

to the family and friends affected by this terrible tragedy. I rise to honor and encourage YWAM as an international ministry whose largest North American training facility is located in my district at Garden Valley, Texas, where I visited numerous times.

YWAM trains Christians of many denominations and ages with their express purpose being to know God and to make Him known in obedience to the Great Commission which says they are to go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. YWAM currently operates in more than 1,000 locations in over 149 countries with a staff of nearly 16,000. I have also had the opportunity on multiple occasions to meet different YWAM staff and students when they have visited this beautiful city here in Washington, D.C., before embarking on short-term mission trips.

When I speak with these individuals, I am overwhelmed by their passion for their ministry and sincere love for people they have yet to meet. They truly strive to follow the example of Christ by offering themselves as selfless, humble, and loving servants.

The Declaration of Independence says that we are endowed by a Creator with certain inalienable rights. Our Creator endowed this Nation with these individuals who have now been killed. Each of these dear people were a gift to this Earth and to this country. And although we are very disappointed that we did not get to keep those gifts as long as we wished at their Earthly location, we can still thank God for each day that we had them.

We are not promised life without hardships. To the contrary, those who take up their individual crosses, especially for the sake of Christ, can expect to face greater trials and persecution. For this Nation's entire history, until now, Christians have had a place, a country, where they were not persecuted. But that unique time is changing. In this day of political correctness, often Christians are the only groups it is acceptable to verbally assault. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we should consider everything a loss, including our own lives, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage the staff and students at YWAM during this difficult time.

C.S. Lewis had kept a journal of sorts after his precious wife, Joy, had died. In one entry, he said, in effect, that he missed her so much he wanted her back. But he realized how very selfish that was. His wife was in heaven. She was in paradise. It was not in her interest to return to a land of tears from a land where there is no sorrow. Lewis went on to say that we are told Stephen was the first martyr. But he said, as I think about it, didn't Lazarus get the far rawer deal? If you review the Bible looking for quotes from Lazarus after he was brought back from the dead, you will not find them. I will bet he was not a happy camper.

In any event, we can look forward to the day when we can be reunited with these friends from YWAM. But may those at YWAM find strength and encouragement from friends, from each other, and from these words: may God bless those at YWAM and may He continue to shine His face upon them.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE JULIA CARSON

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a moment to pay tribute to our friend, our colleague, our beloved sister, JULIA CARSON. It is my belief that when the Almighty created this beautiful, charming woman, he threw away the mold.

Long before JULIA CARSON came here, she was a fighter, someone who stood up and spoke out for those that have been left out and left behind. She was a champion of ordinary people, a champion for justice, for civil rights, for human dignity. I want to thank her friend and our former colleague, Andy Jacob, whom I served with, for doing all he could do to have JULIA CARSON come to this place.

In this body, we are like a family, one family. We become like sisters and brothers. And I feel with the loss and passing of JULIA CARSON, we have lost a member of our family. The chain, the circle, has been broken.

I will never forget when I was much younger, on April, 4, 1968, almost 40 years ago, I was in her district. She was not representing the district then, but we were in the City of Indianapolis with Robert Kennedy when he announced to the crowd that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had been assassinated. When JULIA came here, she always said to me, JOHN, you must come back to Indianapolis and visit. And I have gone back there.

We will miss her. She has gone on to a better place. And we will never, ever see her likeness again.

FOURTH QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE FRESHMEN REPUBLICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. McCARTHY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, tonight for the American public, we are going to hold the fourth quarterly report of the newly elected freshmen Republicans giving an update of what has gone on here on the floor. As the Sun begins to set on our first year in Congress, this is really the appropriate time to talk about it. This week we are bringing up what they call the omnibus bill, because we have 13 appropriation bills, but this Congress has only been able to get one through.

So what are they doing this week, at the last hour, at the last moments because Christmas is coming and people want to go home? They are throwing them all into one great big ball and putting them before the American people.

Now, when we flew back here, like we do each and every week, when I got here on Monday, I quickly found 34.4 pounds of pieces of paper of the omnibus bill and was told that in a few short hours we were going to go to a vote.

Well, tonight we want to tell the American people that we want to bring a little transparency to their government. We want to show them exactly what is going on here. And I will tell you this, the American people should know, Mr. Speaker, that this government is not small. This government is \$2.9 trillion. Now, just think for a moment. That is just the amount of money that this government spends. Now, if you compare that to economies, not just to what other countries spend in their government, but to their economy and what they produce, what their governments spend it on, ours would be the third largest in the world. Of course, the United States economy is the largest, and there would be Japan, but we would be larger than Germany. We would be larger than China with all the money they spend in government and all that they produce as you look at the different products that they make. We would be larger than the United Kingdom, larger than France, and larger than Italy.

When you think about that and you think about the deficit that we have, isn't there a place that we can find the fraud, the waste and the abuse and eliminate it? And that is what these 13 freshmen who have been newly elected a year ago have been about to do.

Now, tonight, we are going to start out talking with different members of the freshman class. It is an honor to look at the different members that we have. Our first individual that we have comes from the State of Minnesota, the Sixth District, Representative MICHELE BACHMANN from Stillwater, Minnesota.

I would like to yield time to MICHELE.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Thank you, Representative. What an honor to be able to be here. What an illustrious class we have, and I appreciate the gentleman from California so much for his fine direction, for his leadership and for our class. He is doing a wonderful and able job. He is telling the story that the American people want to hear, and that is where we are in this particular quarter, what is happening with our finances, because that is what we do, after all, when we come here to the United States Congress. We come here for a very simple purpose. We have to deal with 11 spending bills covering various subjects, and we have to take care of those. We have to make sure that we fully fund the priorities that we believe in and make sure that we

are keeping faith with the American people and doing so in a way that respects their property, their private property.

Because after all, what is it that each one of us has? We have our time. We have our livelihood. And when we go out to work every day, the money that we bring home for our families, the money that we bring home that we hope that some day will buy us a home, put our children through college, maybe have enough to offer us a secure retirement, that is the result of our labor that we take every day.

