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There is something fundamentally wrong when one can sue McDonald's for millions of dollars because they spill hot coffee on oneself. Excess litigation hurts job growth. That is another difference between the Republicans and the Democrats.

And how about too much regulation? I know as a small businessman the huge regulatory burden on our economy. It is almost \$8,000 per American family. How many mortgage payments is that for the average American family? How many semesters of college is that? Instead, we are paying more in regulation costs. We want to bring down that regulatory cost. The Democrats want to increase that regulatory cost.

Litigation sends jobs overseas. Regulation sends jobs overseas. And taxation sends jobs overseas.

We need to thank President Bush for his principled leadership in all the job growth that he has created in the economy.

THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, a group of Members from Congress from Ohio have come to the floor regularly over the last 3 years, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND); and we have since been joined by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), freshman from northeastern Ohio, to discuss what Bush economic policies have done to the middle class, how they have squeezed middle-class Americans with higher gas prices, higher health care costs, stagnant wages, and especially staggering job loss. Our State of Ohio has lost, since President Bush took office, one out of six manufacturing jobs, almost 200 jobs every single day of the Bush administration.

These failed economic policies are especially putting the squeeze on America's and Ohio's middle class. Middle-class families feel the brunt of this administration's economic policies. America's middle-class families are losing ground on jobs, losing ground on health care, losing ground on education. Yet the Bush administration's answer to every single economic problem, as we saw from listening to my friends paint their very rosy picture of the condition of the U.S. economy, at least the condition for the most affluent in the U.S. economy, the answer in every case for the President for every problem that we face is more tax cuts for the wealthiest people in our country, hoping that some of those benefits trickle down to the middle class and

maybe create some jobs from time to time.

That clearly has not worked with the loss of plus 2½ million jobs since President Bush took office, the first President since Herbert Hoover to have a net job loss. And the President's other answer to these economic anxieties, to these economic problems, are more trade agreements like NAFTA, like the North American Free Trade Agreement. Singapore, Chile, Morocco, Australia, and now the Central American Free Trade Agreement, and later the Free Trade Area of the Americas, all of which have hemorrhaged jobs, all of which have sent jobs overseas.

As I said, Ohio has lost almost 200 jobs every single day of the Bush administration, and now leading U.S. corporations are beginning to send not just blue collar but white collar jobs, clerical jobs, administrative jobs, technical work, computer programming, even radiology and radiologist jobs overseas as well.

Government figures confirm that the North American Free Trade Agreement, very conservatively speaking from a conservative government, that NAFTA has cost Americans more than a half million jobs. If that is not enough, the President now has signed just last week the Central America Free Trade Agreement, which will ship more jobs out of Tennessee or out of Ohio or out of any of our States to Mexico, to China, and all over the world. Roughly 830,000 U.S. service sector jobs, telemarketers, accountants, software engineers, chief technology officers will move abroad by the end of 2005, according to a report released in May by Forrester Research. Forrester Research projected that 600,000 jobs would move overseas by the end of next year; 3.4 million jobs will leave the U.S. by 2015.

So instead of fighting for trade pacts that keep jobs in the United States, the President's plan is to repeat the failures of NAFTA and to use taxpayer dollars to outsource American jobs. Get that: to use taxpayer dollars, literally to use taxpayer dollars, to outsource jobs, to send jobs overseas. This is an administration that, when begged, literally begged, by 200 of us in this Congress, would not extend unemployment benefits to those 1 million Americans, 50,000 Americans in the gentleman from Ohio's (Mr. RYAN) and my home State to allow the extension of unemployment benefits for those Americans who lost their jobs, but continue to try to look for jobs.

Instead of fighting for corporate tax reform such as Crane-Rangel, the administration remains silent on responsible bipartisan legislation, the Crane-Rangel legislation that both parties support, 85 Republican sponsors, 90 Democratic sponsors, supported by the AFL-CIO and the National Association of Manufacturers, a jobs bill that will reward companies that produce domestically. Instead, the President wants to continue to give tax breaks to the larg-

est companies, which happen to be his largest contributors, which so often send their jobs overseas.

Responsible leadership means not just being critical of the President in what he is doing but also offering what we should do instead of these failed trickle-down economic policies and failed trade agreement policies.

Four things to start off: a moratorium on job exporting trade pacts, meaning let us look at NAFTA, let us look at China trade, let us look at CAFTA, let us look at all these trade agreements before we pass another one to decide what works, what does not work, and make the changes we need to. Second, tough action against China and other trading partners who refuse to play by the rules.

When I came to Congress a dozen years ago, we had about a 400 million, million with an "m," trade deficit with China. Today we have 120 billion, with a "b," 3,000 times the trade deficit that we had with China just a dozen years ago.

Third, enactment of the Crane-Rangel corporate tax reform plan, which, as I said, uses the Tax Code to reward companies that produce domestically the manufacturing in our country instead of the Bush way of giving big tax cuts to the largest corporations, most of which outsource their jobs every single day.

And, fourth, an extension of unemployment insurance to help bridge the gap until better, good-paying jobs are created and people can once again support their families.

The President's plan includes none of these provisions, in large part because large American corporations that have funded the President's campaign, who are the President's strongest allies, from which most of the President's Cabinet has come out of, all of those companies are doing very well, their stockholders and their executives are doing very well under the Bush tax plans and outsourcing plans, but their workers are not and our country is not.

And, lastly, before yielding to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) to talk about education issues and what that has done to jobs in this country, the President's health care policies are also hitting America's middle class right in the pocketbook. Prescription drug costs increased 9 percent last year, five times the rate of inflation. Yet the President's drug bill, the Medicare bill, written by the drug industry, written by the insurance industry will increase drug company profits by \$140 billion over the next 10 years and has protections in the bill for the drug industry so that they can continue to charge three times, four times, five times what drugs cost everywhere else around the world.

