

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here again with the authorization and approval of our leader, Ms. PELOSI; STENY HOYER, our whip; Mr. CLYBURN, our caucus chair; and our vice chair Mr. LARSEN from Connecticut. We would like to thank them also for giving the 30-something Working Group an opportunity to come to the floor as often as possible to talk about the issues that are facing this country.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we once again find ourselves in a scenario where there is a major disconnect between what the feelings are of the average American citizen sitting in Ohio or Florida or in the Midwest or any other State with what their issues are, what their challenges are, the problems they face sitting at the kitchen table, and what is going on here in the United States Congress and around the Potomac River.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard now how we have all these new issues that have been dusted off the shelf, brought back out front, back on the talk shows, back on the media circuits, back on radio talking about priorities that only belong to a small fringe group of people in America when the real problems that American citizens face look a little something like this: College tuition costs, up 40 percent; gas prices, up 47 percent; health care costs up 55 percent; and median household income down 4 percent.

The American people are crying out to State capitals all over the country, to Washington, DC, please, please, somebody listen to what our needs are. Please, somebody help us with an alternative energy plan. Please, someone help us reduce the cost of college tuition. Please, someone help us rein in the cost of health care. Please, someone help us lift our wages up, someone invested in the country. That is what the American people want. Yet time and time and time again we continue to get issues of amending the Constitution for any reason we see fit and divisive debates in the United States of America.

So I have a question, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to propose to the American people. What do we believe in as a country? What do we believe in, Mr. Speaker? What kind of America do we believe in? Do we believe in an America that will give the very, very few a tax break, the people who make more than \$1 million a year a tax break, while we are increasing the cost of college tuition, while we have high gas prices? And with the top leadership in the United States of America saying conservation is a good personal virtue, but it has no room in the personal policy debate that this country has. Is that what we believe?

See, I believe that the American people want leadership in this country and they want us to take on these issues. These are difficult issues, and it may be hard to go to a millionaire for some people and ask them to pay a little more in taxes, that may be difficult, but the country demands that kind of leadership because we need to invest it into lowering college tuition costs so we can get more people educated in this country.

Now, I agree it is not just money. We need reform. We need to do things differently. We need to figure out how a 21st century college or university should work or a K through 12 should work. We need to do all those things. Just throwing money is not the solution. But to give millionaires a tax break at the expense of the kinds of reforms that the Democratic Party wants to do in college tuition, in alternative energy sources, I think is very, very important.

We have in the United States a lot of untapped human potential. And a lot of times, Mr. Speaker, we get caught up in policy debates about what our resources are, and conservation, and making sure we tap into all the resources of the country, but one of the great untapped resources that we have in the United States of America are our kids. We cannot continue down the road we are going down now, not investing into the arts, not investing into the team sports, not investing into business incubators at the rate we should be, not making sure that every school has a nurse or a clinic so our kids are healthy, not making sure that we reach out with SCHIPs, so that all our kids are covered and have health care so that they can be productive citizens.

These are investments we make into our kids, into our parents to make sure they are healthy so that they can be productive and learn in school. Because the other option is to say, the heck with the kid, he doesn't have the money. He or she doesn't have the money, they can't afford to go to the doctor, well, lose another one and move on. That is not what America believes in, Mr. Speaker.

So the real issue is this: Here is the world we are competing in: 1.3 billion Chinese citizens, 1 billion Indian citizens, and the European Union. They all want to clean our clock, Mr. Speaker. They want to knock off America. They are not scared. They are coming after us. They are barreling down. You go to Shanghai, you are riding a magnetic levitation train, one of the only ones in the world. They are investing in engineers like crazy, schools and education like crazy, knocking over buildings. They do not have property rights, environmental rights, human rights. They do not respect religion. They are not really playing fair, but they are playing to win.

Now, how do we combat that with only 300 million citizens? We combat that by investing into our people, mak-

ing surely our people are healthy, educated, and have opportunity. And you know what? Some people may not take advantage of the opportunity. We understand that. But we need to begin to provide opportunity again for Americans.

The article today in USA Today about college debt, how can we expect kids to go out and take risks and take chances and start new businesses when they leave college with, last year, averaging \$19,000 in debt? Nineteen thousand dollars. You think these kids are going to want to go to an inner city school and teach kids when you leave them with, if they have a Master's Degree or Ph.D. or something, over \$100,000 debt if you're a doctor. We need to invest back into the United States of America. We need to have an infrastructure program.

Back home 2 weeks ago people in Ohio were talking about sewer lines and water lines and septic tanks and fees. Look what is happening to our country. We are letting it rot from within.