And where are we at now in this country with the amount of money that the government is consuming out of our paychecks? It seems every year those days go a little bit longer and longer when Congress is consuming more money. That is a real concern for a lot of Americans. I know it is a concern for me. It is a concern for our family and for the people that I represent back in Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District. And I know as I have spoken with our fellow freshmen, and many will follow me up here when I conclude my remarks, they will tell you the same thing.

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They are very concerned about how the people back home are going to be able to hold on to the fruits of their labor, the private property that they have been able to amass and accumulate for the benefit of their family.

Well, here's just one topic that I want to take tonight, just one little piece, and spend a very few moments on it, and it's a concept called the alternative minimum tax. Now, this is something that came about in the Tax Code back in 1969. Back in 1969, there was a hue and cry because there were about 155 multimillionaires who didn't pay taxes that year, and rightly so. There were a lot of middle-income Americans, lower-income Americans that were pretty upset about this. They were paying taxes, but they saw that wealthier people, through legitimate loopholes, you might say, or legitimate provisions in the Tax Code, were able to completely escape taxation.

Well, this created, as you can imagine, a hue and cry right here in this body. So the Congress decided to create a bill called the alternative minimum tax. What this would do, essentially, is a person would have to figure their tax once. If they didn't have a tax liability, under the alternative minimum tax they figured their tax a second time, and whichever tax liability was higher, that is the tax that we get paid. In other words, whichever way that Uncle Sam did better, that would be the final outcome of a person's tax return. So the American citizen never was able to pay the lower amount of tax; they always had to pay the higher amount of tax.

Well, the alternative minimum tax kind of turned into something that you might equate with one of those 1950

science fiction movies called, maybe, "The Blob that Ate New York City," because that is what has happened with the alternative minimum tax. It has become kind of like "the blob that ate New York City."

Now, remember back in 1969, 155 Americans were impacted by the alternative minimum tax; in other words, they had to pay a higher tax. That is what that means; 155 Americans. Well, guess what Congress forgot to do? They forgot to index this tax for inflation. So, guess what? Every year more and more Americans had to pay this tax, and more and more Americans were reclassified as being wealthy or rich.

Well, guess what? Last year, 3.5 million Americans had to pay the alternative minimum tax. One hundred fifty-five, 3.5 million. Guess where we are today? As of today, this Congress has done nothing, absolutely nothing to eradicate the alternative minimum tax. You know what will happen? Twenty-three million Americans will be impacted by this measure. That is redefining what rich means in this country.

So, do you know what the new definition of rich will be? It will be a police officer married to a teacher. Now, think of that, a police officer married to a teacher. We don't usually think of people in those income tax categories as being redefined as rich. But now, under the so-called wisdom of this Congress, that is exactly what has happened.

Now this is a problem. We cannot allow this higher level of taxation to seep down into the middle class where people are working hard. They aren't rich by any stretch of the imagination. They are just hardworking, decent people, trying to make a go of it; not what this tax was intended to impact. That is something we need to consider. There actually can be a conclusion. Sometimes the curtain needs to come down on ill-advised measures; and if there ever was an ill-advised measure, it's the alternative minimum tax.

I just want to give you a figure here. Historically, over the last 40 years, and we are standing here, it's a beautiful December evening in Washington, D.C., the year 2007. For the last 40 years in this country, the Federal Government has consumed about 18.2 percent of gross domestic product. That is pretty much the money that is created and generated in this country every year, gross domestic product. Well, guess what? The Federal Government has consumed about 18.2 percent.

If this Congress continues to do nothing, and unfortunately, that is a lot of what we have seen this year is a lot of do nothing, if Congress continues to do nothing with the alternative minimum tax, instead of 18.2 percent of all the money that is created in this country, that number will rise to 24 percent. Almost one-fourth of everything that is created, the income that is created in this country will come where, to your pocket? Are you kidding? It will come

here to the United States Government. That is not what we want to see happen.

This is kind of a dream come true for politicians that love big government, because they don't have to vote for this tax increase. It's just on automatic overdrive. It's going to continue to grow. Just like I said, "the blob that ate New York City," that is the alternative minimum tax.

That is not what those of us who are standing up here to talk to you about tonight, with fiscal responsibility, that is not what we are about. That is not what we want. What we are after is a clean, straight repeal. We want this ill-advised tax to go away. People think that a tax is here forever, that you will never get rid of it. You never get rid of death, you never get rid of taxes. Well, it is possible to do it. It's possible to do it if we have the will.

I believe collectively the American people would want us to get rid of this "blob that ate New York City," the alternative minimum tax, because why should the government continue to profit from a bad law so that you will have to continue to spend more and more and more of your income. And pretty soon, everybody's going to be redefined as rich, everybody will be, and pay a higher level of taxation. This is absolutely ridiculous. There is no reason why we should continue a law like this, and I fully believe that we need to do something about this bill, and do it soon.

Now, here's one aspect that is being debated even this evening. There are those on the other side of the aisle that think that we have to "pay" for this tax. In other words, you need to continue to be taxed more. Here's how they plan to do it. They plan to create a bank account, if you will. And what the other side across the aisle is planning to do, you know what they are going to put in that bank account? They want to put tax increases in that account. They want to have a 1-year tax or 1-year patch, or fix. So instead of 23 million people paying that tax this year, they just want it to be 3.5 million people. Still too many. It's 3.5 million too many people, if you ask me.

But what they want to do is create a bank account and put tax increases in it. And what they are going to do, just "take it to the bank," as they say. The American people are going to be stuck with a bill of \$50 billion in tax increases that you're going to have to pay, maybe not next year, but the year after. That bill is going to be stuck to the American taxpayer.

We can do so much better. Do you know that we have more revenues coming in this year into the Treasury than any other time in the history of this country? Revenues are not the problem. We don't need all this additional revenue. What we need is some fiscal discipline, some fiscal responsibility. We need to get our sense about us and realize we just can't be all things to all

people. We set our priorities. We do what you do every day at home in your home and in your business. You just realize you need to spend within your means.

So we need to get right on this. We need to not create any phony bank accounts where we don't put money in, we put IOUs in that you the American public are going to have to pay. We are going to get rid of that.

