

Madam Speaker, we need to help our workers, especially those in who have been hit the hardest by this economic downturn. At the same time, we need to stimulate our economy in the most effective manner possible to prevent the downturn from spiraling into a recession. This bill accomplishes this goal. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released a study this past January specifically endorsing the use of extended unemployment benefits as a cost-effective way to boost the economy.

We in the Congress need to be both smart and compassionate. Let's help the unemployed while protecting those who currently have employment. Let's stimulate the economy and create new sustainable job opportunities for the American worker. Let's pass H.R. 5749.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation to temporarily extend unemployment insurance benefits.

Whether we are in a recession or not, the point is clear: current economic growth has been so sluggish that the job market is weak and job prospects are poor. The recent May 2008 jobs report confirms this as the unemployment rate increased by one-half point to 5.5 percent, which was the biggest one-month increase in over 20 years. Since the first of the year, our economy has lost more than 300,000 jobs.

By providing an extra 13 weeks of jobless benefits to workers in every State who exhaust their unemployment benefits and another 13 weeks of benefits to those in States with high unemployment rates, we can help approximately 4 million unemployed workers meet basic needs such as food and rent while they continue to look for work at a time when the economy is languishing. And we can give our economy a much-needed boost. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, extending unemployment benefits would be one of the most cost-effective and fastest-acting forms of economic stimulus.

Madam Speaker, many Americans are struggling to make ends meet. With rising gas and food prices and a weakened labor market, we can help those hardest hit by this sluggish economy by providing them relief in passing this much-needed bill.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008, which will provide 13 weeks of extended unemployment compensation benefits for all workers who have exhausted their current 26 weeks of benefits. This measure also provides 13 additional weeks for workers in States with unemployment rates of 6 percent or higher. In order to receive these benefits, workers must have lost a job through no fault of their own, be actively searching for a job, be able to work, and must have a minimum number of weeks worked and amount of wages earned over a specific timeframe prior to being unemployed.

This bill provides a critical boost to the many Rhode Islanders, and Americans across the Nation, who are struggling to find employment. Our country's unemployment rate jumped from 5 percent in April to 5.5 percent in May, the biggest one-month increase in over 20 years. In my home State of Rhode Island, the unemployment rate reached 6.1 percent in April, and we have lost an estimated

6,300 jobs since the beginning of the year. H.R. 5749 would provide relief through March 2006 and benefit 3.8 million Americans. Most importantly, this measure would immediately help as many as 8,000 Rhode Islanders.

When discussing this matter, we must remember to look beyond the statistics and recognize the serious toll that unemployment is taking on American families. I have received numerous calls from my fellow Rhode Islanders asking when Congress would extend their benefits. They tell me how they are looking for a job, but they just have not been able to find one yet. They have not given up—research has shown that workers who exhaust their unemployment benefits, search for a job at similar or higher levels of intensity as those who find employment before their benefits expire—but they need more time. Compounding the problem, the rising cost of gas poses an additional challenge in searching for a job, and rising food prices have made it even harder to put food on the table. Our constituents are turning to us for help.

As Members of Congress, we have the power to give hard-working Americans another chance to continue their job search and provide for their families. Our country has faced economic hardships and recessions before, and I have no doubt we will weather this current downturn. I encourage my colleagues to pass this bill and give a hand up to those who are most vulnerable during these trying times.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5749 to extend unemployment benefits to millions of American workers, including over 700,000 in my home State of California.

I wanted to take this opportunity to put a human face on the recent economic downturn.

Just yesterday, I spoke with a 51-year-old woman named Karen from my home district of San Diego.

After working for the past 10 years as a customer service specialist, Karen was recently laid off from her job.

She has been actively looking for work but has been unable to find a job because of the poor economy.

Unable to afford health insurance, the stress of being unemployed is beginning to take a toll on Karen's health.

It has also become harder and harder for her to pay her bills. She told me, "Just looking for a job costs money, because you've got to pay for the gas to drive to the interviews."

And to make matters worse, her unemployment benefits have just ended.

By voting for H.R. 5749, we will provide the support millions of Americans need to get back on their feet.

Let us help American workers get their lives back.

Mr. SIRE. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act that will provide immediate relief to 3.8 million unemployed workers who continue to struggle to find work in the slowing economy.

Recently, the Nation experienced the biggest one-month jump in the unemployment rate in more than two decades, rising from 5.0 percent to 5.5 percent and is now an entire percentage point higher than a year ago. Americans have been losing jobs in each of the past 5 months, with the number of unemployed now at 3.8 million. The airline and automobile industries alone have laid off over 50,000 employees combined.