I just want to tell one story, Mr. Speaker. I went to China last summer for about 2 weeks, and as we toured the country and we went to different high-tech shops and chip manufacturers and Intel and all the fancy new high-tech companies that were there, we had a conversation, a kind of an ongoing conversation about their engineers in China versus the American engineers. And after hearing how many engineers they had and how well they were doing and how cheap they were, but yet very educated and very motivated and knew that they wanted to provide a lot of headaches for the United States, I started asking, well, what are the advantages of the U.S. engineers? And time and time again you would hear that the U.S. engineers are more creative, and they work in teams better than any other engineers in the entire world, all over the planet.

So the question is: Why is that? Partly it is because we promote and had promoted and have promoted in the United States athletics and sports and speech and debate. Team concepts. Teamwork. And we also, for some years, promoted the arts and taught these kids at a young age how to be creative and how to learn how to draw and paint and dance and sing and just to be creative and think outside the box. Those are the two advantages we have.

So I came back to the United States after 2 weeks and all you hear is pay to play. If you want to play sports in high school in Ohio: Pay to play. Some kids it may cost \$500. Two kids, maybe we will give you a break, \$750. Average families don't have that. But these kids are not going to develop the kinds of skills they need to be competitive in a world economy. Period, dot.

Are we okay with that? Is that something we believe in? Do we believe it is okay if kids have to pay an extra \$500 or \$1,000 to play sports when we know

it gives us a competitive advantage in the marketplace? Are we okay with that, America? I am not okay with that. I think it stinks. And then you come back and what is the first thing that gets cuts in the school districts? The art programs. First to go.

I had a woman last night from Liberty High School talk to me about how they had cut art programs for their kids in the grade schools because of budget constraints. We are cutting off our noses to spite our faces. We have to make these investments.

And then I come to Washington, DC, and we have a lot of tourists here, now is the tourist season in June and July, we get a lot of students down here, and what are we talking about? We are talking about gay marriage. Wait a minute, Mr. Speaker. We have got college tuition up 40 percent, gas prices up 40 percent, health care costs up 55 percent, and we are talking about gay marriage? Give me a break. Who are they bothering?

People don't come up to me at the Giant Eagle in Niles when I go down to get a pound of coffee and some honey, Mr. DELAHUNT, because I like to put honey in my coffee to sweeten it, because my Aunt Rosie taught me to put the honey in. It is good. It prevents colds. Nobody grabs me and says, can you please stop the gay people from getting married up in Massachusetts? They are killing me. No one has ever said that to me, and I am from a conservative district in Ohio.

People want to know what you're going to do about gas prices. What are you going to do about college tuition costs? What are you going to do about health care costs, Mr. DELAHUNT? These are the real issues in our country.

I yield to my friend.

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Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I can just interrupt for a minute, I think the question you are posing is, what are our national priorities in a time like this where people are pressed and there is a tremendous degree of economic uncertainty? One only has to take a look at the Dow Jones today. The Dow Jones went down another 100 points today. Last week it was around 300 points. The week before that it was 200 points.

Most Americans are looking at their 401(k), Mr. Speaker, and they are noticing that they are slipping behind. I dare say, Mr. Speaker, if you compared the Dow Jones Index today with the Dow Jones Index in the last several months of the Clinton administration, you would discover that after 6 years, after some 6 years of economic policies that only favor not just the middle class and the upper middle class, but the super-rich, you will discover that the Dow Jones hasn't moved.

All of those people who were planning on the customary growth in the Dow Jones so they could retire are now finding themselves compelled to work

more years so that they can sustain themselves, so they simply can sustain themselves. Our friend from Ohio, Ms. KAPTUR, she can tell you that in terms of the old-time pensions when somebody worked for years for a company and then they retired, they got a pension every month that they could count on, plus their savings, those pensions are gone. They no longer exist. They are gone.

And then we hear our friends on the other side of the aisle talk about privatizing Social Security, you know, PSAs, private accounts. Well, I guess if you looked at it from that perspective and you had no growth for 6 years, you would be beside yourself. You would be devastated emotionally. But that is what has happened.

And you know what we are doing with our money? We are not spending it on the priorities that everyday people have. The war in Iraq, for example, is closing in one-half a trillion dollars, Mr. Speaker. One-half a trillion dollars. That is trillion with a T.

And one only has to review the reports by the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction, and what you see is a record not just of incompetence and mismanagement but abuse and fraud. You know what, Mr. Speaker, this is the only country that is really at the plate in Iraq. We are not loaning this money, we are not loaning this money to the Iraqi people, we are just giving it away. It is the greatest welfare program in the history of mankind.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I am sure you remember the debate, Mr. DELAHUNT, because you were probably leading it at the time, the debate when we are talking about let's loan the money to the Iraqis. Everybody said they are going to be able to use the oil for reconstruction. Another urban myth. It never happened.