We want to just do a clean repeal, do away with the alternative minimum tax, be fiscally responsible, be good and kind to the American people. That is a Christmas present that we need to pass and send out to the American people tonight. That Christmas present needs to say that we respect you, we respect your work, we understand how hard you work, we understand that your family means the world to you, your children mean the world to you, your parents mean the world to you, your business could use a little bit more capital investment too. We trust you, and we know that you can put that money to work far better than any of us collectively ever could hope to do. There are essentials that government has to fund, but what we don't need to do is have a blob that eats not only New York City, but the rest of the United States.

So I for one, Representative McCARTHY, believe with you that we need to do right by the American people, trust their judgment, be sensitive to their family needs, and do away with the alternative minimum tax.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. I thank the gentlewoman from Minnesota, Mrs. BACHMANN, because she said it right, that this alternative minimum tax is going to hit a lot of Americans. And it is not about a revenue crisis here in Washington, DC.; it is really a spending crisis. We set a new record that more money has come into this Treasury than ever before, but more money is going out.

This Congress has a couple other historical facts with this year. This is the longest a Congress has ever gone without approving 13 appropriation bills. This is a Congress that has not been effective from that date. And I will tell you from the 13 freshman Republicans that got elected all at the same time, we talked about accountability. We talked about changing the way Congress goes about it, that we bring transparency back home. And in that omnibus bill that was before us, those 34 pounds of paper, there were 9,000 earmarks; 9,000 earmarks. Think for one moment. Did the American public get to debate them? Did they get to see them? Did the power of the idea win at the end of the day down here?

And you wonder as you are sitting back at home, Mr. Speaker, with the American people, maybe they don't qualify this year to pay the alternative minimum tax. Will they be affected still? I will tell you, if you are a taxpayer and you get a refund from the IRS and you try to send that in early,

get your taxes done early so you can get that money back, and maybe you are going to take your kids to Disneyland, maybe you are going to put a little money a way for a kid's college, or maybe you are going to put money away for yourself for retirement, you know what? You are not going to get it back very soon. The IRS has already said because this Congress has not acted, this majority has not taken it up and solved the problem, because of that, we are going to wait 7 extra weeks. They have to reprogram, even if an action is taken here tomorrow on this floor, and that is the concern I have.

When you think about this budget, \$2.9 trillion. People at home say, You are talking trillion, you are talking billion, what does that mean? Let's take it down just one step. It is 1,000 billion for every trillion. Just think for a moment, just \$1 billion. It is Christmastime. If someone were to give you \$1 billion and you went and said, I am going to spend \$1,000 a day. I am going to go on a shopping spree each and every day. How long it will take you to spend \$1 billion? 2,740 years. A billion minutes ago the year was 104 A.D. and the Roman Empire was flourishing; yet the Federal Government spent \$1 billion in the last 3½ hours. That is what is going on that the American people need to know about.

To continue on, we have some more freshmen here with us tonight. From eastern Tennessee, we have Representative DAVID DAVIS from Johnson City. Let me tell you a little bit about DAVID DAVIS. He sits on the Committee on Education and Labor, Homeland Security and on Small Business, because he has been a small businessman. He knows how to run a business, how to earn money, how to employ individuals and how to grow the economy.

But I will tell you, he is a Representative that never loses sight of where he represents in eastern Tennessee. Just last week he opened up his house to all of his constituents. He welcomed them over for a little time of cheer during the holiday season. And you had about 500 people through your house, and you said at the end of the time it was nice, because you had the hardwood floors and you had it all cleaned up.

But we are very proud of the representation you give and how you reach out to your constituents, and I yield the time to DAVID DAVIS.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, KEVIN. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your friendship.

You know, we have been here almost a year now, and as I look at my fellow freshmen, I feel blessed to represent the American people with some of the best people that I know, good people that are willing to come here and work hard and try to get things done for the American people.

I grew up in the mountains of east Tennessee. My dad has got a sixth grade education. I was able to start a

business. I was able to succeed. I was able to serve in the Tennessee legislature. It just goes to show that in America, you can do whatever you want to do.

Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can or if you think you can't, you are right." That is common sense. If you go out there and you make things happen and you are willing to work hard, good things will happen for you. Henry Ford knew it. Teachers know it all across America, moms and dads and all across America.

We live in a blessed Nation. As a matter of fact, it even talks about that in the Bible. In Psalms 33:12, it says "Blessed is the nation whose god is the Lord." We are a blessed people, and I feel very blessed to represent the people of northeast Tennessee back in my beloved mountains where common sense reigns, American values reign.

You know, we are in America today and we are in an America where we spend too much money. Ronald Reagan understood this. When Ronald Reagan was President, he once said, "We don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we don't tax enough. We have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too much." And I can tell you, Ronald Reagan would not have been pleased with this Congress this year because we have certainly, under the majority rule, they tried their best at every turn to find a way, a new way, to tax the American people.

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There are moms and dads sitting around the kitchen table all over this great country trying to put a budget together. They are trying to put a budget together to decide how they are going to take care of their kids, how they are going to buy gas for their automobile, how they are going to pay their heating oil bill, how they are going to pay for college for the next generation, how they are going to save for retirement, how they are going to provide for their health care costs that keep increasing day in and day out.

The American people are looking for leadership. And when this new majority took over last year, they promised open, accountable, transparent government that was going to get results for the American people. Well, the results that this Congress has brought about, actually, over the last week or two have started to come back to some common sense. It took them about 50 weeks to get there, the longest in history; but finally they are starting to come back and going to pass some bills that cut their spending by about \$20 billion. Thank goodness we had a President that said, I am going to veto if you spend too much. Thank goodness we had a minority party who stood up and said you are not going to spend too much money.

Moms and dads across America can spend their money better than a Congress. Moms and dads know the answer of how to raise their kids better than a

bureaucrat in Washington that has never met those kids.

This majority has failed the American people right up to the last week or so. The majority failed to pass 11 out of 12 appropriation bills.