The current high levels of unemployment have only added to the struggles of the U.S. economy by adding thousands more Americans to those having a hard time making ends meet. This bill will provide the necessary extension of unemployment benefits to those 3.8 million Americans who struggle to find employment within the current timeframe.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this necessary legislation that will give our economy the relief it needs. Extending these benefits is an efficient and quick way to support our country's workers and invigorate the economy. My Democratic colleagues and I are committed to providing the much needed relief to the millions of unemployed workers, who in the face of rising gas and food costs, continue to struggle to support themselves and their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time has expired.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5749, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1615

#### EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING REBATE CHECKS

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 977) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that rebate checks would better stimulate the economy if spent on American-made products and services from American-owned companies.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 977

Whereas many economists believe the economy of the United States is entering a recession;

Whereas the economy lost 17,000 jobs in January 2008 and 191,000 in 2007;

Whereas the manufacturing sector lost 269,000 jobs over the past 12 months and 28,000 jobs in January 2008 alone;

Whereas manufacturing employment now accounts for less than 10 percent of the job market for the first time since data began being collected in the 1930s;

Whereas in January 2008, 18.3 percent of those unemployed had been out of work for 27 weeks or longer, up from 16.2 percent a year earlier;

Whereas manufactured goods imported from developing countries have grown from just 2.5 percent of the gross domestic product in 1990 to 6 percent in 2006;

Whereas annually, total housing starts decreased in 2007 to 1,353,700, which is a 24.8

percent decrease from the 2006 estimate of 1,800,900;

Whereas Congress and the President responded to the potential recession by passing into law a bipartisan stimulus package that provides rebate checks of up to \$600 per individual and \$1,200 per married couple, plus an additional \$300 per child;

Whereas the stimulus legislation will put money back into the hands of low-income and middle-income Americans, those who need it most;

Whereas the stimulus legislation will be most effective if the rebate checks are spent on American-made goods and services from American-owned companies;

Whereas American-made goods are the best in the world;

Whereas every dollar from the stimulus package spent on an American-made good or service, rather than a foreign-made good or service, will result in more than a dollar increase in the short-term gross domestic product;

Whereas if rebate checks are spent on American-made products and services from American-owned companies, an additional \$10,000,000,000 will be infused into the economy;

Whereas the annual trade deficit has grown to the \$700,000,000,000 range in the past decade, up from the \$100,000,000,000 range in the early 1990s;

Whereas buying American-made goods would not add to the size of the growing trade deficit, which many economists contend is unreasonably large;

Whereas there have been concerns about the safety of imported goods, spurred by the fact that 60 percent of product recalls in the past year involved Chinese-made toys, food ingredients, and other products; and

Whereas many countries do not follow the same environmental, labor, and human rights standards of the United States, putting American workers and companies at a competitive disadvantage: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives encourages Americans to use their rebate checks from the stimulus package to purchase American-made goods and services from American-owned companies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 977, which is sponsored by my friend and colleague, Representative BRUCE BRALEY of the State of Iowa. This important resolution encourages Americans to spend their rebate checks on goods and services produced by American-owned companies.

I would note that Representative BRALEY cannot speak on behalf of his

resolution today because he has returned to his district due to the widespread flooding there in the State of Iowa. I know that my colleagues join me in wishing Representative BRALEY and his constituents a swift recovery from this disaster.

The economic stimulus package signed into law this past February by the President will put money back into the pockets of many hard-working Americans. If they spend their rebates on American-made goods and services, as this resolution would encourage them to do, they will inject an estimated \$10 billion back into the U.S. economy at a time when it needs it the most. Moreover, by spending their money on domestic products, Americans will also help reduce our country's skyrocketing trade deficit.

H. Res. 977, which has the support of more than 100 Members of this body, would augment the Federal economic stimulus package by reminding Americans of the importance of purchasing American-produced goods and services to help our flagging national economy. I urge the House to support passage of this noteworthy resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, we rise not in any opposition to this at all and in support. We thank Mr. BRALEY for bringing this made-in-America resolution to the floor today. We too on this side of the aisle want to reach out and give our condolences and our best wishes to his constituents in Iowa that are dealing with the flooding.

Now, let's look at this resolution very quickly. It states some of the obvious things about our economy; that since the Democrats took over in 2007 that we have lost 17,000 jobs, and since that same time when the Democrats took over in Congress, we have lost another 269,000 jobs over the past 12 months within manufacturing, making it the lowest time in our modern history, where only 10 percent of the jobs, or first-time jobs being created, are in the manufacturing business. That has always been kind of the backbone of America's economy, and those things have been changing.