Mr. Speaker, one more point. Because I was critical of the President's plan on prescription drugs, I want to mention what we should do to get costs under control. First of all, we should

give clear authority to our own government to negotiate on behalf of 40 million Medicare beneficiaries lower drug prices. Every other country in the world does it that way. That is why Tamoxifen, a breast cancer drug, costs the Canadians one-eighth as much as it costs Americans, simply because the Canadians use their 30 million residents as a bargaining pool to negotiate better prices from the drug companies. The U.S. Government has refused to do that in large part because the drug industry gives so many campaign dollars to too many Members of this body, especially Republican leadership and especially the President's re-election campaign.

The second thing we should do is allow the reimportation of prescription drugs from Canada so if we really do believe in NAFTA and fair trade and free trade, American wholesalers, American drug stores like Drug Mart, should be allowed to go on the international market and buy those drugs from Canada at one third and one fourth the price.

Mr. Speaker, I also would mention some things about education, but we have an expert here. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), freshman congressman, will talk for some time about jobs in Ohio and education and some of the issues that he wants to discuss.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I think it is important that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) shared with us exactly why we are having all these problems. I think people sitting at home would be thinking to themselves why in God's name would our country be giving tax credits to companies who would outsource jobs? And the answer, as the gentleman so eloquently gave us, is that these people who are making the profits from outsourcing jobs are the same people that are donating millions of dollars to Members of this body, that are donating millions of dollars especially to the Presidential campaign, and that is probably the fundamental problem that we have in this country right now.

Our government and our laws are being dictated to everyone else by the big-money people, and they control this institution. And I think the best example that we have had, at least since I have been here, is why would we not allow prescription drugs to come down from Canada. It seems it would make sense. But then we realize, as I was reading his op-ed here that he wrote here in the New York Times, we realize that political contributions from the drug industry to Republicans in this body is \$22 million, 74 percent of the total of the money that they raised. The Democrats raised \$7 million, only 25 percent. Still a lot of money. But it is clear that if they are raising \$22 million, 74 percent of their total amount of money that they are

raising, that they would be advocating on behalf of those major corporations and they would be saying we do not want to free trade with Canada. And the same thing with not allowing them to negotiate down drug prices. Why would we not use the buying power of millions of people to sit down with Pfizer, say to Pfizer, we are going to make a deal here. They want access to these millions of people, they have got to sit down and talk to us and negotiate a fair price.

So I think it is very important and probably the best point that we could make as we speak to the American people here tonight, because they would ask why are we doing this, and the reason is there is too much money in this game and the average person has a microphone and the people who have a lot of money have a big bull horn, and they seem to get everything done.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) talked about outsourcing of jobs, free trade, competing on a global economy, our workers trying to compete with workers who make \$5 a day or 50 cents an hour in a lot of these other countries. The promise to the American people always was this: we are going to trade, we are going to compete in an international economy, in a global economy; but we are always going to invest in our own people. We are going to invest in our own children. We are going to invest in our college students. We are going to make college accessible, affordable so that we can get the high-end jobs. Now we are still losing the high-end jobs; we are losing a lot of them to India. If we would have fulfilled the promise that this government made many years ago and one has a computer-programming degree or a high-tech degree of some sort, most of those jobs are now leaving in the millions in the next few years to India where they are paying people with bachelor's degrees in engineering not even \$5 an hour, and we know the kind of money that they make here.

So not only are we losing the high-end jobs; now we are no longer even investing in education. And I just want to share a few statistics with the people who are listening. Student debt is up 66 percent since 1997. Funding for higher ed in Ohio was slashed by over \$18.5 million in 2002, 2003. In-state tuition at places like University of Cincinnati, Kent State University, University of Akron, Youngstown State, the tuition costs have been raised by 10 to 15 percent since basically the late 1990s, and the burden is being placed on the students who are trying to get ahead. So it is up 66 percent. I think the most atrocious statistic that we can have is, because of these increases, in the fall of 2003, an estimated 250,000 students, college qualified, could not afford to either go to college or continue to go to college. They were completely shut out because of the increase in tuition, the lack of buying power for the Pell grants.

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So how can we on the one hand say that we want to trade, we want to participate in the global economy, we have the right to lift everybody else up and share some of the wealth of our own country, and then at the same time not invest in our own people? That has clearly been the policy of this administration, it has clearly been the policy of this Congress.

Since 1994, the Republicans have controlled this Chamber, they have had the presidency for the last 3½ years, and they have done nothing. President Bush promised in his election that he was going to increase investments in the Pell Grants for the first year and then graduate it up. It did not happen. College loans today are costing kids more, and the policies that this Congress wants to adopt will cost them even more money in the long run. So something actually needs to be done.

Since 2001, which is another interesting statistic, tuition and fees have increased by almost 30 percent in 49 of the 50 States. When we are talking about Ohio and talking about trying to create jobs in Ohio, you cannot overlook the fact that we have not, whether it was in this Congress or in the General Assembly in Ohio, we have not made sufficient investments into the young people who are going to create the new economy.

Really, as we are losing these jobs, it is also important to note that we do not know what the new economy is going to be. Many of us are advocating for alternative energy sources, investments in high speed rail and a variety of other issues that I think we need to advance on, but those are just our ideas. The private sector will ultimately create what the new economy is to be. But the government's role has been and should continue to be investment in the colleges, investment in the young students, and let those bright, intelligent, creative minds create the new economy we are going to have.

One last statistic that I want to share, and that is the No Child Left Behind, because we have talked a little bit about college but have not talked about K through 12. No Child Left Behind was put in place to move the bottom 25 percent of the students, bottom in regards to test scores and achievement, move them across the finish line, with investments into after-school programs, good idea; investments in the summer programs, good idea; investments into one-on-one tutoring, if necessary.

The philosophy was we are going to pull these kids across the finish line so that they can have a successful life. If they have the one-on-one tutoring, if we make the investment after school, if we make the investment during the summertime and help these kids along with intensive training, that they will be able to succeed and become proficient. So that was the Federal mandate on the States, that was the Federal mandate on the local school districts.

