

DEMOCRATS RECOGNIZE THAT ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE. VOW TO WORK WITH BUSH TO STIMULATE ECONOMY

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, across the country more and more Americans are struggling to make ends meet. Unemployment has risen to 5 percent. Home values are dropping and millions of Americans are getting hit with mortgage rate adjustments. At the same time, the costs of health care, groceries, gasoline, home heating oil, and college educations continue to rise. It is welcome news that Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke is signaling that the Fed will cut interest rates to address the slowing economy. But this is not enough.

Democrats want to work with the President and the Republican Congress in the coming weeks to jump-start the economy and provide sound relief to American families. I would hope that we can all agree that the economy needs a jolt. Democrats believe a fiscal stimulus plan should adhere to three simple principles to be effective: It must be timely, targeted, and temporary.

Madam Speaker, we want to work in a bipartisan fashion immediately to develop a legislative plan based on these three principles so that the stimulus plan can be passed and implemented into law without delay.

SOUND POLICY FOR AMERICA'S ENERGY NEEDS, NOT HOLLOW PROMISES

(Mr. BOUSTANY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, across the country, American families are dealing with high energy prices. Families, especially those at risk due to home foreclosure, illness, and job insecurity face high anxiety about just how high these prices will go. Oil and gas prices soared last year, but this Congress did nothing to address the underlying problem. Some suggest an increase in the gasoline tax, a 40-cent per gallon increase. Now that is a lot of money in southwest Louisiana.

Washington must rein in waste and promote energy solutions to meet our energy needs. This Congress should promote sensible policies that unleash American ingenuity to come up with the next generation of alternative fuels. Washington also needs to work to fix our aging roadways and bridges. But we have a responsibility to cut wasteful spending instead of hiking taxes.

Let's do something positive for the people. We can promote energy solutions and fund necessary repairs for our infrastructure. Increasing taxes is not a solution. Let's make the hard de-

cisions, because that is what the American people put us here to do.

ADMINISTRATION'S BUILDUP TO WAR IN IRAN

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, over the past few years this administration has been beating the drums of war against Iran. There are parallels against their efforts to try to create a war against Iran and the falsehoods that set us on the path to war against Iraq. We know that the United States intelligence community was able to demonstrate that the administration's claims that Iran had a nuclear weapons program were in fact not true.

The January 6 incident at the Strait of Hormuth is still another cause for this Congress to look deeply at the administration's Iranian war buildup, because it appears from news reports that the Department of Defense grossly inflated an encounter that took place in the strait, an encounter that was not like any that had taken place before, and then not only inflated it, but fabricated information that would cause the American people to believe that Iran was demonstrating military aggressiveness.

We really have to get off the path of war towards Iran and start working on building diplomatic relations.

TAX INCREASES HARM THE ECONOMY

(Mr. AKIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, as we start a new year, one of the things that we are seeing in the economy is signs of stress. The unemployment is rising somewhat, we see the trouble with the housing market, the savings and loan crisis. Over the past year, the Chairman of the Fed, Ben Bernanke, warned that the Democrat tax increases increasingly threaten our economy. Last year, the Democrats passed a \$528 billion tax increase here in the House and proposed the mother of all tax increases, a \$3.5 trillion tax increase, the largest in the history of our country.

That is exactly the wrong medicine in an economy that is struggling. Instead, what we should be doing is we should be returning a portion of that money that people earn so that it can be invested and strengthen the economy and put us back on the road to recovery, just as we did in 2001 and 2002. It's time for us to understand that tax increases are exactly the wrong medicine when the economy is struggling. I hope the Democrats remember that.

TAX BREAKS FOR THOSE SUFFERING THE MOST

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has dropped over 10 percent, and all economic indicators indicate that we are in serious financial trouble. This Congress needs to respond on behalf of the American people. Unfortunately, in the past this Congress has responded by giving tax breaks to the wealthiest, and it has created the largest gap in income between the upper 1 percent and the other 99 percent, probably in the history of this country.

We need to work in a bipartisan fashion. We need to work together. The previous speaker was correct: We need to give money back to taxpayers. But they need to be the working taxpayers, who are suffering the most, the people who are now unemployed, not able to pay taxes because they have lost their jobs, or people who need help with food stamps, and people who will immediately put that money into the economy, not the wealthiest who have savings in the hundreds and thousands and millions of dollars and can live on through this and survive it and won't put that money back into the economy.

The tax breaks of the past were mistakes. The spending needs to be for people who are suffering. They are the people who know the hard economic times we have. I read my e-mails on a daily basis and there are many people out there suffering who need economic help now. We need to act in a bipartisan fashion, but remember those who suffer the most.

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EMPLOYERS WHO HIRE ILLEGALS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, during a routine traffic stop, an illegal immigrant named Juan Leonardo Quintero-Perez shot Houston Police Officer Rodney Johnson in the back of the head and killed him. This case highlights the illegal immigrant epidemic in this country.

It seems, however, that Juan Quintero-Perez had already been deported before from the United States. In 1998, Quintero was arrested and convicted of indecency with a child in Texas and then was deported back to Mexico. But Perez was able to return to the United States a few months later because his employer, Robert Camp, sent money to Mexico to hire a smuggler that snuck Perez back to Houston.

