person to an area but we assign two Americans to a region for safety and other reasons.

I believe going into space is valuable, but we have to do it in a bipartisan way, protecting American jobs, providing for education and explaining to the American people how we will fund our vision in going to Mars and to the moon and the safety of it.

Let me just say that the Democrats have extended an olive branch. I agree with my colleagues the need to create more jobs. That is a big question, are you going to do it. But I agree that Democrats are saying to the President that those who seek higher education need increased dollars for the Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,800 and doubling the Hope Scholarship Tax Credit from \$1,500 to \$3,000, and getting rid of the disabled veterans tax once and for all. How can we have young men and women in the front lines of Iraq and when they come home as disabled veterans, they are to be taxed?

And finally let me say, Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot of work to do on immigration reform. And my support for moving in the right direction is that I say to the President tonight, let us talk about comprehensive immigration reform including Liberians, including Haitians, including a comprehensive response, Europeans and others from all over who are trying to earn access to legalization, let's not have a flat earth procedure where at the end of 3 years you disappear into the night.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the President will be optimistic tonight. I hope he will accept the olive branch. I hope he will work with the Congressional Black Caucus and the chairman, and that we will get on the right track for America. Because if we do not, the world is watching us tonight and wondering whether America can lead in the 21st century.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order.

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

There was no objection.

#### STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr.

FOLEY) for allowing me to have this unanimous consent and let me commend the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for having this special order dealing with some of the very trying problems of our time.

In this new millennium, we will face many hurdles and we are going to hear the first the State of the Union address tonight. But today I would like to rise this afternoon to discuss the true state of the Union as it is, not as we would like it to be. We have our true land and then there is wonderland. And it is great in wonderland because all things are nice and we have the road that leads to all good things.

However, the true state of the Nation is more grim. It is time to face reality. There are too many people in our Nation who are still struggling. They are not enjoying the benefits that have been awarded to the more privileged among us. While the White House tries to put the best face on the economy, the fact is that we have lost about 2.5 million jobs in the last 2 years. Long-term unemployment is at a 20-year high.

While the wealthiest Americans enjoy the benefits of tax cuts, which was tilted their way, millions of Americans continue to live paycheck to paycheck, although the unemployment rate has dropped .1 percent. There are more people unemployed this month than were last month because thousands and thousands have dropped out of the hunt for a job because of the long-term unemployment. And they have just given up, they have fallen out.

□ 1430

So the unemployment rate is not even a true reflection of what is going on. The response of the Bush administration to this inequity is to make lop-sided tax cuts permanent.

Our friends across the aisle who used to rail against budget deficits only a few years ago are now willing to overlook the largest, most alarming budget deficit in the history of this great Nation.

Under former-President Clinton's budget policies, we amassed a healthy budget surplus, which has now been totally squandered. We used to talk about mortgaging our children's futures. We do not hear that anymore.

What this means is that resources that can be channeled into positive action to address such key problems as jobs, health care, education, housing are no longer available. They have been drained by the irresponsible tax cuts for the very wealthy in our Nation.

The state of the Union today is weaker in many other ways. Racial disparities in health care continue to take a toll on minorities. Yet the administration's response to this national health crises is to sweep it under the carpet.

The Washington Post reported last week that a Federal report on racial disparities was rewritten for the first time in our history by the Department

of Health and Human Services to hide the fact that minorities in our Nation receive inferior health care for a wide range of diseases. In fact, the final draft of what was supposed to be a scientific study dropped the detailed descriptions of health disparities and removed a reference to national problems. This is a serious matter because studies have shown that even among patients with identical diseases and similar income levels, minorities are less likely to receive the same quality of care for diseases including cancer, diabetes, heart problems, AIDS, and other illnesses.

As our colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), pointed out, the first draft of the "Health Care Racial Disparity Report" mentioned the word disparity 30 times in the key-finding section, while the final version mentioned the word only twice and then even failed to define it.

As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I remain concerned about inequities in education of our children. This marks the 50th anniversary of the historic *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision which banned segregation in schools. Yet, the fact is that our schools have not reached the goal of racial integration. About one-third of African American students go to schools that are 90 to 100 percent African American. About 70 percent attend schools that are composed primarily of minority students. We need strong leadership at the top to reverse this trend and to really leave no child behind and to ensure access to a quality education for all of our students.

We are one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all; and we need to make that plan and dream a reality.

Mr. Speaker, we can only make our country stronger and we are better if we are willing to examine the real state of the Union and seek real solutions to our problems.

I hope we can pull together and address these issues so that we can begin to move forward again in crucial areas including the economy, health care, and education.