But, lo and behold, we prioritized and we gave tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country. Half the people in my congressional district did not get one dollar from the tax cut. So this nonsense that was being spewed out on the other side earlier tonight that everyone is benefiting from this tax cut did not hit home in Youngstown, Ohio, in Warren, Ohio, and in Akron, Ohio. It did not show up. Fifty percent of the people in my congressional district did not get one dollar back from the tax cut.

So we have all these Federal mandates underfunded. No Child Left Behind just in Ohio is underfunded by \$1.4 billion just this year, \$1.4 billion. That is going to go to the State to have to comply, and that is going to go down to the local school district. If you are sitting in Ohio and do not think these mandates are going to cause your local school district to have to go and try to pass another property tax increase, you are missing the boat.

So what we are trying to say here is the Federal Government has a responsibility to invest, whether it is No Child Left Behind, college access or anything else, into our young kids and students so they will be able to compete. We have missed the boat. We have not fulfilled our obligation, we have not fulfilled our responsibility, because, as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) has said, we had to give these tax cuts.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. We have been joined by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), and also the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

I want to call on the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. JONES) next, because she is in the middle of a hearing in the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is so wonderful to be on the floor of the House again with my colleagues as we talk about the issues that are impacting our State. Right now in the Committee on Ways and Means we are marking up FSC-ETI bill, which has to do with giving corporations who take jobs over to foreign countries greater tax benefits.

Since I am the only Democratic Ohio member on the Committee on Ways and Means, I want to get back over there, because I have a piece of legislation where I am offering an amendment that if the tax provisions provide benefits for manufacturing workers who lost their jobs, we ought to be able to provide benefits to service workers who lost their jobs, because in Ohio it appears we have lost some 133,000 service worker jobs since this administration took over.

I rise with my colleagues as a supporter, a voice for the middle-class and a voice for the lower-class people in our country who make up the backbone of our country, those Americans who since George Bush took office are find-

ing themselves overlooked, under-appreciated and kicked to the curb.

I could go on with my statement, but what I am going to do is submit my statement for the record, because I know Ohio is in good hands with the three of you on the floor of the House to talk about what is going on in Ohio.

I need to go back over to the Committee on Ways and Means and make sure the voice of Ohio workers is heard in that hearing. If we get done before the hour is up, I will be back to engage in a conversation with each and every one of you.

You know if unemployment is high in the majority communities in Ohio, in the minority communities it is even higher. I just got some statistics saying in the City of East Cleveland, the unemployment rate is 12.7 percent, 12.7 percent. We need to be a loud voice on behalf of the workers of Ohio.

Let me say to my colleagues here, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), I have been calling him "senior." He does not like to be called senior colleague, but my colleague with greater seniority than me, and my colleague the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), with greater seniority than me. At least I am more senior to somebody, my colleague with less seniority than me, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN). Keep it up, brothers. I am glad to be here with you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a voice for the middle class. Those Americans who make up the working class, the backbone of this country. Those Americans, who since President Bush took office are finding themselves overlooked, underappreciated and kicked to the curb.

My home state of Ohio, has seen the worst of this economy. Since President Bush took office the state of Ohio has lost 214,500 jobs. Of those lost jobs, 167,800 of them were manufacturing jobs; 1,300 of those lost just recently in April.

My colleagues across the aisle would argue that the economy is improving; however, the Republicans have much to do to erase the job deficit that they have created through their tax cuts for the wealthy.

The growing industry that the Republicans have been talking about is significantly weaker than the shrinking industry. In Ohio there is a -29 percent wage differences between industries gaining jobs and the industries losing jobs. Additionally, the health insurance coverage for the growing industries is only 53.1 percent compared to 70.2 percent of the shrinking industries—a difference of 17.1 percent.

The economic outlook is even worse for many living in my district. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services, the unemployment rate in Cuyahoga County is at 6.5 percent with over 43,500 workers unemployed. The cities of Cleveland and East Cleveland have been hit the hardest with Cleveland's unemployment rate at 12.2 percent with 25,000 unemployed workers and East Cleveland with a 14 percent unemployment rate and 2,346 workers unemployed.

This economy has had a disproportionate affect on minorities in this country, particularly

African Americans. According to the U.S. Courts, Administrative Office's Bankruptcy Statistics, 1,625,208 households filed for bankruptcy in 2003, a 33 percent increase from 2000. That is nearly 1 bankruptcy every 19 seconds.

For minorities the statistics are even worse. According to an article by Elizabeth Warren and Amelia Warren Tyagi, entitled the Two Income Trap, 2003, African Americans and Hispanics are much more likely to go bankrupt. Hispanic homeowners are nearly three times more likely than white homeowners to file for bankruptcy, and black homeowners are nearly six times more likely than white homeowners. African Americans are also twice as likely to lose their homes due to foreclosures, often falling victim to the unscrupulous practices of predatory lenders.

Additionally, African Americans have higher levels of debt. The typical African American families had debt of 30 percent of their assets, while the debt of typical white families was 11 percent of their assets.

Homeownership and credit are not the only place where the minorities of this country are feeling the economic squeeze. It is affecting their education where they are seeing an increase in tuition of \$1,207 at 4-year public universities. It is affecting their health care, where here in the United States the total family premium for health insurance has increased by \$2,630 to \$9,068. Even child care costs have increased by \$2,050. A Census study showed that African Americans and Hispanics spend more on child care than whites. The average black family spends 10.4 percent of household income on childcare, and the average Hispanic family spends 10.7 percent, compared with 8.1 percent for white families. This along with skyrocketing gas prices and the outsourcing of Americans jobs, our middle class citizenry is suffering.

It is time for us to provide real legislation and initiative to strengthen middle class Americans. Democrats have a plan to jump-start our economy through tax breaks to encourage businesses to keep jobs here in America, invest in our small- and medium-sized businesses and work to secure universal access to college and expand job training.

