

Iraqi militant groups. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Iran and maintain in force comprehensive sanctions against Iran to respond to this threat.

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the Iran emergency declared on March 15, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 2008.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 11, 2008.

□ 2115

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WILSON of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

SOMETHING WE CAN ALL AGREE ON: OUR TAX SYSTEM NEEDS HELP

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it's springtime in Washington. We're all anxiously awaiting the start of the spring baseball season, cherry blossoms, and of course April 15 when we all face the deadline for filing our Federal income tax.

Now questions are often asked, paper or plastic, regular or decaf, conservative or liberal. Americans don't always agree and don't always see eye to eye. But there is one thing which a majority of us do agree on and agree on hands down, that our Federal tax system needs serious help. According to a 2007 Tax Foundation Study, 78 percent of Americans think the tax system needs a major overhaul.

Everyone knows the problem. Each year Americans dedicate billions of hours and billions of dollars complying with a very complex Tax Code. In fact, in 2005, the average taxpayer paid almost \$1,900 per household in compliance costs. That means a taxpayer must work 6 days each year just to pay for the cost of preparing his or her Federal taxes for that year.

Time is precious. Time is money. Time is fleeting. Time is precious, and we never have enough for raising our families. Time is money, and valuable resources are lost that could be spent on productive activities such as grow-

ing the economy and creating jobs. Time is fleeting. And we can never reclaim those hours that we have spent complying with our very complex Tax Code.

We all complain about paying taxes. We all complain about navigating the complex code. And the fact is, if the system was fair and simple, it would be a lot easier to follow and a lot easier to swallow. Americans don't mind paying for roads, for a strong defense, or even for health care for your grandmother.

The fact is, right now, we have a situation where two families can be living side by side, earn exactly identical incomes and face a very different tax liability on April 15. The Smith family makes the same amount as the Jones family, and they're forced to pay a higher share of the tax burden.

The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal. Maybe it also should say all taxpayers should be created equal, and it should apply to the tax burden.

Changes could be made within our existing system to improve it in the short term. Full expensing of business capital, permanently repealing the estate tax, abolishing the alternative minimum tax are a few of the possibilities. But fundamental tax reform would pay larger dividends. Just think of the jobs and economic growth that resulted when President Ronald Reagan cut the code in half back in 1986. Let's apply some of that same common sense that President Reagan used back in 1986 to streamlining today's unruly code in the 21st century.

Simplicity and fairness demand that we replace our current system with a single rate system that taxes income only one time. Even the National Taxpayer Advocate, Nina Olsen, recommended that lawmakers simplify the tax code. That was one of her recommendations in the 2007 annual report to Congress.

A faster, a flatter, a fairer tax structure would work and it's pretty simple. Tax returns could be done on a single page, maybe even on a postcard. It could be accomplished in just a few steps.

Time me now. Multiply your income by a fixed percentage, subtract a standard deduction, and the process is over. Fourteen seconds. Gone will be the stressful hours figuring out whether your military service or your marital status will adversely affect your return. No more headaches trying to determine where the estimated tax payments go. Tax prep fees might be money spent on, I don't know, something more rewarding. Maybe a vacation, maybe a personal day off, maybe even creating a new job.

A single tax rate structure would eliminate taxes on capital gains, taxes and dividends and taxes on savings because again, remember, we're going to tax income only one time. Businesses could expand and create jobs. Personal savings would increase.

How many times we hear it said over and over again, Americans don't save

enough money. Americans don't save enough money because when they put some of their hard-earned money into savings, half of the interest earned goes away to Federal income tax. It's taxed as ordinary income. Where's the incentive in that? We ought to incent savings in this country, not punish it, not grind the saver into the dust when, in reality, if we increase savings in this country we might not face some of the problems that we face today.

Without the heavy corporate income tax which is currently the second highest in the industrialized world; let me say that again, the second highest in the industrialized world, companies would have less incentive to move their headquarters out of the United States and, more importantly, less incentive to offshore their earnings.

Recent polling by American Solutions show that 80 percent of Americans favor an optional one page tax return with one rate. After all, who could complain about making something easier, especially a process that comes at a high cost.

Former Speaker Gingrich said in this body over and over again, real change requires real change. Americans agree the Tax Code is unfair and should go. Let's take a cue and translate this agreement into real change. After all, fundamental tax reform is a worthwhile goal, and this Congress, this Congress should take it up and pursue it for the benefit of the American people.

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

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. WELLER of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to be before the House once again. As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we have been coming to the floor now for some 5 years to not only share with the Members but also with the American people on what's happening here in the Capitol.