Funding for this Congress and for this government actually ended back in October, and here we are on the eve of Christmas and we are still waiting to put the final touches on a budget that should have been done back in October. You couldn't do that back home in east Tennessee. You can't do that in any city in America. You have got to use common sense and you have got to pay your bills on time.

MICHELLE talked a moment ago about the majority has failed to protect the taxpayer with the AMT fix. You see, no leadership, no results. And that is basically where we are at. If the AMT is not fixed this week, it will leave 23 million taxpayers owing more money and not bringing their refunds home the way they expect. It will be a tax increase on the middle class. No leadership, no results.

Then, you look at the energy bill that has been talked about all year. Finally passed one this week. It is amazing, you get to the 11th hour of the 11th month and you finally start to pass some of these bills. But an energy bill that basically had everything in it except energy. We had an energy bill that had regulations, we had an energy bill that had taxes, and we had an energy bill that had no energy. No leadership, no results. And we are certainly seeing that today.

Then we had a majority party that has tried their best to do everything they can to make sure that the troops didn't receive the funding that they deserve. I went over to Iraq and spent time with the men and women in uniform, and there are young men and women over there that the American people would be very proud of. They want to be there; they volunteered to be there. They want to come home, but they want to come home in success, not in failure.

We have a majority party that actually had a leadership back in the spring that said: we failed. I can tell you, I can tell my colleagues, we have not failed. America has not failed. Ronald Reagan also used to say when he said tear down that wall, he said they lose, we win. I would hate to be in a situation in this war where we have to look back and say, we lost, they won. And we won't do that if we protect our men and women in uniform. And we can do that. As a matter of fact, there is a bill on the Senate floor tonight to make sure that funding is available for our men and women in uniform across the globe, not just part of the globe, but across the globe. See, if you have no leadership, you have no results.

And then the majority party has talked about health care, probably one of the most pressing issues facing the American family today. We talk about a need to fix health care, but we have

not seen it in this Congress. The American people demand the ability to be able to go out and afford and feel reasonably comfortable that their children, themselves, and their moms and dads are going to receive the health care that they need. And there are solutions to those problems, but you have to have leadership to get results. No leadership, no results.

Then the cost of energy. When this majority party took over, it was interesting, if you look back, they said: the Republicans have left us in a lurch. Our cost of energy is skyrocketing. If you will give us the opportunity to lead, we are going to lower the cost of energy. When the Republicans gave up the majority in January, oil was \$56 a barrel. Now it is \$90 a barrel or thereabouts. \$56 to about \$90 a barrel. That is going in the wrong direction. Again, no leadership, no results.

The American people want us to come together, work as a team, and work on these issues, health care, energy, funding our troops so we can win, taking care of immigration, building the fence, making sure we have a secure Nation, making sure that we have an education system where our children can feel reasonably sure that they can go out and get the education they need. That is the type of leadership we need. That is the type of leadership that was promised for the most honest and ethical and open Congress ever. I am still waiting.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be with you.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee. He has done a tremendous job here, and I appreciate your comments. Because when we all sat on this Chamber's floors and we listened for the first time the pride of having the first woman elected Speaker, her comment and her words were: partnership, not partisanship. And we looked forward to that day that we would sit down, we would debate the ideas, and we would actually change the way that this body works, and no longer would congressional Members just slip something into the bill so it would pass and no other Member was able to see it or debate it. But we soon learned that did not change.

You know, the President of the United States stood in these Chambers and gave the State of the Union speech, and he challenged this Congress to cut their earmarks in half. Now, that would mean there would only be about 6,700 earmarks inside the bill. There were 9,000. We heard the majority side say: we had to put another 230 in from the last time you even were able to look at these just to get Members to vote for it. That is not the way the American people want legislation produced. They want to see it in a committee, they want to see it debated, they want to see the power of the idea actually win.

What are these earmarks about? Well, these earmarks are probably the

worst things you have ever seen. We used to have a former chairman of the Ways and Means, Bill Thomas. And when he retired, he took all his papers, it is an historical time, on what he was able to accomplish in his 6 years as chairman and his 28 years in Congress, and he gave it to the junior college in Bakersfield, California. We have a new chairman of Ways and Means, and he had been there only about 6 months, now it is almost a year. Within 1 year, he had already put \$2 million into the Health and Human Service appropriation to build a library named after himself, to build a very nice office for himself in the style of a Presidential library of like Bill Clinton or Jimmy Carter. Those two libraries were built with private funds.

But, you know, I take a great deal of pride of the Republican freshmen, because all 13 voted "no." The majority in the majority party all defended him; came down with an amendment to say, let's strip that \$2 million, we have a deficit. The college didn't even ask for it. That individual actually came to the floor, defended it, and said he deserved it, he worked here so long. We said, well, you named it after yourself. Should we put something in and name it after ourselves? No, no, you wouldn't deserve it. But that, the Building a Monument to Me? The idea that it is not the taxpayers' money? That is what has gone on. That is what is going wrong here. And that is why tonight we are talking about the transparency. We are talking about what is going on.

Our next speaker tonight comes from the State of Ohio, the Fourth District. And I will tell you, the impact that he has had on this floor in less than a year is tremendous. If we had just taken his amendment on each and every appropriation bill that he would put forward, the American taxpayers would have saved \$20 billion. \$20 billion. But each and every time, the majority party twisted the arms of each and every one of their Members to make sure that it wouldn't pass. But he did not give up, and he continues to fight that call and be able to move us forward.

So I yield to Representative JIM JORDAN, who is the only freshman Republican who serves on the Committee of Judiciary, Committee on House Oversight and Reform, and the Committee on Small Business. Congressman JORDAN.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I thank the gentleman for yielding, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the chance to address the Chamber tonight and be with my freshman colleagues who have fought the good fight on spending. We have heard a lot about spending and taxes.

I gave a speech last week back in the Fourth Congressional District in the great town of Findlay, Ohio. And I said at the start of that speech, I said 1 year in Congress has confirmed what I suspected: with the exception of the military, with the exception of our good men and women who wear our uniform, with that exception, the rest of the

Federal Government doesn't do anything well.