The American people deserve better than what they are receiving from this administration and we move forward to address the needs of the American people.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on these issues on one of the most important committees in this Congress, the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from southern and eastern Ohio, whose district runs from Youngstown all along the river down to Portsmouth, who has been fighting for better health care since he has been a Member of Congress, for lower drug prices, for working to provide access to health care for veterans, health care benefits, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for yielding.

I watched the special order which preceded this special order, some of our

colleagues. Quite frankly, I sat in my apartment watching the television as they spoke, and I was wondering if they are from Michael Jackson's Neverland, because they certainly are not in touch with the real world. The fact is, do these people ever go home and talk to their colleagues on the weekends?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, President Bush's Secretary of Commerce recently said, "This is the best economy of my lifetime." Again, I wonder, I know that President Bush and his top advisers have personal wealth and do not get out much, but it is pretty amazing.

Mr. STRICKLAND. If I could interrupt and say, for him it may be the best economy of his lifetime, and I do not doubt that. But what about the workers there in Washington County in a little town called Marietta that I met with this week who are losing their jobs?

What about the workers in Belpre, Ohio, in the same county, working in a factory that makes collectible dolls, the Lee Middleton Doll Company. There are about 35 workers, mostly women, many of them single mothers; one of the workers is 73 years of age, who is working in order to buy her medicine. They have been told on the 25th of this month their jobs are gone, because that doll company is taking that work to China.

Now, how much do these people there in Belpre make? The average wage is somewhere between \$7 and \$11 an hour, and they are going to China for cheaper labor. I would like for my colleagues who preceded us to come to Belpre, Ohio, come to Marietta, Ohio, come to Martins Ferry, Ohio, come to Lisbon, Ohio, come to Salem, Ohio, where the Eljer plant that makes bathroom sinks and tubs, they are closing. They are manufacturing in China probably this very evening as we stand here on this floor and speak to each other.

All of those workers are without a paycheck, they are without health care. They are without hope, many of them. Some of these workers are 55, 60 years of age. They do not yet qualify for Medicare. Many of them have health care problems. They are wondering, what are they going to do?

I wish I could tell them that we had a President that I could go to and share their plight and expect some positive reaction from. These people, I do not know, they say the economy is booming, jobs are coming back. They need to come to Ohio, and they need to come to Ohio and not go to a pre-arranged event, where certain people are invited and other people are excluded. They need to come to Ohio and just go from community to community. They will find out what is happening.

People are afraid they are going to lose their jobs if they have not already. They are afraid they are going to lose their health care if they have not already. They are wondering what is going to happen to their kids.

I want to tell you, I was really offended because the Columbus Dispatch did a series of articles on hunger and the use of food pantries by Ohioans, and they did a series of wonderful series just laying out the problem and what the experience is.

When the Bush administration was contacted for a comment, Mr. Eric Bost, B-O-S-T is how you spell his name, the U.S. Under Secretary for Food and Nutrition Services, he had the gall to say, "Well, there has been a bump up in the number of people using these pantries, but how much of that is due to people taking the easy way out I do not know," he said.

Well, Mr. Bost, I wish he would come to Ohio. It is a lot of fun, Mr. Bost, to stand in a food line, waiting to get food for you and your family, for your children. It is a nice way to pass the time of day.

What an insult, for the person in this administration who is supposed to be concerned about food and caring for people who need proper nutrition to make such an outrageous comment. It shows that he, and I guess many of the others in this administration, are totally out of touch.

There are families whose dads and husbands are serving this Nation in Iraq who are showing up at these food pantries. We need to wake up. This is a serious, serious set of circumstances.

It is so frustrating, it is so frustrating to know that in a country where we have the wealth to give huge tax breaks to the richest among us, the richest among us, that we have got families whose dad or whose husband is serving this country in Iraq showing up at a food pantry in order to get the food they need to feed their children. I wonder if the President is aware of that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman would yield, I read that same series of articles. There was a quote in there by one of the gentlemen, and I cannot think of his name, who worked at either the food pantry or helped run the Second Harvest, and he said the lines were depression-like. Those were his words, depression-like.

So to sit here and say the economy is going just fine, just humming along, that these tax cuts have worked, and we have people, in the same article they said the increase from 2002 to 2003 was I think 17 percent increase in people using the food pantry, and then last year was 19 percent on top of the 17 percent, they have the audacity to come down here and say things are getting better.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I think it is appropriate and proper for an official of the Agriculture Department to really try to scrutinize what is happening, what is being reported by the Columbus Dispatch, to try to understand what may be causing this. But to have the callousness of heart to imply that this bump up in the use of food pantries is due to people wanting

"the easy way out," what does he mean by "the easy way out?"

This man, like myself and many others who serve in this Chamber, probably goes out and spends as much on a single meal as some families may have to try to feed themselves for several days, and for someone in that kind of position to utter a comment like that, if I was George W. Bush, I would fire that man the moment I became aware of the words he had uttered.

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He does not deserve to serve in this administration and to hold the high position that he holds in the Department of Agriculture. He ought to work somewhere else, but he should not be working in a program that is designed to try to help people who are in need of food and good nutrition.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I do not hold any ill will personally toward any of these leaders in our country whose values and positions and policies are so different from what, obviously, the four of us believe this country should pursue; but when you hear the Secretary of Commerce say, "This is the best economy in my lifetime," when you hear our colleague from southwest Ohio only 45 minutes or so ago talk about how the economy is roaring back; the gentleman from Texas, one from West Virginia, one from Arizona, one from Indiana talk about the record-setting economic growth, it really does remind me of kind of what happened at the Timken Company.