I know our friend from the west of me in Toledo, Ohio, who is one of my mentors down here, has a difficult story to tell us tonight.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I just want to conclude something. So with this giveaway program, this giveaway from the American taxpayers, we have not even spent the money well. The Iraqis have not spent the money well. We were going to build 150 primary health care centers in Iraq. Only six have been built, and they are running out of money. Great record. A great record. That sounds to me like the Babe Ruth of mismanagement, waste and absolute pilfering of American tax dollars.

Why can't we do it here in the United States, Mr. Speaker? Why can't we build 150 primary health care centers for our own people? Would somebody please respond. All I know is we are taking this money and we have brought it over there. And by the way, one of the most incredible readings that anyone could take on is the special inspector general's report about the missing \$9 billion; \$9 billion is simply unaccounted for.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank TIM RYAN of Ohio, my neighbor and friend, and also Mr. DELAHUNT of Massachusetts for getting the time this evening to talk about the real issues that the American people care about that don't get enough attention on this floor as we are designating more honorary days and bills that do not have a lot of substance attached to them, when the American people actually expect us to do something here to benefit their lives and their children's lives today and tomorrow.

On the Iraq issue, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I tried to get amendments passed in our committee when Mr. Bremer was head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, when we saw billions and billions of dollars being extended to that authority with no accountability back to this Congress.

Originally, they came to us with a proposal of \$20 billion with no strings attached, with no accounting back to this Congress. Eventually that was reduced down somewhat. But of the dollars that were expended, we were not able to get reports back from the administration because amendments were disallowed in our committee for the billions of dollars that have gone to who knows where over there. Now they are trying to get amendments to look at maybe \$6 billion that was expended. But let me tell you, the horses were out of the stalls before there were proper accounting procedures put into place. The truth will come out. But the record is clear who sought to get amendments and those who blocked them. That is in the record in the committee. It is outrageous.

I can remember when Paul Wolfowitz, who is no longer with the government, the President's big advisor on invading Iraq, when he said we would have this all paid for by oil sales, and we surely do not see that as even part of the equation.

As I thank my colleagues for organizing this Special Order tonight, I wanted to give a very specific example of what is happening in this country, not in Ohio, not in Massachusetts, but in Iowa and Arkansas and Illinois. As we do this Special Order, I would like to pay special tribute to excellence in a top-of-the-line quality company that is closing its doors, a company called Maytag Corporation that is headquartered in Newton, IA.

Let me say for the record I own no stock in Maytag Corporation. But our family, our household, is one of those who has appreciated the excellence of their products that have served the American people and the world for over 100 years. Sadly, this legendary American company, first founded in 1893 by F.L. Maytag, 35 miles east of Des Moines, IA, is soon to close its doors. And in Iowa, as well as subsidiary plants in Illinois and Arkansas, over 3,000 Americans will lose their jobs. The generations of Americans who crafted and built and serviced this all-

American product called Maytag deserve recognition in this Congress. They should be proud of the heritage of which they are a part and of their commitment to quality. For indeed, their quality and dependability helped build the America that was self-reliant here at home.

The gentleman from Ohio was talking about how the United States is becoming more and more indebted to foreign creditors. Maytag was the kind of company that built a strong America. It was an America that did not become overly reliant on imports and imported componentry to support its operations. It was an America that believed that its own identity and strength depended on domestic firms dedicated to excellence, and we led the world.

The company valued its product, its community, and its workers. And when the gentleman from Massachusetts was talking about pensions being taken away, it was the kind of company that really did build community where people could depend on their retirement income.

I feel compelled to discuss for a few minutes, to pay tribute to this historic company, truly an American icon company, and its workforce. As America says good-bye to Maytag, we also say good-bye to the type of firm that shaped our identity as a society.

That identity made the United States a world leader in the 20th century in manufacturing and agriculture. And that identity has been clouded by the very issues you are talking about here tonight by our growing over-dependence on imported products and imported capital from across the oceans, and Maytag represented that part of our history when America understood what it had to do to build the best.

The American people will soon witness the pink-slipping of Maytag's thousands of workers and sadly become part of our history. Of course, and this goes into a point that Mr. RYAN and Mr. DELAHUNT mentioned, the most recent chief executive officer of Maytag who brokered this closure and sale is reputed to have made over \$18 million in a golden parachute on the deal.

So my remarks tonight are really directed to the workers and management staff who hoped this day would never come. Wouldn't it be nice for America's consumers like myself to be able to travel to Newton, Iowa, and Heron, Illinois, and Searcy, AR, and say "thank you" to these workers and their families and friends who helped build an American legend company for over a century. Let's say thank you to them tonight.