And I asked the audience, tell me how the Department of Commerce improves your family's life. Tell me how the Department of Labor improves your small business. Tell me how the Federal Department of Education improves life in our schools. How does it really help our teachers, our school board members? Most importantly, how does it help our children in our schools across this country? And of course the answer was nobody knew. Nobody knew what all this big government does.

In fact, today there was a story in our Columbus, Ohio paper. It is a Cox News Service story written by Marilyn Geewax, and the headline is: "Federal Finances a Mess." And the date line says:

"Washington. The Federal Government finances are in such a disarray that the Nation's budget watchdog said yesterday that he was unable to sign off on the books. Comptroller David Walker said the Treasury Department's annual report wouldn't be acceptable in the private sector."

In quotes, he said this in his speech at the National Press Club: "If the Federal Government were a private corporation and the same report came out this morning, our stock would be dropping, and there would be talk about whether the company's management and directors needed a major shakeup." That is what our comptroller had to say about the Federal Government.

And yet what did the majority do this first year in Congress? They tried to tie the hands of our troops, that one area of the Federal Government that does a great job. And in the rest of the government, they increased spending, as my colleague from California pointed out, over \$20 billion. \$20 billions in increased spending for the Federal Government that, we all know, according to the Comptroller, is a mess. And it is important we recognize that.

And I am proud to be associated with these members of the freshmen class who have spent so much time this year trying to get a handle on Federal spending and bring it back into line, because we recognize a few facts, just a few numbers. And my colleague from California and the previous speakers have pointed this out as well. We have a \$9 trillion national debt. Each citizen, each American citizen's share of that national debt is \$30,200. And here is the real concern: when you have out-of-control spending like this, it inevitably leads to higher taxes. And we have already heard from our good friend from Tennessee who talked about the tax burden currently facing families. We heard from the from Minnesota about the tax burden that the AMT is going to impose on over 20 million Americans.

If we don't get a handle on spending, there is going to be real consequences on this country, and here is why it is so critical. If we want to make sure that

we promise to our retirement systems, if we want to make sure we leave our children a debt-free Nation, and if we want to make sure we can compete and win in the international marketplace, then we have to begin to control spending. And that is why, as my colleague from California pointed out, I was proud to work with our class this summer, and we offered a series of amendments that would do just that.

It was interesting, during those debates, when we got up and spoke about why it was important to hold the line on spending and begin to save taxpayers' dollars, begin to allow families to keep more of their money, it was interesting during that debate, the other side said: We can't do that. We have got to increase spending. We have got to increase spending, in some cases two and three and four times the rate of inflation, because if we don't, the world is going to end, the sky is going to fall. Everything terrible is going to happen. And yet, you know what has happened, as has been pointed out already this evening? We didn't pass those spending bills, as the law requires, by September 30.

So since that time, over the past 10 weeks, we have been functioning under what we call a continuing resolution, which is a fancy way of saying we are living on last year's budget, exactly what the amendments we proposed were going to do. We are living on last year's budget. And do you know what? The government is running. The sky hasn't fallen.

And my argument is, if we can do it for 10 weeks, we can probably do it for 10 months, and we can probably do it for a whole year and save my taxpayers, as my friend has pointed out, over \$20 billion.

When you think about the size of government, there is a great line that Thomas Jefferson had. He said: When the government fears the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny.

Now, with that statement in mind, ask yourself a question. If sometime tomorrow you get a knock at your door and you go and you answer your door, and the gentleman standing there identifies himself and says, Hello. I am Mr. SMITH and I am with the IRS, is your first response, Oh, joy. One of my public servants is here to help me today? Of course not.

We all understand government is too big and we need to reduce it. And the reason we need to reduce it is because we understand one fundamental fact: moms and dads can spend the money better than we can. Moms and dads can do a better job than the bureaucrats in this Federal Government that the headline even says is a mess can do when it comes to spending their money.

Think about that typical family out there. One of the reasons America is the greatest Nation in history is because moms and dads have been willing to sacrifice so that the next genera-

tion, so that their kids can have life a little better than they did.

□ 2100

If we don't get a handle on spending, it is going to be tough to continue that great tradition that has helped make America the best. The same comptroller who was cited in this article that is in today's papers, the same comptroller had this statement to say: "We are failing in our most important stewardship responsibilities. We have a duty to pass on a country better positioned to deal with the challenges of the future than the one we were given."

That is our challenge. That is what this class is about. We want to make sure that we get a handle on spending so we can do what is right stewardshipwise and pass on to our children and our grandchildren the same great America that we inherited. That is what made America great, and that is what we have to do as we move forward.

It starts by getting a handle on spending so we can keep taxes low and we can compete in this international marketplace.

I thank the gentleman from California. His leadership continues here in the United States Congress, and I am proud to be associated with that in our freshman class.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Well, I appreciate my good friend from Ohio. The gentleman brings up a good point. The article the gentleman cited said if the Federal Government was a public business, that our stock would be dropping. Well, if you look at the poll ratings, that is exactly what has taken place.

We have set a new record in this Congress with this new majority with the lowest congressional approval rating ever. This new majority has set a new record of being the least effective; 13 appropriation bills, 1 year to get them done, and only got one through. Twelve have not gone through. So they compiled them all and laid them on the floor. This is the longest any Congress has ever gone. And the only reason that the omnibus bill is going to pass now is a deadline.

The American public does not believe that their government should work based upon deadlines; it should work based upon ideas and accountability. We have been in office about a year now. As that sun begins to set, I have thought about what could improve this House. The House really is the leader of the free world. I have come to the conclusion there are two things this House needs. Number one, we need accountability. Number two, we need adult supervision to get the job done.

I will tell you that is what tonight is about. Our next speaker comes from the Seventh District of Michigan representing Battle Creek, Jackson and Adrian. His name is Representative TIM WALBERG. He serves on the Committees of Agriculture and Education

and Labor. And let me tell you how hard this individual works.

I caught him this morning. He was up working on constituent services. He is now on the floor. There are times he is over in the hospital visiting troops. I told him we were going to be speaking on the floor tonight. He said, Let me see. I am going to be in my office and I am going to put on a teletown hall to my district. He is calling thousands of people in their home, and they are going to question their Congressman.