The Timken Company, as all of us remember, is President Bush's favorite Ohio company. The Timken family has given both President Bush and his father literally millions of dollars and raised millions of dollars. The President went to Timken a year ago and praised the workers for a literally 10 percent increase in productivity, praised this company for all that it has done in this community, deservedly. Then several months later, only about 6 weeks ago, sent out a news release saying that they had record sales their first quarter, then the company went on to say their earnings per share were 60 percent over last year's first quarter. Then, just 2 or 3 weeks ago, Timken announced that it was closing its three plants in Canton, Ohio, laying off 1,300 workers and moving its production to China.

It really is a scenario where I believe the people in the administration just do not see what is going on out there. I mean, Mr. CHENEY, the Vice President, gets \$3,000 a week in pay still from Halliburton, a company which he has been connected with on and off and continues to do favors for. Most of the administration officials got hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars in tax cuts. Most of the Members of this body who believe this economy is humming are not talking to workers who still have their jobs, but who see

the gas prices going up, who see their kids' college tuition going up; as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) said, in Ohio State alone, a 13 percent tuition increase just this year alone, and schools all over the country are facing that; who see their local property taxes and State taxes going up; who see their wages stagnant and with not really much chance of increases, and face the anxiety of a potential job loss, potential plant closing, potential outsourcing of their white collar job.

And of course they feel anxiety. Even when there are a few jobs being created, President Bush will still be the only President who has had that job loss during his term since Herbert Hoover. But even if the news gets a little better with a few new service jobs that pay not great, but at least pay something, the anxiety people are facing is simply not seen by the members of this administration.

I think one of the reasons their policies are so off course and that President Bush's answer to every economic problem is more tax cuts for those of his social class and his contributors, and more kinds of trade agreements that continue to shift jobs overseas and continue to reward outsourcing. I think so much of it is based on the fact that he has not really seen and really understood that these are not, the Members of Congress or the administration, these are not problems that they really see very often in their daily lives. So they conduct these policies, they formulate these policies that work for some small number of people in this country.

Profits are up for the Timken Company; the problem is they are laying off 1,300 people. So some people at Timken are doing well, the ones that the President knows, but the people who are not doing well in the community, a community which has now lost the money for their schools and to fix their roads and all of that.

Let me yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) who has seen these issues from a slightly different perspective, another Great Lakes industrial State.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, for organizing this Special Order so that Democrats can talk again about a topic that the White House and President Bush would much rather we do not discuss in public, especially during an election year, and that is the middle-class squeeze. I do come from Illinois, another Midwestern State that has been very, very hard hit by the unemployment that has been exacerbated by this Bush administration.

I want to tell my colleagues about a piece of information that came our way. My husband has a pilot's license to fly private planes. We certainly do not own one, but he gets a magazine called "Flying" that had in it this brochure that had these screaming headlines on it that said it was time to ben-

efit from the new tax law by buying a private plane. For about \$360,000, you can take advantage of this new bonus depreciation program, a 50 percent bonus depreciation program; and you would be able, if you bought this, a mere \$360,000 plane, you could write off in the first year \$260,000.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I represent an Appalachian district, 12 counties along the Ohio River. My district borders Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman think they would be interested in this plane?

Mr. STRICKLAND. I do not have a lot of constituents who would want to go out and buy a \$360,000 plane, but I do have a lot of constituents who would like to buy a pair of tennis shoes for their child or maybe some vacation time for the family. Those are the kinds of things my constituents want, not \$360,000 planes that they can write off as a tax deduction.

I am glad the gentlewoman brought this to our attention, and I would like to hear more about it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the thing that is really great about this deal is if you take this first year \$260,000, these planes last a long time, maybe the useful life is 20 to 25 years, and it really does not depreciate in value all that much. So you could take this first-year write-off, and then a couple of years later you could sell it and make a whole bunch of money.

This is the kind of deal and this is the kind of constituent that this Bush administration has helped. And how many people are really in the position, certainly not many in Illinois, not very many people I know to take advantage of this great tax break.

As I said, the thing they seem to be missing here is now Republicans are talking about this roaring-back economy. Okay, "back," implying that we have fallen a long way, baby, and now that more jobs are being created, they are saying, is this not a miracle of the Bush administration. But let us remember, we are barely halfway back. We are talking about still this President being the first on record since the Great Depression to go without creating a new net private sector job. Mr. Speaker, 1.9 million Americans who had jobs in 2001 still do not have jobs today.

So this kind of playing with the numbers like, is this not great, I have been trying to figure out, it is sort of like an arsonist who burns down the houses and then says, oh, look, they are building all of these new houses, or they are building these houses, we are coming back. No, you do not want to see the house burn down.

Then of course, if you are lucky enough to be one of the people who is getting a job in this resurging economy, your pay is going to be less, on average; in fact, about \$9,000 less is the average for the new jobs. Your benefits

are going to be limited, and your wages are likely to grow at only about 2 percent a year. And then, over the last 3 years, there has been a \$2,050 increase in child care costs, a \$2,630 increase in family health care premiums, a \$938 rise in the cost of gas per household with teenagers, and that has barely started.

We will have to make a new calculation soon. And a \$1,207 increase in college tuition, which my colleague talked so eloquently about and, at the same time, median family income has dropped nearly \$1,500. So the real question that should be asked, the question that was asked in a past campaign really is, Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago? I want to tell my colleagues that in Illinois that the answer is absolutely no.

I wanted to tell my colleagues some of the numbers in Illinois, about our job loss. Personal bankruptcies in Illinois. Instead of buying fancy airplanes, what we find is that personal bankruptcies in Illinois are at an all-time high: 13,739 people declared bankruptcy in 2003, a 42 percent increase from 2000. A lot of these bankruptcies are caused because of health care costs. You cannot afford to be sick in America anymore if you are an average working family. Most of the people, in fact, who do not have health insurance actually are holding a job. Over 70 percent of the uninsured live in a family with at least one full-time worker. And then we have 44 million people, 15 percent of the U.S. population that lacks health insurance coverage of any kind over the entire year. And the number of uninsured has been steadily increasing at about 1 million people.