I'm going to do a short segment because we have other Members that need to come to the floor. And the hour is late, and tomorrow we're going to be working pretty hard past this hour tomorrow, I'm pretty sure. And we want to make sure that everyone is able to make it home and do the things that they need to do to prepare for that day.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I just would like to say that we've been in debate now for a couple of hours on the budget, the 2009 budget. And I can tell you, Federal budget, as it relates to the House version, I can tell you what I've read and seen of the President's budget, we have a lot of patching up to do in that budget.

Tomorrow we will have a number of different caucuses coming to the floor presenting their budget, their ideas. Some of them came before us today to talk about some of those issues to be considered before the full House, and I'm glad that we are providing that opportunity for the Members to participate in that process; also, to be in debate with the Republicans on Democratic new ideas, moving in a new di-

rection. And I think it's so very, very important not only for the Members of the House to be a part of that exercise, but also for the American people to witness that exercise so that they will know, firsthand, who has the best priorities for the working American people that are out there, and those that are retired and those that are yet unborn, preparing this Nation to be able to bring them up in a way and to be able to have the resources in place so that they can see the kind of strong America that I witnessed when I came about.

Now, let me just share a little bit about this budget. And it supports fiscal responsibility and also accountability on government. I think a lot of the frustration with so many Americans right now is based upon a lack of accountability, a lack of oversight, a lack of restraint as it relates to spending. And I think when you have accountability, you're going to save money. I don't think it, I know it.

Now, 13 years in public service, and 8 years at the State level, I think it's important that we embody that. And this budget, it brings the budget back to balance by 2010, and our House budget, unlike the President's budget that he has proposed, not only to the House, but to the Senate, also the budget follows PAYGO rules which you say pay as you go, something that we adopted in our rules to say if we're going to spend it, we're going to show how we're going to pay for it. And I'm glad to see that we're still embracing not only that rule, but also that philosophy as it relates to the American people, of what they ask for.

The administration also continues in the fiscally irresponsible practices. And in this budget we bring it back to being responsible. And it's a real contrast, because since January 2001, a \$5.6 trillion, 10-year surplus has been converted into a record deficit. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor almost every night to share how that deficit has crippled America and hasn't allowed us to be able to do the things that we need to do back in our districts.

I think we look at the wasteful spending; this administration is littered with examples of wasted spending and lack of accountability. And I'm glad that Chairman SPRATT of South Carolina has embraced that in his budget that he's bringing to the floor. Our budget that we're bringing on the Democratic side, we're looking at not only strengthening the economy, but creating jobs and at the same time energy, education, jobs, infrastructure and innovation will be the watchwords as we move through this process as basic principles. And so many Americans can, and also the Members, can go on www.budget.house.gov to look at the Democratic budget because I think it's important that we have that level of transparency so that they can take a look at the proposals that we are going to put forward.

So many of my constituents and so many Americans are challenged by the cost of energy. And we do know on January 22 of 2001, gas prices were at \$1.47. And now, today it's at \$3.13 per gallon. And I know many of my constituents and many of the Americans that are paying attention to the proceedings here on the floor, they're saying, well, Congressman, you're a little bit off of that \$3.13, because as I moved around Washington, D.C. today I saw it as a lot greater.

□ 2130

We provide, with our budget, as it relates to dealing with some of these gas issues, it provides a \$6.1 billion funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency and other energy programs, which is \$1.1 billion, 21 percent more than the 2008 level.

So we are moving in that direction making those kinds of investments, and some may translate that into saying that we are pulling ourselves out of Iraq, out of the Middle East and investing in the Midwest and trying to not only push private sector but also Americans in the direction of being more energy efficient so that we don't find ourselves continuing to depend on the big oil companies.

If I can have my big oil company chart, I would appreciate it, because I think it's important to be able to reflect on it. Also, it rejects President Bush's budget cuts of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, including the cuts to solar energy power, and also what the President did in terminating the weatherization-assistance program. We are replacing all of that, and I think it's important for Americans to understand what is happening here.

These big oil companies have reaped record profits under the Bush administration, and as you can see here in 2002, it was first \$30 billion in record-breaking profits. It then kicked over \$59 billion, \$82 billion, \$109 billion, \$118 billion and \$123.3 billion of these oil companies raking in these profits. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, we have moved legislatively to make sure that we call back some of those giveaways that the Republican Congress gave these oil companies.

And this has resulted in what I talked about a little earlier, \$1.47 when the Bush administration started in January 22, 2001, and it almost sounds like an inauguration date, and what we face now at \$3.13. The barrel of oil continues to go up.

So this energy investment and being efficient is very, very important to the country, also very, very important to national security.

We also invest in hundreds of billions of dollars in new investment and green jobs, green-collar jobs. These are jobs, Mr. Speaker, that we can't ship overseas. When we make our building greener, when we make our homes greener, these are jobs that anyone who can even be a high school dropout