So when I talk about this place needs accountability, I will tell you that the Seventh District of Michigan is getting that accountability from morning to night, that TIM WALBERG is hard on the job, working fast and making sure that accountability is coming back home.

I yield to my friend from the Seventh District of Michigan, TIM WALBERG.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, Congressman McCARTHY.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I would express my desires to have Mr. McCARTHY campaign for me next time with those type of words.

And you read them very well, just as I wrote them for you.

It is, indeed, a privilege to be with Members of Congress, in this case 13. We call ourselves the Lucky 13. But we are 13 with ideas, 13 Members who came to Congress, the only freshmen Republicans to come from across the Nation, and every one of us came with conservative principles that said we believe America can do it better. We believe that individual Americans, as we have discussed already, have ideas and abilities that if allowed to be generated and to be creative, they can succeed. We represent them, and what a privilege it is for me personally to represent the good people of the Seventh District of Michigan, a State that is going through very, very difficult times right now because of the lack of leadership, the lack of understanding that when you take more of the resources, more of the liberty away from individual citizens, you frustrate not only the economy which Michigan is suffering through right now, extremely, but you also take away the creative juices that expand the ability and opportunity to do the things that were defined in our Declaration of Independence, promoting life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness or property.

That is something that I believe this freshman class of Republicans want to return to, the American solutions from American people committed to doing the best for themselves, their families, and the future of America's wealth.

I am interested, as you might expect, my friend from California, I am interested in a key issue to Michigan, known as the Motor Capital of the World for many, many years with the Big Three in the auto industry, with transportation on our mind and under our fingernails, hardworking people of Michigan who made the world run on four wheels and sometimes two, a great heritage that we have that pertains to energy and pertains to how we use it.

I appreciate the words of my good friend from Tennessee on the issue of the bill that we just passed today which could be considered the "no energy" energy bill. The latest shot, Mr. Speaker, in the Democrat's war on American jobs is this so-called energy bill that was on the floor today, this bill that we have been waiting for quite some time, yet it has no new net energy in it. And there is no way we can tax ourselves to energy independence. Congress can't tax our way to providing a greater supply of energy in America, and we can't just add more government regulations on industry and expect that we will have more energy in the pipeline. It doesn't work that way.

Mr. Speaker, I support American energy solutions, starting with expanding domestic supplies, and, two, lowering costs for U.S. consumers and for U.S. manufacturers, which use one-third of our Nation's energy.

Access to competitively priced energy helps U.S. communities and citizens compete in the global economy and preserves high-paying jobs here and at home.

If enacted, this bill that we passed, this bill will result in higher energy costs, few energy supplies, a weakened domestic energy industry and more job losses for U.S. factory workers, including my factory workers in Michigan. U.S. manufacturers already face a 31.7 percent cost disadvantage when compared to our major trading partners. By increasing the cost of energy, this bill will drive the cost even higher, putting quality American jobs at risk, and I resent that.

Mr. Speaker, I am strongly concerned about the absence of any meaningful provisions to expand domestic energy supplies. I remain committed to proposals that enhance U.S. energy security and production through increased production of all types of energy: improved conservation and efficiency, yes; more research on technology and alternative energy; increased access to domestic sources with continued environmental protections and improved distribution.

I support and have sponsored legislation to foster biodiesel technology. I have cosponsored legislation that would allow us to produce nuclear power. Other countries are doing very well right now with limited waste products that come off of it that can't be used.

I have also supported legislative initiatives that would increase our exploration in Alaska and the Outer Continental Shelf for clean power through natural gas, clean coal technology and other things. And yet today, in this piece of legislation where we had the opportunity, there was no energy.

So let me cut to the chase here and talk about the specifics of what this energyless energy legislation will do. In Michigan, it will kill jobs, as well as other places in the United States. It creates a confusing set of CAFE man-

dates. I don't call them standards. These are mandates based upon just human reasoning that says let's put at 35 miles per gallon fleetwide average. These mandates have the goal of dictating to our families, farmers, and small business owners what we can and can't drive, what we can use for commerce and industry. Some aspects are controlled by the National Highway Transportation Agency, specifically fuel efficiency mandates, but this could collide with EPA regulations, tail pipe emissions, which could create an unpredictable set of regulatory mandates.

It gives advantages to foreign car companies such as Volkswagen and Kia who don't make trucks, minivans or SUVs. We are not opposed to their cars, but we are not comparing apples to apples in these CAFE mandates.

We can do more to encourage energy conservation by allowing more clean diesel technology in cars and trucks, which the Federal Government has discouraged for decades. New diesel technology is clean and efficient and it is quiet. It has been effective in Europe for a long time, and we need to move it here.

These are issues that I am concerned with not simply because my State has been impacted very negatively by it. It will cost jobs and it will cost futures for my people, for my family, and it is a further intrusion into the freedoms and creativity that American citizens so deserve.

I appreciate the chance to espouse on some of these issues tonight. I know my colleagues have things to say about these issues. But more importantly, the American public needs to speak and we need to say we are interested in American solutions, not just political posturing that does nothing except serve political purposes that ultimately diminish the power and the control and the liberty of our American citizens.

So thanks for this time this evening, and I look forward to communicating further as time is available.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. I thank the gentleman from the Seventh District of Michigan.

When we came to this floor, I like many of you sat here and dreamt about the day we put people before politics. You watched TV, and you didn't want a red or blue country; you wanted it red, white and blue. When we come to this floor, we put on our American hat, not our Republican, not our Democrat hat. But the one thing, we haven't found the partnership here; we found the partisanship. We found bills that were coming up for political gain, not to be debated on the floor, not to be debated in committee. And I will tell you when you think about that, that is not the way to run this House, and the American people have said so when you saw the poll numbers.

Tonight is about bringing about accountability and talking to those Members who are home in their houses and wondering about what they are going

to be able to do for Christmas and what they are seeing on the floor of this Congress. This new majority has put in the largest tax increase in American history.