So those folks now who used to have kind of a middle-class life, many are without health insurance, getting lower wages, no benefits; and they are often the ones who are actually standing in that line waiting to supplement their food at the end of the month, because ends just do not meet. And if it is a senior citizen who is on a fixed income, then they are trying to figure out how to buy their medication. They know that this prescription drug card is certainly not going to provide the answer to them.

Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago? And for the vast majority of Americans, obviously not the ones that the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of Commerce or the President of the United States or the Vice President of the United States hang out with, or obviously have much occasion to run into at all when they are on the trail at these \$1,000- and \$2,000-a-plate dinners that the President is going to these days; it is about time that he took a look and saw that the middle class is being squeezed out of existence.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois. I appreciate her description of the squeeze on the middle class, because I think when any of us goes out into our

districts and talks to people, not preselected crowds that when prominent politicians, particularly the President, when he went to Youngstown to the area of the gentlemen from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and (Mr. STRICKLAND), and spoke to a group at the community health center and they were all doctors.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Invitation only.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Invitation only, 150 people, something like that, and they all cheered at everything he said. But when they put themselves out in front of the public and they hear these stories, they hear about someone making \$22,000 a year who has just had their meager health insurance scaled back even further; who is facing increased gasoline prices; who wants to send their kid to Akron University, which had a double-digit tuition increase each of the last 2 years, I believe, on the average; who faces increased child care costs; whose wages likely will not go up, they are just hoping they can keep their job for another year or 2 before it is outsourced, or before their plants close down. And then they read these stories in the paper, they read the Secretary of Commerce say it is the best economy of my lifetime, they hear our colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about the shining city on the hill and how great the economy is, and they just wonder if they live in the same country that their leaders are presiding over and that their leaders live in.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, can I just say it another way? The vast majority of Americans are not asking for special favors. The American ethic of working hard and taking personal responsibility is alive and well. Americans want to work and take care of their families. But they expect just a little bit of help from the government, that when they get sick, they are not going to go bankrupt, that the school that they send their children to and they pay taxes for will provide a quality education; that when they retire, they will be able to retire in some dignity. The reverse of what the gentleman is saying is that Americans do not want that much from government, but they are not getting even the helping hand that they expect, deserve, and in fact, they have paid for.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, they want Medicare they can depend on, they want decent public education, they want affordable prescription drugs, they want a fair tax system that does not give tax breaks to the wealthy and leave them wanting for pennies, if that; they want fair treatment.

□ 2215

They want fair treatment.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to belabor this point, but I want to go back to what was said about these Ohioans who find their situation so serious that they have to go to a food pantry to get food for their families, and the fact that a member of this

administration said this terrible thing. I just think it is awful what he said. And the President campaigned as a compassionate conservative, and the good book teaches us that we have a responsibility to care for the poor and to feed the hungry, to feed the hungry. That is a responsibility that we have as individuals, as people of faith. And I believe ultimately as a government. And yet the President's man, this Mr. Bost, when confronted with the fact that there are increased numbers of people in food lines as a result of this Columbus Dispatch series, he said, There is a bump but how much of that is due to people taking the easy way out, I do not know, he says.

Now, this is the response that comes from the Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks. Her name is Lisa Hamler-Podolski, and she said, "Bost makes unfair judgments of people who use Ohio food banks and food pantries and he underestimates the courage it takes for many people to ask for help."

Now, that is a compassionate attitude. And Mr. Bost's attitude is a callous attitude. And I think the President has got a responsibility here. I think he should hold this man to account. Does this man represent the President's attitude? When the President is informed that there are increased numbers of people standing in line for food throughout Ohio, is he sympathetic? Is he compassionate? Or does he support this person who is a part of his administration and who, quite frankly, used to work for him when he was Governor of Texas. So this is a man he knows apparently pretty well. He brought him from Texas to Washington to oversee this program.

So I think the President has a responsibility either to accept this man's attitude as reflective of his own or to reject this callous attitude and his callous comment.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as sad as it is, I just want to say how this has just followed a very consistent pattern that this administration has taken with regard to the facts. And most recent, I think the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) already brought it up tonight, was with the Vice President's office regarding Halliburton. We do not have anything to do with their contract, they said. My office had nothing to do with it, the Vice President says. I do not even know what you are talking about, the Vice President says.

Well, it is in the New York Times today. Scooter Libby, the Chief of Staff for the Vice President, approved the contract, okayed it, with Halliburton. State Department, terrorism is down. Well, another analysis comes out. Terrorism is up. They were wrong. Colin Powell apologizing again after the U.N. fiasco. Weapons of mass destruction. No weapons of mass destruction. Greeted as liberators. Greeted as conquerors. They are going to love us. They hate us. We need 200,000 troops. No, we do

not. You are fired. We only need 130 and now we do not have enough.

Consistent pattern, whether it has been foreign policy or domestic policy, this administration at least, if we can give them some kudos but they have been consistent, but consistently wrong and have been consistently harming people.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I think my friend is absolutely correct in pointing out these inconsistencies.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Consistently inconsistent, just to clarify.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I thank the gentleman. I understand that none of us are perfect. No administration is perfect. Every administration makes mistakes. I certainly have made more than my fair share. But the fact is that there is an attitude reflected in these comments and I think in other actions of this administration that indicate that there is a total disconnect between their fantasy land, their world as they imagine it to be, and the real world that you and I and others who go home and spend time with their constituents and listen to their stories and hear their hopes and fears understand.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. It is generous of the gentleman to say that all administrations make mistakes and that even you have made a mistake. But I just want to remind the gentleman that the President could not think of a single mistake when asked at a press conference if there were any mistakes that he has made in his presidency. He said that none came to mind. He thought there probably were some but he could not even think of one.