Then at the beginning of 2008, probably one of the more remarkable things and frankly what I think people look to Congress to actually do, you have the Republicans, Democrats and White House all working together, and within a couple of weeks had a pretty good stimulus bill. We knew that the economy was slowing down, that unemployment was increasing, and we did what the American public required of us and got a bill passed that stimulated the economy by helping small businesses with some accelerated depreciation. But the heart of it was getting money back out through what we call the stimulus checks to eligible families.

Mr. BRUCE BRALEY suggests in this resolution, that I think we are going to adopt today, certainly we are in sup-

port of it, says that it helps our economy more if we buy products that are made in America. Of course, those products are made by people employed in America, and it will have a cyclical turn of the dollar where it goes to not only that company, but those people working there, which then in turn they get to spend within their community and it turns over.

But one of my fears, well, not fears, but let's just say concerns, is that now with the gas prices everywhere over \$4, it hit \$4 in almost every gas station back in Nebraska in my district yesterday, that the stimulus checks aren't going for what we thought they were going to go to, and that is for consumers to have a nice little chunk of change where they could go out and buy an appliance, something that they need in their home, something that they can reach out and really help with the bigger dollar item that helps to really stimulate the economy. Now it is probably going to go to just filling up the gas tank.

We have got two cars in our family that are smaller cars. My Camry, I put over \$70 in filling up in Omaha this weekend. I can't imagine what bigger families are doing to keep up with this. So, frankly, if we want to go even a step further and stimulate our economy more, what we should do in addition to these stimulus checks is adopt an energy plan that will actually increase supply and lower the price of gasoline at the pump.

We can do this by embracing a very comprehensive approach to energy. We have got alternative fuels like coal-to-liquid. And, by the way, last week during the Department of Defense reauthorization, this Congress adopted a policy of banning the Air Force from engaging in contracts to buy coal-to-liquid as a synthetic aviation fuel.

We can use cellulosic energy. We are going to have about 13 small micro-pilot plants come on within the next couple of years. We can do things to speed that up, by passing a tax credit that is more than 1 year, like we did a couple of years ago, instead of adopting the 5-year plan that this side of the aisle was pushing.

We can also not only use those types of alternatives that have such great promise that we can use in a mix, but we can also do conservation. We want to encourage people to conserve not only the electricity in their home, but we are talking about fuel here to create a supply that will lower the price at the gas pump, which is a not-so-hidden tax on American families. We can do that by incenting, providing a tax credit for more than 1 year, for people to buy in plug-in electric hybrids. Some American manufacturers are going to start rolling those out next year, but they will be more expensive. So we want to incent people to buy those. If we can do a blend and conserve, we can take a large step towards energy independence.

We can get fully independent of all OPEC oil if we add one more prong to

this plan, and that is allow offshore drilling. Right now we have China working through Cuba that is getting to within about 60 miles of the Florida shore, but yet we can't have American companies do that.

We can open up oil shale. Last year, about November, we had a vote on this floor that banned the ability to get oil from oil shale in Colorado and Wyoming. We just found another large pocket of oil from oil shale in North Dakota. I wonder when that is going to be banned to use.

So if we bring our own resources together with all of the alternatives, we can bring the price of gas down rather dramatically and be independent. And if we can bring the price down, have a stable supply of energy under this type of a comprehensive plan, the American consumers, the families, can expect stable gas prices for a generation or more as we work towards completely going off of fossil fuels, to like a hydrogen economy.

So while we stand on this side of the aisle in favor of this resolution to buy American, my fear is that the reality is most of this stimulus money is going to be going to the OPEC countries when we fill up our tax tanks.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), who is the longest-serving female currently in this body.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank Chairman BUTTERFIELD for yielding and for his kindness in allowing me to rise in support of H. Res. 977, encouraging Americans to expend their rebates to stimulate our economy the most by buying and investing in goods and products made right here in the good old USA.

Congressman BRUCE BRALEY of Iowa is to be commended for bringing such a sensible bill to the floor. The voters of Iowa were smart to send him here. He has obtained over 106 cosponsors on this bipartisan bill. We know as we debate this today, he is out in his district trying to help the families there who have been hurt by the terrible, terrible flooding. We know he is not just working there, but he is working here as well, and has the deep respect of his colleagues.

Rebate checks spent here in America on American goods will better stimulate our economy. Buying American products and American services from American-owned companies, purchasing U.S. farm products produced in this country or processed here, buying U.S. Savings Bonds, if you want to save, all keep jobs and income here. Indeed, buying fuel that contains ethanol or biodiesel from U.S. farmers helps America.