You know, the IRS Federal codes have 1.6 million words. That is 380 times the number of words in the U.S. Constitution. When our Founding Fathers said what would it take to run this country, they were able to do it in much fewer words and regulations.

I think tonight as we sit and talk, and we sat and debated on this floor, I look to my good friend from eastern Tennessee to talk a little bit about the earmarks and the abuses that have come forward that the people back in eastern Tennessee would say that is not the way they run their household.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. If you look at the 9,000 earmarks that are in there, special projects, the one that leaps out to me and leaps out to the people of northeast Tennessee is over a million-dollar hippie museum in New York. That is not the way the people of east Tennessee want to spend their hard-earned money. There are better ways to spend money in Tennessee and across this great land.

As I said earlier, moms and dads are really trying to figure out how they are going to take care of their kids. They don't need Members of Congress or bureaucrats in Washington trying to spend their money on hippie museums in New York. They need to know they can fill up their tank with gas and be able to afford it. Or be able to take the kids out for a meal and be able to afford it. Or be able to afford a month's worth of energy to keep their kids warm. Or be able to buy health care and be able to afford it. Or know that they have a Congress that is going to take care of illegal immigration because they are worried that a country that is not secure is not long to be a country.

Those are the things that the American people are concerned about. They are not concerned about trying to have special pork barrel projects to help a Member of Congress get reelected. They are concerned about making sure that their family is taken care of. That is what we ought to be concerned about. That is what I think the freshmen Republicans came here to do.

I started off tonight by saying I am blessed to be able to stand on the House floor of the United States Congress.

□ 2115

Come from humble beginnings back in the mountains of east Tennessee and be able to come here and represent just some commonsense American values, and that's what the American people want.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. You make a very good point, and I will tell you, you talk about these earmarks. That just means the majority party goes out and tries to raise more money, raises the taxes. And one of the leaders

to stop that, because you see how many taxes you pay and what really comes from the leadership that continues in Ohio, Congressman JIM JORDAN.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I thank the gentleman for yielding. You're exactly right. We always hear this line, tax and spend politicians. It's actually the opposite. It's spend and tax. Spending drives the equation. And when Congresses spend and governments spend so much, they do just what our friend from Tennessee described, they take money away from families and spend it on earmarks, spend it on this big government that as we've already figured out tonight is a mess according to Comptroller of the Treasury. So you're exactly right.

And what the Democratic majority has proposed this year in their budget to satisfy all their spending is the repeal of the tax cuts that were put into place in 2001 and 2003, tax cuts that give a child tax credit to children and dependents, great concept for families. Tax cuts that lowered the income tax rates, those are going to go up. The child tax credit is going to go away, the death tax is going to go up and the dividend tax is going to go up, in addition to a whole other list of taxes they've also unveiled.

So the reason it's so critical to control spending is because high spending inevitably leads to higher taxes. And when you tax and tax and spend and spend, you take money away from, as our friend from Tennessee has pointed out, the typical family out there, the moms and dad who want to invest.

Think about the typical family that was described by our friend from Tennessee. Typical family, they get up every day, they go to work. They go to church on Sunday. They take their kid to soccer practice, they take the kid to Little League. They're putting money away for college education. All those things, and yet you have a Congress who spends things on like, as you pointed out earlier, Congressman McCARTHY, a monument to themselves in their district. Think about that. A sitting Member of Congress who uses taxpayer money to name a facility after himself while he is a sitting, while he's in Congress. Unprecedented. And yet that's what we saw with this Congress. And it's all driven because they want to spend and spend and spend. They think they can spend your tax dollars better than you as a family, you as an individual taxpayer can spend it.

So again I appreciate this chance to talk about these things this evening. More importantly, I appreciate the opportunity, as our friend from Tennessee has pointed out, to fight for those things that I think really matter to families and work with my colleagues in our freshman class. And I yield back.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Well, I appreciate that, Congressman, because you made a very good point, because that wasn't the only Member that sat

there and put an earmark in. We had a bill come through here talking about the Defense, went over to the Senate, came back. We had an individual that was in the leadership of the Democratic Party, all a sudden there was \$1 million in there for a golf course in his district. And we asked, well, why did you need to put \$1 million in the Defense bill for a golf course there? They said because all they had was tennis courts. They needed golf as well.

Do the American people really believe they need their taxes raised so some Member could put in a golf course and never even be debated in committee, never even have to withstand the ability to have accountability to look at it transparently? I mean, that's the frustration we see.

And I know my good friend from Michigan, Mr. WALBERG, when he sat there and worked on the farm bill, he looked time and time again at those family farms that say when they want to pass on to the next generation, he looked at this new majority, what they did, that they were going to raise the inheritance tax to 55 percent. You know what would happen to those family farms back home.

Mr. WALBERG. Absolutely. I appreciate you bringing it up, and I appreciate my good friend from Ohio for endorsing legislation that I've offered, and to have you as co-sponsors on it as well, that would make permanent the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts that have blessed this Nation and its taxpayers well and have allowed this economy to grow at a steady pace for the longest time in history.

Again, to say to the family farmer who is able to survive in this economy, by the sound effort, good work, creativity, doing what it takes to compete, and then to say that because they have succeeded, when they pass on that family farm, as it is a real business, and some of it's not a small business anymore, that they will be dinged for their responsibility, as opposed to applauded for what they've carried on for the family.

That again brings me back to a broken record on energy as well, because when you're talking to the family farmers who have to use energy to produce food, and the resources from petroleum and otherwise producing fertilizer and all of those costs going up, we've got further tax problems for the citizens of the United States. Bottom line, this energy-less energy bill will not lower gas prices for American families; it will not help American families or farmers dealing with heating costs and drying costs in their granaries this winter.

This no-energy bill doesn't include anything to increase domestic energy production. It does, however, and I'm sure you'll all be glad to hear that what was left in this was a \$240 tax credit, and we all like tax credits, tax incentives. But this is a tax credit, \$240 tax credit that we're going to provide every 15 minutes for people who regularly ride their bikes to work for the

purchase, repair, or storage of their bicycles.