It seems to me that just condoning, or in the case of the gentleman you talked about, the employee of this administration who says that people in food lines are just maybe looking for an easy way out, I would say that statement is a mistake and that the person that made that statement who is in a position of authority in a department that gives out food stamps that is supposed to help poor people with feeding programs, that is a mistake and he should be fired.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I absolutely believe that.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. The gentleman from Illinois' (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) statement about the President when he could not think of any mistakes that he made, several of us came to the House floor and talked about that a couple of nights, and not so much to be critical of the President, but to sort of think about mistakes this administration has made, because as you learn when you are a child you cannot really learn very much until you acknowledge the mistakes you make and then you correct them.

The President still has not come forward on Iraq, on this issue we talked about, on the prescription drug bill when they said it cost \$400 billion over 10 years and then it later came out it was \$534 billion and they knew that but they did not tell the American public

and they threatened someone's jobs if he told the media or told the Congress.

I think if we are going to move ahead, if we are going to solve this Nation's economic problems, the President, it would be so much better if he would say, hey, this was a mistake. Ronald Reagan did that. Ronald Reagan, when he was going a certain course in driving up the budget deficit, at a couple points he made a change and he did some different things and the country was probably better off for it.

This is really the first President in our lifetimes that I think has not been able to acknowledge a mistake and change course. I do not want him to go around doing *mea culpa, mea culpa*, but I do want him to acknowledge a mistake and do a correct and change course. He really has failed to do that.

Again, his answer to every economic problem no matter what the situation is more tax cuts to the wealthy and trickle down economics and more trade agreements. His answer to every situation remains unchanged and he will not change the direction of failed policies. That to me, it is not personal to George Bush, but it just makes me wonder the character and the motive sometimes, but not even so much that it is the judgment of the very stubborn people in the White House that think they have the answer because it fits their ideology and they will not change that direction when it is clear their economic policies have failed. It is clear their environmental policies, their health care policies, as the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) said, a million more people are uninsured every single year in this country since President Bush took office. Clearly these policies are not working. Would they not want to change these policies and go in a different direction?

Mr. STRICKLAND. I think the ability or the willingness, the capability to admit a mistake is a sign of strength and a sign of character. I fear the person who is so self-assured and so arrogant in his or her self-confidence that they refuse to acknowledge the fact that they may have made a mistake or made a misjudgment or made a wrong decision. I think that kind of person tends to be brittle and inflexible. So, consequently, if you get started down a route or pathway that is the wrong pathway, rather than having the ability or the willingness to change course, you continue to plunge headlong into some economic or social or military disaster.

The fact is that a lot of mistakes have been made. We made a terrible mistake when we sent our soldiers into battle without having adequate body armor. We made a terrible mistake as a government, as a Pentagon, as an administration, when we had soldiers in Iraq without up-armored Humvees.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. That is a mistake that neither the Pentagon or the President has acknowledged, even

though we know dozens if not more men and women were killed because they did not have body armor, because the Humvees were not up-armored with the kind of protection that we know how to put on and failed to do.

No one in the administration, in the Pentagon was punished for that failure, no one was reprimanded, no one lost their job. Yet dozens of young American men and women died because of it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Actually, it was reported in Newsweek and other places that there had been a Defense Department study that showed that perhaps as many as a quarter of those troops in battle that were killed or injured would not have been had they had the proper equipment, 25 percent. So we are talking about more than a few dozen.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. So imagine if the administration when we first were in Congress, and all four of us talked about this, as members of the Committee on Armed Services, as members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as members who were involved in a lot of Iraq things in the beginning, every one of us came to the floor as well as at least a couple of dozen other Members of Congress and hundreds of representatives of veterans' organizations and people advocating for soldiers, for their better treatment, if the administration had said earlier when we first started talking about this, right when the war started in March and April of 2003, if they had said, we have made a mistake. We have got to do something about this today, and if we do not do something, the people who are responsible will be punished, imagine how many more lives would have been saved, how many fewer soldiers would have been injured and lost their limbs and capacities.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, we are standing here in the Chamber. We are talking about problems that we see, mistakes that have been made, and some I guess would say why regurgitate that. That is old news. What we need to do is look forward and decide what we are going to do from now forward rather than dredging up mistakes that have been made. My answer to that question, and I think it is a legitimate question, but my answer to that question is this: The same people who made those faulty decisions, who made those misjudgments, who made those mistakes and are unwilling to admit them are the same people who are still in charge and they want to make decisions regarding our future. They want to make decisions regarding our future military actions. They want to make decisions regarding our future health care policy. They want to make decisions regarding our future education policy. They want to make decisions about a whole range of things.

The American people, I think, deserve to know that these people who are currently in charge and want to remain in charge are the very ones who have made these mistakes and refused

to acknowledge them and are continuing to pursue policies which are harmful to this country. So we need to call attention to the past in order for us to have some sense of what we can do to correct the situation and move this country forward in a positive manner.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Our responsibility here is to identify what these problems are in order to change course for the country. We are not just sitting here talking amongst the four of us. We are here talking to the American people because we want to engage them in the discussions. Something that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) said and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) said that I want to identify with, when we talk about people not admitting their mistakes we have lost the constitutional balance in the legislative branch and our oversight ability on the legislative branch because it is all controlled by one party. We are in a very, very dangerous situation.

I think this is something that maybe the American people do not understand at home is that, and I hate to use this as an example, but when President Clinton was in and this House was controlled by the Republicans and the Senate was Republican, the Republican chairmen of the committees had the ability to subpoena witnesses and call hearings in which they could oversee the executive branch. In this case it was Mr. Clinton. But today we have the Republicans who control these committees in the House. They control the committees in the Senate. There is no oversight of the executive branch, and so we are getting legislation and mandates coming out of the executive branch with no oversight from the legislative body.

Article I, section I, the people should govern. We do not have the ability, the minority party, to subpoena witnesses and do what we have to do to oversee the executive branch. I think the American people need to know that. There is a reason why they are getting away with all of this and we do not have the proper oversight abilities.

Mr. STRICKLAND. The words of the gentleman reminded me of something that happened just 2 weeks ago. We had a forum to discuss the mandatory funding for VA health care. We had a forum and we had representatives of the national veterans organizations before us and they laid out their rationale for mandatory funding for VA health care.