Maytag Corporation, when it shuts its doors, will be closing a chapter in our history for generations that stood for high quality and high performance when they were America's industry leader. They helped define the manufacturing heartland from which Mr. RYAN and myself come, and their company represented the words "quality" and "dependability."

I will talk later about what made their products superior, but it is really amazing to me that we live in a time when we allow this kind of gold star company to bite the dust and we cannot even talk about it here in the Congress except during this particular period of time.

Their production will disappear and it will, just like our furniture industry, just like the television industry, just like us becoming energy dependent, it will become another nail in the coffin in America becoming too reliant on others.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that. We know the economy sometimes weeds out industries and new ones pop up. That happens. That is capitalism. We understand.

But where is the plan? Where is the plan to figure out what are we going to do next? What is the next best thing? What are these Maytag workers going to do? They cannot all work at Wal-Mart or Sam's Club or Super K or Lowe's or Best Buy, or all of the different white elephants that line the suburbs of America.

Are we going to invest in research and development? Are we going to invest in the business incubators? Are we going to lower the cost of college tuition? Are we going to make sure that we invest in the health care industries with nurses and health care workers? What are we going to do? There is no plan for the country.

I believe we need a plan. I just think the values that are here that we are hearing here in the United States Congress certainly do not reflect the average values. I think the Democrats' priorities are America's priorities.

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And that is the key here. When you look at this, briefly, as we are talking about Maytag, this is where the United States is borrowing its money. \$682 billion from Japan. China, \$249 billion, U.K., Caribbean, Taiwan, OPEC, Korea, Germany, Canada. We are borrowing all this money and giving it to the wealthiest 1 percent, 1.9. Let's see here, \$1.9 trillion over 10 years of tax cuts that we are borrowing. So we borrow from them and we give it the wealthiest in our country. And education costs go up, health care costs go up, energy costs go up. I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I could just rephrase it a different way, because Ms. KAPTUR mentioned the phrase "the importing of capital." And what we are doing in terms of our economic policy is that we are exporting our manufacturing base. In other words, that icon of an American company, Maytag, who I am sure provided good jobs and good wages to generations of Americans who represent, if you will, that core American middle class that really distinguishes a healthy democracy from other systems. We have taken that, we have exported those jobs because of these economic policies. Simultaneously, we are importing capital from

abroad. And I think this is a very telling chart, in the past 4 years, from 2001 to 2005, we have borrowed, in addition to the pre-existing national debt, \$1.18 trillion. Of that \$1.18 trillion, 1.16 is from overseas, from those countries that are evidenced on the chart beside Mr. RYAN.

Now, what have we done with that money? We have financed a war that is being pursued heroically by our military personnel and incompetently by our civilian leadership. In addition, the tax cuts have not favored any particular percentage of the American citizenry other than the super rich.

If one takes a look at the chart beside Mr. RYAN, if you earn \$40,000 a year you receive a tax benefit of \$17. Just think of that, \$17. If you make over \$200,000, your tax break amounts to \$1,300. Even if you make \$1.5 million, you get \$4,500 off your tax liability. But if you make more than \$1 million your tax break is \$42,000. So we are borrowing from overseas to advantage the top, not just the top 1 percent, the top .001 percent in this country and funding a war in Iraq that is costing us dearly in terms of our national treasure, which are our young people, as well as dollars and cents being provided for by Americans who are going through very, very difficult times, that I would suggest is reflected in our financial markets if you look at the difference between this past month and that Dow Jones Index and that Dow Jones Index in the year 2000.

With that I yield to my friend from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. I am so happy to see the chart that Congressman RYAN has put up there on how much interest we are paying on our borrowing, and I will let him go into that in detail. But I will just recount a story. Back when I was first elected to the Congress during the 1980s and served on what was then the Banking Committee, now called Financial Services. That tells you something right there. We went from a nation that believed in savings to a nation that believed in borrowing, and now we owe everybody because the whole banking philosophy changed. And we, at that point, had only about 8 percent, between 6 and 8 percent of our bonds that were sold to foreign investors. And I said, hey, we shouldn't go over 10 percent. We should make sure, went to see Alan Greenspan, Paul Volcker, all the different heads of the Fed, and said let us work on a program so the American people can buy our debt instruments. Why should we be selling more and more of these debt instruments to foreign countries? And they said oh, Congresswoman, it is too much trouble to get the Fed to have a website and to let grandmothers buy saving bonds for their grandkids, you know, get it at the bank and so forth. And I told them, put it in the Post Office. Let's have postal savings stamps like Roosevelt used to have. Let's own ourselves. Let's not be owned by foreign interests. And I can remember Mr.