Now, my wife and I enjoy mountain biking. We have two bikes. I have a Harley Davidson motorcycle, two wheels, that I enjoy riding. I have a fuel efficient 30 mile per gallon family car that I use for getting around my district. But I also have a three-quarter ton pickup that I use for hauling my trailer, or last Sunday, in fact, in Michigan, hauling three people out of snow-covered ditches. That couldn't have been done by a Prius, my motorcycle, my bicycle or even my 30-mile-per-gallon car.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield? I just wanted to bring up a point. I represent in the Fourth Congressional District we have Airstream, some of the finest trailers in the world that people use to go camping. It's a wonderful, wonderful product. And you talk about the CAFE standards in this bill which would arbitrarily, some government-mandated standard that fleets would have to meet. It's tough. It's difficult to pull an Airstream with a Volkswagen. I mean, you need something bigger. And that's why we have to approach this. We all want to do things, but we've got to approach it in a reasonable way when we're thinking about the impact it's going to have on our economy, and as you point out on our districts and on our ag community as well. So I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Mr. WALBERG. I appreciate you adding that because that's practical advice and a good example. The American public has grown to associate with our lifestyle all sorts of conveniences that we shouldn't feel embarrassed about. You ought to use them appropriately. We have all sorts of opportunities that other people in other parts of the world would long for. But it's come as a result of ingenuity, creativity, hard work, effort, saving, risk all of that revolved around responsibility so that people can enjoy that Airstream trailer or can use that pickup truck to transport goods and supplies on the farm and to do good deeds of pulling people out of ditches and the snow-covered roads that we had this past weekend.

Nonetheless, we, as legislators here in the U.S. Congress, have the privileged opportunity of allowing that to expand and thus bless the world, 25 percent of the world's population here, with over 85 percent of charitable resources that we give to the rest of the world. That is unique.

And for that reason, I think that true conservative effort that says we will avoid responsibility and we encourage people to be further responsible, and we don't let government step in the way with taxes or energy-less energy bills that says things that don't work is the way to go. So thank you again for giving me the opportunity.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Well, I thank the gentleman, and I thank all the freshmen that have been able to join us tonight, because really tonight

was about bringing accountability and maybe some adult supervision because I think that's what the American public wants to see here in Congress, see that we are able to provide more free time, not take up more of your time to earn more taxes for the American Government.

I'll tell you tonight we're probably going to turn out the lights here in Congress in the next couple of days. But as those freshmen coming from the Republican Party, we all pledged that we would work in a bipartisan manner. We're eager to do that. We have a desire to do that, not to be a red and blue State but be the red, white and blue country. And we challenge the majority party here to change from the last year. It doesn't have to end a year from now as poorly as it ended this year. It doesn't have to end with the failure in setting new records, with the approval ratings so low with the lack of bills coming through, nothing but earmarks to try to get a bill through. It could actually end with common sense, with pride and, really, to be able to move it forward.

I'll tell the American people, I might get at times a little depressed sitting on this floor, but if anyone ever comes back to Washington, DC, I'd ask you to look up your Congresswoman or your Congressman and have them give you a tour because the greatest city in the world is right here and the greatest monument is this building, and the best monument inside this building are the stairs.

I will tell you, those stairs are made of marble. When you walk on those stairs those stairs are worn out from the feet that have walked before. And every day that I come over I take the stairs to go up the one flight just so I can walk on those stairs. And you know what? I get goose bumps each and every time I do it, because I believe that regardless of how big our challenges are, we will come together because the people before us and the challenges before us were much greater than we're facing today, that they came together. And if we can learn one thing through those stairs of marble it's that each and every one you take one step at a time. And I think we need to take one step, each at a time to come a little closer into the middle and find some common ground.

So I thank you for the time you have been with us tonight, and God bless.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to be here before the House once again. And a lot has been done and I'm so glad that we're here and 30-something, once again, may be our last opportunity in this year of 2007. We appreciate the courage and the

commitment by those of us that are in the majority. And we talked about a number of things that we would do and that has actually happened, Mr. Speaker. And a lot has happened this year, and, Mr. Speaker, I know that your constituents and others as it relates to Minnesota and what has taken place there and the tragedies that y'all have dealt with and how this Congress has responded to that tragedy of the bridge falling, and so many of your constituents are in recovery as we speak, and being from south Florida, hurricane ravaged area, we know what recovery means. And it's important for us to respond in a bipartisan way.

But I can tell you, some of my colleagues that were on the floor just prior to me hitting the floor talking about earmarks, it's very interesting. I am, you know, it's one of those days, and I'm glad that I was able to make it to the floor and that we were able to take this hour, and we want to thank the majority leader and also the Speaker and the majority whip and our leadership as it relates to the Democratic Caucus and our vice Chair for getting here, because to talk about earmarks, it's very interesting because we've reduced earmarks by 40 percent. I mean, that is something that the Republicans did not do over a number of years. You wouldn't even know who put an earmark in if it wasn't for the transparency that the Democratic Congress brought to this process.

Now, I'm going to tell you right now, I'm very happy that I was elected to come to Congress and that I'm going to get the opportunity to go home and tell my constituents what I've done for them in Congress. That's what it's all about. Why are we here representing 600, 700,000 individuals, Americans? To not only represent them here in Congress, but to also, quote, unquote, bring home the bacon on behalf of your constituency, to make sure that they have what they need, to make sure when a county commissioner or someone that sits on a parish board has an opportunity to come to their Member of Congress and say we need something from the Federal Government, meanwhile back here in Washington, DC, we have Republicans that have voted in the last five, or four Congresses for tax breaks for billionaires. Their name's not attached to it. We come here, we bring transparency, we bring accountability. We bring accountability to this process. And then they come to the floor with the audacity to say, well, you know, oh, these earmarks. Well, you know, I don't know, but I'm pretty proud of the fact that the city of Pembroke Park is able to do something about the water treatment that they've been yearning for, struggling city. I'm very proud that the city of Miami is able to say thank you Congressman for representing us in the U.S. Congress.

Meanwhile, the Republicans, for years and years and years, have been able, Mr. RYAN, to give tax breaks to