□ 2230

The reason it was a forum and not a hearing is because we could not call a hearing. We do not have the authority. Only the majority party can call an actual hearing, and so we had a forum; and in that forum, we did receive information from the American Legion, from the DAV, from the Vietnam Vets, from the purple heart folks, every veterans organization in this country; but it is sad that it could not be an official hearing which would have a different

standing within the Congress in terms of its ability to actually deal with legislation and move it forward into a place where it could finally become acted upon.

So that is an example of total one-party control of the Supreme Court, of the Senate of the United States, of the House of Representatives and of the Presidency; and that means that they are responsible, totally responsible. They cannot shift the blame. They cannot say it is someone else's fault. It is the fault of the leadership of this party.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friends for joining me.

It is the duty of us, as we talk about the middle class ways, and it is our duty to offer what we would do positively with what we have talked about in the past with Crane-Rangel and looking at these trade agreements again and extending unemployment compensation and doing the right things and changing the economic policy into the right direction in this country.

I thank my friends, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) for joining us.

WILLINGNESS TO ADMIT FAILURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting discussion of the issues of the day for the last hour or so by the opposing party, and certainly I am sure that to a large extent the remarks are heartfelt and are as a result of a distinct difference in opinion as to exactly where this country should be and how the leadership should actually be constructed.

It is intriguing to me in a way as I sat and listened to the discussion about when the Members of the other side talk about the need for admissions of wrongdoing or failure. It would be so much more, I think, credible for them to approach this issue by first saying that we on the left have to admit certain things that we now know to be inaccurate.

Let us start with the fact that the entire world has disavowed our economic theories of greater government control of the economy, of cooperation with foreign governments, especially those governments that were totalitarian in nature and Communist by design, but all of these things have failed and we know it and the whole world recognizes it. The fall of the Communist empire, as a result of the variety of strategies employed by the United States and by others, including the Pope, as a matter of fact, we now see that it was a house of cards that

had no real basis in reality; that could not sustain itself; that socialism was not ever, ever able to deliver its promise of a better life for the people under its control; that greater government control of the economy, that larger government enterprises, that opposition to Communism, that all of these things were failures. It would be so much more credible for our friends on the other side of the aisle to approach this discussion of the need for willingness to admit failure had they started with that.

Had they started with saying, you know what, we have tried, we for 40 years, we had control of this body, Presidency, it was a Democratic-controlled Congress, certainly for the majority of the 40 years prior to 1994, and we pushed the idea of greater Federal involvement in the lives of Americans. We did so because we believed it was right. We did so because we believed the theories that were supposed to be there to substantiate the claim that greater control of our lives by the government, even control of the means of production by the government, the things we call socialism today, those claims have now been proven to be false.

It would be so refreshing to have them stand in front of the House, Mr. Speaker, and say we were wrong and we are willing to admit it; we are willing to admit that people do better throughout the world, as a matter of fact, not just in the United States. But throughout the world, it is the governments under which they live that are governments that espouse a free enterprise, a democratic kind of government that allows for individual liberty and individual enterprise. We were wrong to suggest that we should not confront Communism as forcefully as possible and that we should not, in fact, increase all of our Defense appropriations so as to essentially force the Communist empire to collapse under its own weight which is, of course, what we did, what Ronald Reagan proposed and it worked.

Most of the leaders of the Free World, and even some leaders of what was in the past a totalitarian country, came to the United States for the purposes of paying homage to Ronald Reagan and admitted that his strategy and his ability to see what was good for America and what was good for the world was, in fact, the right way to go.

Yet, never did I hear in the discussion here for the preceding hour that our friends were willing to concede the point that they were wrong and that the whole world knows it, and that people, every time they have had the opportunity, they voted to cast off totalitarian dictatorships and socialist enterprises.

So, as I say, it would have been better, it would have been certainly more convincing had they come here first with an apology for all of the things that they have been espousing for the last half a century and now they know

to be incorrect and failures of policies, but they did not do that. They just suggested that what we are doing today is wrong. Well, what makes us think then that what their view is of today is any better, any more correct, any more insightful, any more intuitive than what their view of what was yesterday and the world in which we lived up till today? Why should we trust them with guiding this Nation's future?

I did not hear them disavow the principles upon which their party and upon which, in fact, the left has been relying for years and today only, only exists and are espoused in institutions of higher education primarily in this country but perhaps even around the world; but everywhere where the rubber hits the road, everywhere where people have to actually go out and make a living for themselves and their families, everywhere where people are struggling to overcome the kinds of government tyranny under which they may live, everywhere where that exists, people yearn for something quite different than what the left offers them.

So that realization, that empirical evidence that we have to say that all of those ideas were wrong, that evidence has not yet manifested itself, and that realization of the error of their ways, it has not manifested itself in any of the rhetoric I heard tonight while I was waiting to deliver my remarks on, I should say, a totally different subject.

Nonetheless, I thought I should comment on what is apparent to me to be at least a discrepancy in the testimony that was provided here by our friends on the other side of the aisle for the last hour.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, let me go on to the discussion of an issue that I have many times in the past tried to bring forward on this floor and an issue that I believe to be of enormous importance to the country and certainly an issue that I believe needs the attention and debate of my friends and colleagues in the Congress of the United States and certainly a reflection of the debate that goes on throughout the country every single day around water coolers in offices and on work sites throughout America and around dinner tables throughout America. That debate and that discussion revolves around the issue of immigration and immigration reform, and it has many, many implications for who we are as a Nation, where we go from here, and how successful we may be in trying to achieve whatever goals we establish for ourselves.

It is connected to an even more significant challenge to the United States, and that is the reestablishment of the idea of exactly who we are, of what we are, what principles we espouse as a Nation, of what principles we can adhere to as a people.

This part of the debate is an extremely important one, hard to bring up, hard to articulate. Certainly it is