#### FUTURE IS BRIGHT

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be back here in our Nation's capital for the opening of the 108th second session of Congress.

As we start a new year, we often pray for hope and optimism to help lift the Nation, to help guide the Nation, to help give it strength and to honor the character of this Nation that we all love so dearly.

So it is troubling that when, in the first hour of the first day of the 108th

second session, the negativity ringing in this Chamber is deafening, the criticism, the constant carping, the antagonism towards this President knows no boundaries. Yet the American public remains optimistic and hopeful because that is in our core nature. That is our core; that is who we are as people.

There is a reason Howard Dean went down in ashes, in flames in Iowa yesterday, because for the last 11 months he has done nothing but characterize and criticize the President of the United States in negative tones. Consequently, John Edwards comes in second because he was at least talking about hopeful optimism, a spirit that is imbued in the character of this Nation and its people.

As we proceed in this year of trials and tribulations, you have to look back at the past year and look forward to the future and hope that, rather than fighting one another, we can join together in finding solutions to our common problems.

In the last hour and a half I have heard how bad the economy is. Yet at this time our Dow Jones Industrial Average is over 10,500; NASDAQ has passed the 2,000 threshold. Unemployment is dropping. Statistics prove it. Last month was not the best month; but anyone who follows the economy recognizes there is a lag behind employment and robust employment numbers and optimism in the sector that is gauged by Wall Street. Factory orders. Sale of durable goods. Light trucks. Look at the numbers. Real estate. First time home buyers. People's 401(k)s now back to where they were pre-1999. Their IRA's are gaining momentum again. Their financial status is better. Not perfect, not perfect, but better. And what fuels that basic surge in investor confidence? Well, that is the term. Investors' confidence.

In order to have confidence, you have to have some optimism, and you have to have some hope that times will in fact get better. But if you listen to the cacophony of voices from the other side of the aisle, woe is me, and how desperate we are.

It was telling, one of the speakers offered the President an olive branch moments ago. Why is it when they offer the olive branch, they always hand it to you with the thorns exposed?

Can there not be a generous offer of helping together, solving Americans' problems? It has to be about criticizing virtually everything this administration has done.

Look at Iraq and look at the strength of character that this President displayed in challenging one of the most evil dictators of our time. He is met with negative sound bytes and poll-driven babble about why we should not be there and why we should leave immediately. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and Mr. Dean eloquently made that point. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) came in last and Mr. Dean was third. So clearly I think others, based on if you

are taking polling statistics, 65 percent of the American public thought it was the right thing to do to liberate Iraq from Saddam Hussein.

The President stood alone on that precipice trying to decide what was best for the people of this country, stood alone. And yet with the wind at his back, he has now been able to change fundamentally the way other nations look at us. Fundamentally. Libya is now in negotiations to turn over its nuclear secrets and arsenal and weaponry and technology. Libya. It was not that long ago that Muammar Khadafi was heading Libya, obviously with an eye towards destroying the Middle East. And now Libya is at least, hopefully, brokering negotiations as we speak.

North Korea is sounding more conciliatory rather than beating their chests and threatening the annihilation of Japan or South Korea or other places. North Korea is now starting to talk about containment.

Pakistan and India, who have been at odds for a long time, are talking about constructive engagement to solve their mutual problems relative to Kashmir.

Think about it. Think about just those hot spots in the world where because of the President's strength of character in pursuing the evil of Saddam Hussein have we now started to recognize that only peace can be achieved through strength. Yes, it must have been lonely for this President when the rest of the free world was saying, I am not interested; let us not do that; let us not upset the apple cart; let us not bother Iraq. They are quiet now.

To the contrary. If you are one of the 1 million people that have died in Iraq, I am not sure you consider it quiet. If you had your tongue cut out by Saddam Hussein's henchmen, I do not think you consider Iraq peaceful. If you were starved or imprisoned or murdered by the regime, I do not think you consider Iraq a place you would call home. Yet, because of the President's insistence on pursuing the course of action that would free and liberate the people of Iraq, we now have the dominoes falling in other areas of the world that are showing that the United States' strength is what is solving the perplexing and difficult challenges we face as a Nation and as a world power.

I can remember during the last administration when there was a problem in Haiti, and I believe the U.S.S. *Harlan* was heading for Haiti, and because of a band of malcontents and miscontents and misfits who were on the dock waving brooms and pitchforks, our Commander in Chief then ordered the U.S.S. *Harlan* to turn around and not head into Haiti to bring peace and stability to Haiti.

We turned around a naval vessel because we were nervous about the gathering of dissidents on a dock at Port au Prince. That visual image of our naval vessel turning around from a group waving brooms at our military power