Camp knew that Quintero-Perez was an illegal immigrant and a criminal, but Camp hired him again anyway. Camp even rented a home for Quintero-Perez, and then Perez murdered Officer Johnson.

Those who knowingly hire and house illegal immigrants, all in the name of making a little money, should go to jail. Rodney Johnson's blood is on the hands of the employer who brought the illegal outlaw back to the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS RECOGNIZE THAT ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE AND VOW TO WORK WITH PRESIDENT TO STIMULATE IT

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, as Congress resumes this week, our priority must be to work in a bipartisan fashion to address our struggling economy.

There is no way to sugarcoat this economy. Over the past 12 months, wages have fallen, forcing hardworking middle-class families to work harder for less. As a result, family debt is at an all-time high and household debt averages an average 133 percent of disposable income. Last year, families were spending 14.5 percent of their disposable income to service their own debt, and middle-class families are having a harder and harder time just making ends meet.

Democrats want to work with President Bush to create a bipartisan economic plan that is timely, targeted, and temporary. Economic experts say this is the best way to stimulate the economy. Last Friday, congressional leaders sent a letter to President Bush asking him to come to the table so that a bipartisan plan can be reached.

Madam Speaker, the American people need our help during this uncertain economic time. We cannot wait any longer to help this economy, and the only way it can be done is if we work together.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES MORE FAVORABLE THAN COVERAGE OF REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, a study by Harvard University and the Project for Excellence in Journalism has reaffirmed what many of us have long observed: Media coverage of Democratic Presidential candidates has been far more abundant and favorable than coverage of Republican Presidential candidates.

The study found that 49 percent of all stories involved Democratic candidates, while just 31 percent involved Republican candidates. In addition, Democratic Presidential candidates received twice as much favorable coverage as Republicans, and Hillary Clinton drew nearly twice as much media coverage as any Republican nominee.

Until we hold journalists to the highest standards of their profession, unfair reporting will continue to influence elections and undermine our democracy.

BETTER LEADERSHIP NEEDED DURING TRYING ECONOMIC TIMES

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, America is sliding into a full-fledged recession. Meanwhile, the President continues to pour hundreds of billions of dollars more into the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the first wars in America's history in which most Americans have never been asked to sacrifice anything.

The President has offered no means to pay for this war spending. It is being financed solely through increased borrowing. Apparently, the idea is to borrow money, particularly from China, while driving up oil prices that benefit Iran in order to fight the war on terrorism. I am not sure that is such a wise strategy.

We send an astounding \$60 million a day to China. We now owe China \$1.4 trillion. America has never been so deeply in debt to another country in our Nation's history. It is the equivalent of every American borrowing \$4,000 from China.

Today, the Bush administration will announce that our trade deficit with China is \$250 billion, a quarter of a trillion dollars, just this year. We have gotten ourselves into a financial vise, too dependent upon a totalitarian state. It can't continue and should not. We need better leadership, Madam Speaker.

COMMENDING PETER GROFF ON BECOMING FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN STATE SENATE PRESIDENT IN COLORADO HISTORY

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to commend my friend Peter Groff on his historic achievement of becoming the first African American State Senate President in Colorado's history. Senator Groff becomes only the third African American Senate President in U.S. history. This momentous accomplishment is well-deserved.

Senator Groff is one of the most honorable, bright, and deliberate individuals I have ever had the pleasure to serve with. He embodies statesmanship and has earned the trust and esteem of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Senator Groff's courageous and visionary approach to governing can be summed up in his own words: "To be bigger than the politics of the moment." I find it fitting that the man nicknamed "the conscience of the Col-

orado Senate" would be the first in our State's history to shatter this once seemingly impenetrable glass ceiling.

In closing, the Honorable Shirley Chisholm once said, "I don't measure America by its achievement, but by its potential." I can think of no better person to help Colorado achieve its potential than Peter Groff. He will serve Colorado with honor and distinction.

BRINGING ECONOMIC SECURITY TO WORKING FAMILIES

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to express my strong concern about the fiscal crisis that we are facing here in our country.

The subprime mortgage crisis has directly impacted millions of American homeowners, particularly in my own district in the San Gabriel Valley. As the chart shows, nearly 650 families in my district somewhere lost their homes to foreclosure. In Los Angeles alone, a family loses their home every hour.

Nationally, unemployment rates have risen above 5 percent. Half of my district has a rate above 5 percent. In East Los Angeles, it is upwards of 7.2 percent. Other economic indicators are showing signs of an economic slowdown, including a sharp decline in consumer spending and the largest annual increase in wholesale prices in 26 years.

While I am proud that this House has passed billions to provide relief for middle-income Americans and small businesses and increased the minimum wage, we still have to do more. I look forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle to bring economic security back to the working families, not only in my district, but across this country.

RESPONSE NEEDED REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN MILITARY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to associate myself with the remarks that my colleagues have made on the existence of an economic crisis and to ask this administration to wake up. I hope that we will do something to deal with the catastrophic subprime mortgage collapse, and that is to call for a moratorium on all foreclosures across America, those individuals who are behind in their payments and those who are in fact keeping up with their payments. Some response has to come.

But I do want to step aside from the economic engine and the need for that to cite a situation that I think is drastic and, of course, a disaster, and that is the tragedy of the young marine, the young woman, who has now lost her