Greenspan saying to me, well, you know, we like to deal with 20 bond houses up on Wall Street. And I said how much of a fee do you pay them, Mr. Chairman? How much of a fee? And why shouldn't that be owned democratically across this country rather than just a few people in New York controlling our future?

So I just put that on the table here. Now over half of our debt securities are being purchased by foreign interests, and we owe what Mr. RYAN will now explain to the country.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We owe, every year, in interest, this is the 2007 budget authorization, billions of dollars. The big red thing, what are we spending all our money on, \$230 billion is interest on the debt. All this money we are borrowing, it is like your house or your car. You buy a \$20,000 car. Over time you pay \$25,000 for it because you have got to pay the interest. It is sucking money from education, homeland security, veterans benefits, research and development, business incubators, community development block grants, all the things that we put in the communities to help communities make local decisions so that they can grow their local economy. We are sucking it out and we are giving it to China. China is taking the interest that we give them, and they are investing it back into their state-owned manufacturing companies that are stealing the manufacturing jobs. That is the cycle of the money over and over and over and again.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Ms. KAPTUR, do you remember when the President talked about ownership society? The rest of the sentence was, it is not going to be Americans that will own America. It is those whom we are indebted to.

We are selling ourselves to other countries, given the obvious statistics that just jump out at you. For what? For what? For war and for a tax break for the extremely wealthy in this country. That is all that it is doing, and it is at the same time putting a burden on generations of Americans that obviously are unborn at this point in time. And what a disaster.

Ms. KAPTUR. If the gentleman would yield on that very good point. If you look back, they say to us, the Secretary of Treasury that just left, Mr. Snow says you know the real problem with China is the yuan. If we just vary the currency exchange rate, all of our problems will be solved. That is what they said to us back during the 1980s when Reagan was President. Don't worry about the trade deficit with Japan. When the yen-dollar exchange rates gets low enough our trade balance will just automatically come back into the black for the United States. Guess what? It never has because Japan is not an open market. China is not an open market. And if you look at who is, on the prior chart the gentleman had up there, if you look at who has lent us the most money, Japan, they are earning it off of us

rather than opening their markets to U.S. automotive parts, to U.S. Maytag washing machines. You have got a closed market in Japan now using China as a back door for manufacturing with imported parts that are being put into everything. And we are not competing globally on a level playing field and it is killing our workers, and Washington refuses to respond.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And it is a total lack of leadership. If you look, this is quite significant. In the first 224 years of the country, we borrowed \$1.101 trillion from foreign interests. In the last 4 or 5 years, we have borrowed more than that. \$1.05 trillion under President Bush and the Republican Congress. Look at this. They have managed to accomplish more in the last 4 or 5 years than all previous Presidents combined. And at the same time, as we are borrowing this money and we are paying it back in interest to China, taking more of our money from our budget here to pay the interest, I find it peculiar that in 2004, 8 percent of graduating seniors carried student loans of more than \$40,000. That is up from 1.3 percent 10 years prior to. More kids are incurring more debt to go to college at a time when the economy has totally shifted from industry to knowledge based capitalism, knowledge based economy.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And meanwhile, we are building roads, we are building hospitals, we are building schools, we are building dams and levies, we are building deep water ports, where? In Iraq. And we are not building them here in Ohio. We are not building them in Massachusetts, we are certainly not building them in New Orleans. We are not building them here in America where there is such a crying need. And meantime, our people go forward, whether they be seniors and concerned about their retirement security, or whether they be young people and have debts of 40, 50, \$100,000 because of education. There is something wrong.

Ms. KAPTUR. If the gentleman would yield on that point.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Of course.

Ms. KAPTUR. And their parents have borrowed against their homes and home equity borrowings have risen to as high as they can go, and they can't be borrowed against anymore. The State of Ohio has the highest rate of home foreclosure in the Nation because the economy is not galloping ahead and people are borrowed to the hilt and there just is not anymore well to go to in order to finance their kids education and other expenditures that they have.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And if the gentleman would yield.

Ms. KAPTUR. I would be pleased to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I can give you a similar economic picture of what is occurring in my district back in Massachusetts. There was a recent headline in the Cape Cod Times. And in that particular region, where you have many second homes, we are breaking

records now in terms of mortgage foreclosures. One can just foresee what is happening as we talk to our colleagues among ourselves, that the ingredients and the components for an economic downturn of significant proportion are out there. And it will be as a direct result of the borrowing, the reckless spending, the giveaway programs that are going on today in Iraq, and the mismanagement, the fraud and the abuse and the lack of accountability. When you add it all up, it spells a recipe for economic disaster for America.