With the U.S. trade deficit soaring towards \$1 trillion in red ink, investing in America makes more sense today, and I spell that S-E-N-S-E and C-E-N-T-S, than ever before. Today we were reminded of the softness in our econ-

omy with the announcement that the Chrysler Building in New York City, one of America's historic landmarks, will be purchased by a Middle Eastern oil conglomerate from Abu Dubai, just another sign of America's shrinking independence here at home. Spending a stimulus check on foreign-made goods stimulates the Abu Dubai economy or the Chinese economy or the Mexican economy. Expending those precious dollars here at home or saving them in U.S. Savings Bonds strengthens communities across our country.

So I would urge my colleagues and our fellow citizens to buy America, buy made-in-America, invest in jobs here. Use your stimulus check to build a stronger Nation. Now is the hour for all good men and women to use their rebate checks to come to the aid of their country.

I thank the gentleman very much for yielding to me, and urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 977.

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, we have no further speakers, so I will just make a quick statement and close. I just once again thank Mr. BRALEY of Iowa for bringing this resolution to the floor and wish him and his constituents the best.

We on this side of the aisle want these stimulus checks to be spent within America. Hopefully they can spend it on American-made energy.

Madam Speaker, I yield back my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, it is true that I have no further speakers at this time. I am going to close and bring this to a vote in just a few minutes. But I want to thank not only Mr. BRALEY for bringing this resolution, but thank Mr. TERRY for his support of the resolution and for his willingness to urge his colleagues to support it as well.

□ 1630

Mr. TERRY is a very capable member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. We have an excellent relationship with Mr. TERRY and thank him for his leadership.

I also want to thank Mr. TERRY for his comments regarding energy independence. There is no question that Democrats are committed to energy independence. We are certainly painfully aware of the price that Americans are paying at the pump. The Democratic majority is working very hard to correct the problem and to find solutions for our people.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, today I encourage constituents to "Buy American."

Unfortunately, I am unable to speak on the floor today in support of H. Res. 977 because of a developing crisis in Iowa's 1st Congressional District. Massive flooding is leading to evacuations and it is only expected to get worse. Although I realize how important it is to cast votes in Washington, the well-being of my constituents comes first, and I need to be in the district to assist in any way I can.

This January 29th Congress passed a bipartisan economic stimulus bill that provides re-

bate checks of up to \$600 per individual and \$1200 per married couple, plus an additional \$300 per child. This stimulus package is temporary, timely, and targeted, and it will bring relief to working families. On February 13th President Bush signed this stimulus legislation into law.

Just prior to that, on February 12th, I introduced H. Res. 977, a bipartisan Congressional resolution urging Americans receiving economic stimulus bill tax refund checks to buy American-made goods or services from American-owned companies with these rebates.

Under the economic stimulus package passed by the House and Senate, 1.2 million Iowa households—and 117 million American households—will receive a tax rebate. The average Iowa household will receive a rebate of \$917.

The purpose of the economic stimulus package is to provide a jump-start to the American economy. The economic stimulus legislation will put money back into the hands of low-income and middle-income Americans—those who need it most.

In 2007 the U.S. manufacturing sector lost 269,000 jobs. Manufacturing employment now accounts for less than 10 percent of the job market for the first time since data began being collected in the 1930s. Buying American would help keep manufacturing jobs in the United States.

The annual trade deficit has grown to the \$700 billion range in the past decade, up from the \$100 billion range in the early 1990s. If constituents use their rebate checks to "Buy American," they will not be contributing to the size of the growing trade deficit, which many economists contend is unreasonably large.

If the millions of American families receiving tax rebates from the stimulus spend their checks on American-made goods and services, the effect of the stimulus will be magnified. Buying American will infuse an additional \$10 billion into the American economy, creating jobs here in America and helping to narrow our growing trade deficit.

I am proud this bill has been endorsed by a long list of organizations, including the Communications Workers of America; United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America; United Steelworkers; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers; International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; United American Nurses; United Mineworkers of America; Air Line Pilots Association; American Federation of Teachers; International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers; National Association of Letter Carriers; Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO; and the United Association of Pipefitters and Plumbers.

I want to thank Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman JOHN DINGELL and Ranking Member JOE BARTON, for their support in bringing this important legislation to the Floor.

I'm pleased this bill has such strong bipartisan support, with 106 of my colleagues as cosponsors. I want to thank them for joining me today in letting the American people know we are behind them when it comes to doing everything we can to promote a strong U.S. economy and to ensure access to stable, good-paying jobs.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 977. This resolution, introduced by my friend and colleague Representative BRALEY of Iowa, encourages

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution. H. Res. 977.