Ms. KAPTUR. I have asked several economists, how do you describe where America is headed? They said, right now, based on these borrowings and the situation in our economy, America is in uncharted waters. She has never been here before.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. All the more reason, there are not many options here. The Democrats want to take this country in a new direction. We want to stop all the borrowing, we want to stop all the tax cuts for people who make \$300 million a year, 200 million, 1 million, 2 million, 5 million, 10, stop. Balance our budgets. Implement the PAYGO rules so that we could make sure we are not spending any money that we don't have. And we don't have to borrow it from China and take the country in a new direction. Invest in education, invest into the dams here in the United States. Find the \$9 billion that got lost somewhere in Iraq and nobody seems to know where it is.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I hope it is in Ohio or maybe Kansas or maybe Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is almost the same amount that is being cut out of the student aid. 12 billion cut out of there, 9 billion lost. Take the country in another direction. Move it along. We want our Democratic plan, broadband access for all Americans, alternative energy plans, tax credits for research and development, all the things we need to do to move in this new direction and, at the same time, cut these loans in half.

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Make sure that these kids have money to buy a house, buy a car, go back to school, get a Master's Degree, get a Ph.D., do research, start a business, take a chance. These are the kinds of things we need to do.

Now, this is not us speaking. This is what we like to call here a third-party validator. This is former House Speaker Newt Gingrich on the Republican Congress from Friday, March 31, 2006: "They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function." That is the man who gave birth to the Republican revolution. This is Newt Gingrich. This is not TIM RYAN or BILL DELAHUNT or MARCY KAPTUR from Toledo, Ohio. This is Newt Gingrich, saying that the Republicans are in charge of a government that cannot function. Katrina, the war in Iraq, tuition costs, health care costs, energy costs. What is going on? Foreign debt, all the borrowing that we

are doing, giving Lee Raymond a \$2 million tax break. This is not us. This is Speaker Gingrich saying that, and I just happen to agree.

Also, in the same article, he cited a series of blunders under Republican rule from failures in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to mismanagement of the war in Iraq. He said the government has squandered billions of dollars in Iraq. Newt Gingrich, not the Democrats saying that.

Ms. KAPTUR. Would the gentleman keep that chart up there? What amazes me about that statement is Mr. Gringrich was on the advisory board to the Secretary of Defense when the war started. He was one of the people giving advice. So he was one of those responsible for billions of dollars being wasted. I find that very interesting that he would make that statement. I hope he does not try to resolve himself from his own responsibility.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I do not exactly know what specific issues he is talking about, but I am sure he is talking about the \$9 billion lost in Iraq. I am sure he is talking about the foreign borrowing, I hope, and find a way to fix it.

This is Pat Toomey. I am sure both of you served a lot longer with him than I did. He is now President of the Club for Growth. "There's a very high level of frustration," says Mr. Toomey, "and disappointment among rank and file Republicans when they see a government-controlled Congress engaging in an obscene level of wasteful spending."

"Obscene level of wasteful spending." Here is a man who recognizes the fact that paying \$230 billion a year in interest payments to foreign countries primarily is not a good investment for the United States of America. And these are the kinds of things that need to change. And these are conservative Republicans.

And all we are saying as Democrats is let us take the country in a new direction because I think our values as Democrats better reflect what the priorities are in America.

And it hit me a couple of weeks ago when we were home for a week and got to spend a long week with our constituents that there is a real disconnect between what the American people want and what is happening down here and the misplaced priorities that I think we see every day here in the United States Congress. And I know my friend from Massachusetts would like to interject here, but just finally to say that it is those investments that we want to make in college education and some of the others that I feel we need to do and do rather immediately.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAHUNT. MARCY?

Ms. KAPTUR. Well, I think that the proof is in the pudding. Every single trade agreement this country has gotten itself into, whether it is NAFTA that was supposed to give us jobs, which has cost us nearly 1 million jobs

now, was supposed to yield a trade surplus and it has yielded growing trade deficits. The same is true with the CAFTA countries. Now they want to push FTAA. If you look at what is happening to our country, we are losing the ability to produce the wealth that provided the middle class standard of living for a vast majority of our people, and that was America's great achievement in the 20th century. In addition to defeating Naziism and communism, it was our great achievement in the economy where we helped lift an entire society. We provided for seniors in their retirement years. We made affordable college education possible for those who had the ability and the will. And now we look at this century and we look at those possibilities being diminished for the families that used to see rising standards of living and rising tides. And it goes right back to mismanagement of the economy, the over-borrowing that is going on, the lack of production, the lack of trade agreements that really open markets so that we can sell products and earn income so that we do not go into these trade deficits and end up having to monetize that through borrowing.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman from Ohio will yield for a moment, the greatest risk to any democracy is a disparity between those that have in a society and those who do not. There is only so much poverty and uncertainty that any democracy can tolerate. If this trend should continue because that gulf between the affluent, particularly the very affluent among us, and the rest of America is growing so large that we have to step back and take a hard look. And I think what is important to understand here is that occasionally you hear somebody from the other party talk about, well, Democrats don't do this and they don't do that. The truth is that all of the sources of power in this country today at the national level are controlled by Republicans. They control the House, Madam Speaker. They control the Senate, and they control the White House.

You cannot blame Democrats. This is your package. You have got us here. You have owned Washington. Do not say that Washington is the problem because if you say that Washington is the problem, you are admitting that you are the problem because you are Washington. And that is the reality.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I agree with the gentleman. There is nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. And when you have Speaker Gingrich saying the same thing that BILL DELAHUNT from Massachusetts is saying or those of us from Ohio are saying, it must be a consistent theme. And I do not think Republicans are bad people. I just think their priorities are misplaced when you look at what is happening time and time and time again, and it is the same in Ohio. A Republican general assembly, every statewide holder is a Republican, and these kinds of problems have been exacerbated by the local policies at the State level.

And the real issue here is in cities like Toledo, Ohio; or Youngstown, Ohio; or Warren, Ohio; or Niles, Ohio; or Boston, Massachusetts is that there is, as Mr. DELAHUNT said, an underclass forming. And 70 to 80 percent of the kids who go to Youngstown city schools in my district live in poverty. Cleveland is now the poorest city in the country.

There is something wrong with the system when we allow that to happen. I do not believe that we cannot figure out how to do something about this. And when you cut community development block grants and you cut Head Start and you make college more expensive, those are not the priorities of the country. And here is why. I just want to make one point. This is not a moral argument. It can be and it is. But I want to make an economic argument to this. How are we going to compete with 1.3 billion Chinese citizens when we only have 300 million and we have a good number of our people living in poverty? They are not even on the field playing for us. We need them on the field. We need engineers, we need scientists, we need teachers, and nurses and doctors in our inner city schools, in our rural communities to help move the country forward and make those investments like the Tennessee Valley Authority, like the G.I. bill. Let us make those investments again, and we will see what will happen to the country.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am going to ask the gentlewoman to help on this because she serves on the Appropriations Committee, but there has been a raging debate in this country about immigration. There is nobody, I dare say, on either side of the aisle that does not believe that our borders should be secure. And the best evidence, however, of a sincere intent to secure the borders is the recent history of the Appropriation Committee's lack of action in terms of creating the suitable or the necessary funding for Border Patrol. The American people should be made aware when we hear our friends rail on the immigration issue that they have voted time and time again against Democratic amendments over the past 5, 6, 7 years to increase funding for Border Patrol so that our borders would be secure. And I hear that, and I just have to laugh because they own it. They own it. They want to indulge in the rhetoric. They want to talk tough. But when it comes to producing the resources so that we can say our borders are safe and secure when it comes to illegal immigration, they are missing in action.

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to endorse what the gentleman says and mention that the arrests that just occurred in Toronto were due to people driving up through Ohio, through Windsor, and going up into Canada. And we have been trying to get homeland security money at the northern border, and the Bush administration has just produced

a budget, with their allies here in Congress, that cut the amount of money that cities like Toledo and Detroit, Cleveland received to protect this border with Canada. We cannot even get Coast Guard patrols up on Lake Erie. Members like PETER DEFAZIO of Oregon here have fought so hard to try to get 100 percent funding. We have had amendments in our committee to examine all containers offshore before coming to this country. They are simultaneously defeated every single time that we offer them.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Did we get a Republican vote ever?

Ms. KAPTUR. No Republican votes. No Republican votes. So the problem is that we cannot do what is right for this country, and all that money we paid in interest due to borrowings we could fully fund the homeland security additional needs that we have. We could take care of those kids that cannot pay their college tuition. We could take care of veterans. We could take care of the water and sewer lines that the gentleman from Ohio, "Mr. RYAN" was talking about. That is how big \$200 billion is. Roll all those agencies together, paid for, but not when you are extending yourself by all these borrowings.

And when the new head of the Federal Reserve made a statement that interest rates might have to go up because of this capital crunch our Nation is facing because of this debt, the markets got so skittish. The stock market dropped a couple days in a row. The real estate industry went crazy because they know if those rates go up, the kind of foreclosures you are experiencing in Massachusetts and we are definitely experiencing in Ohio are going to skyrocket. So the economy is at a critical edge. We are in uncharted waters in terms of the importance of these borrowings and the down draft that that is creating inside this society. It is really a very dangerous situation.

At the beginning of the 21st century when President Clinton left office, and there was much I disagreed with him about, but we had a balanced annual budget and were beginning to pay down our accumulated debt. And I can remember Alan Greenspan saying when we are getting down to zero and we were starting to pay not just the annual deficit down but the accumulated debt, he said, well, gosh, you know, it might be dangerous for America not to have some debt. And I remember hearing that statement and I thought what? What? America's strength comes from standing on her own two feet. What kind of international investments does he have?

Mr. DELAHUNT. What a dangerous thing, Ms. KAPTUR, a debt-free America.

Ms. KAPTUR. A debt-free America. And I thought, hey, wait a minute, which bondholders is he having dinner with up there on Wall Street? What is going on?

And look at what happened on NAFTA. When the peso went south after NAFTA was passed, Wall Street bailed them out. Well, who are their little friends? Who is the club up there, the Wall Street club, that governs what happens across this society?

The person on Main Street in Toledo, Ohio, wants a balanced budget. They want a debt-free America. They know that makes America strong. They are not willing to accept this kind of financial dependence that our country has gotten itself into.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They do not want a Wall Street. They do not want a financial market that has not moved upward in 6 years. It has just slid and stagnated. That is what has happened here. All you have got to do is pick up the paper every morning and check the Dow Jones.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. When you talk about NAFTA, I remember during the whole debate that was supposed to fix the whole illegal immigration problem. So I do not think we can have this immigration debate without putting it into some context to say I thought NAFTA was supposed to fix this problem. Wages would rise, standards of living would rise, and people would not want to come back over here. That was a part of that big debate.

Ms. KAPTUR. Could I just comment on that to say the reason we have all this illegal immigration from south of our border is because NAFTA for the Mexican people totally disemboweled their rural countryside. It was planned. We have had over 2 million people who have lost their livelihoods. Peasant farmers. It is a sacrilege on this continent as far as what is going on. And the people have nowhere to go but to try to come up here to get food. They run across deserts. They risk their own lives. And why? Because their farmsteads were taken away from them. They have nowhere to go.

I tried to get agricultural amendments for transition in Mexico passed when NAFTA was considered. They were disallowed on the floor of this Congress under the Fast Track procedure, and now we are reaping the wrath of that agreement.

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Those folks that are coming up here, illiterate, risking everything, for why? To feed their families. That is the reason for the illegal immigration. Unless we fix NAFTA, we are not going to fix the illegal immigration problem in this country. I don't care how many fences they build.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As we wrap up, there is a lot of rhetoric, but you have just got to look at the facts. President Bush says America's economy is strong and benefiting all Americans. Ask yourself, regardless of the rhetoric, what the reality is. College tuition, up 40 percent. Gas prices, up 47 percent. Health care costs, up 55 percent. Median household incomes, down 4 percent. Don't listen to us. Don't listen to

Newt Gingrich. Don't listen to the other side. Judge for yourself. Is this the kind of America you believe in? If so, continue to put the Republicans in charge of the government. Quite frankly, I believe as much as we like them, they are unable to govern. Katrina, the war, all of these statistics, unable to govern.

Let's take the country in another direction and really embody the freedom that this country is supposed to have. www.housedemocrats.gov/30something, if any of you would like to email later.

www.housedemocrats.gov/30something. Dana from Pittsburgh and Amanda from Connecticut emailed us last time. Both emailed saying, Congress needs to talk about the priorities of college costs and gas prices and get on the stick.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Ms. KAPTUR, I know that you are still under that cutoff of 40, but it is great having you on board because I feel very lonely here with these young people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I sense a mutiny coming.

KANSAS FARMERS NEED RELIEF

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, there is an occurrence and an occasion in Kansas that occurs each and every year. It is a very special time in our State. It is the harvest time for wheat. Of course, Kansas is known as the Wheat State. It is a time in which families, sons and daughters, return home to the family farm. There is a lot of work to be done, but there is a history, a culture, a tradition, a family time each and every year in which harvest is a special moment.

But, Mr. Speaker, this year unfortunately is one of those times in which it appears that the Kansas wheat harvest and, in fact, the harvest across the Midwest is going to be less than what we would hope. In fact, the 2006 crop is expected to be the worst in the last 10 years, and many yields are expected to be less than 50 percent of normal. This is a huge consequence to the economy of our State, to the Midwest, and really to the country.

Rainfall has been about 28 percent of normal this year. In fact, 84 of Kansas' 105 counties received no precipitation during the month of February when that wheat crop is attempting to grow. Of those remaining counties, the greatest amount of rainfall in those other counties was thirty one-hundredths of an inch for the month. This is the fifth and sixth years across many portions of our State and in Nebraska and eastern Colorado and Oklahoma and Texas and South Dakota and Wyoming in which drought has had serious consequences. In 2005, drought damage was also exacerbated by tornadoes and hailstorm and freeze. In 2005, every county