

With that I would yield back to the gentleman. I appreciate again his putting this hour together and talking about this very important challenge that we face as a country.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. I thank the gentleman from Ohio so much.

My last speaker, Madam Speaker, I don't know what to say. I mean, he's awesome. When you need somebody watching your back in a fight, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is the guy I want beside me. It is my pleasure to introduce him.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you. I appreciate your kind words, Congressman BARRETT, and I really appreciate your leadership. I know the people of South Carolina do as well. As deputy ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, he has his work cut out for him leading us on the Budget Committee.

I want to bring out just a few facts for the American people tonight, Madam Speaker. Congressman JORDAN pointed out very aptly the size of the Federal Government, just so the American people can understand what a \$3 trillion government costs, what that actually means though. You say \$3 trillion. What does \$1 billion look like?

Well, sure, Bill Gates could tell you what \$1 billion looks like. He's got that in his checkbook. But for the average American, what does that mean?

And to point out the fact that it's larger than most countries are. We have the third largest economy in the world held just in our Federal budget; greater than the whole economy of China. It's absolutely amazing.

But when we talk about boondoggles in government, folks in North Carolina know about that. Look, in western North Carolina, where I represent, in Hickory, where I'm from, Cherryville, I've got to tell you, the American people know the government's wasteful.

If you're out in the eastern part of the State like in New Bern, for instance, if you're out there, you recognize this stuff, but let's talk about a great, enormous in size and scope boondoggle that we have here in Washington, DC.

There are 111,000 bureaucrats here in Washington, DC. Some don't do much. Others are very active. But 111,000 bureaucrats. The average wage for those bureaucrats here in Washington, DC is \$89,561 a year. That's amazing to me that the sheer size of that, the average wage is so high. It's enormous.

But in the Department of Education, we know that education is critical. It's especially critical in western North Carolina. We have 3,224 bureaucrats here in Washington, DC in the U.S. Department of Education. The average wage is \$93,773. Now imagine that. The average teacher in America makes \$47,000 a year. I would much rather take that money from the bureaucrats and put it in the hands of teachers who are actually educating children.

Madam Speaker, we have a crisis on our hands with the size and scope of

government. We have to limit the size and scope of government. We have to bring the budget to balance and do it without raising taxes.

I appreciate and applaud my colleague from South Carolina for hosting this special order so we can bring out these facts to the American people, because as their family budgets tighten, so should the Federal Government's budget.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. In closing, Madam Speaker, when I was working in the furniture store, my furniture store in Westminster, South Carolina, I had a guy named John R. McAllister. I called him Hoss. And Hoss would come in every Friday to see me and he'd make his payment. And it didn't matter whether I was working in the back or working on a truck or unpacking furniture, Hoss would look me up and come grab my hand and shake it and say, thank you for what you're doing. You know, Hoss McAllister probably didn't have an idea close to what I did. But I think about Hoss McAllister tonight, Madam Speaker, and all the Hosses out there that want a fair shake.

We're going to do the right thing. We're going to keep taxes low. We're going to give more money to Hoss so he can make a living.

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 as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's so good to see my friends on the Republican side talking about making sure that we help people and help the economy. And today, you know, we had a bipartisan piece of legislation that the President signed, which is good, this stimulus package. Of course all of the pieces in that package did not turn out the way everyone wanted it to turn out, but we knew that we had to get it in the hands of American people. It puts hundreds of dollars into the hands of almost 130 million Americans, disabled veterans, also seniors, who will spend these dollars immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I must also say, here in the 30-Something Working Group we talked a lot about the bipartisanship. And my good colleague, YVETTE CLARKE from the great State of New York represents Brooklyn, and was a part of that bipartisanship that we shared here on this floor.

Here in the 30-Something Working Group, we talk about how we can work together on behalf of all Americans, not just Democrats, power Democrats or power Republicans, but also independents. And I think it's important when we work together we're able to achieve goals on behalf of the American people. That's what we're looking for.

But, Ms. CLARKE, one the things that I guess, or two of the things we're

going to talk about tonight, not only the President's signing the stimulus package that the House and Senate worked on in a bipartisan way, but we also have to talk about the budget a little bit tonight. I was hoping, since it's one of these cold nights in Washington, DC, that maybe we can accomplish this in a record time of being able to allow folks who, the Federal Government was delayed 2 hours today in opening, but pretty much everyone showed up at my office, and we know that folks have to get home.

But I think it's important, because so many Americans, when the tax rebate comes in, which will be a separate check, their stimulus check will come in and hopefully it will be able to help folks be able to make ends meet.

This tax credit has also offered a one-time rebate of \$300 per child. I think that's very, very important for those that are eligible to be able to get that one-time rebate per child.

Also, it expands financial opportunities for Americans in danger of losing their homes because of the mortgage crisis. And as you know, Mr. Speaker and Ms. CLARKE, we have to make sure that we bring about the comprehensive reform that we need. A number of Americans are losing their homes. A lot of us back in our districts, you know, I'm going to have not only a workshop, but an ongoing working group in helping the folks in my district be able to keep their homes. That's the number one investment tool that we use when we do need money. Having that home and owning that home and having equity in that home is very, very important. Also it promotes small business investment in plants and equipment, and it helps create 500,000 jobs by the end of this year.

And I think that just looking at some of the points in this economic stimulus plan, this is a temporary fix. It's not what all of us here wanted. But on behalf of the American people and on behalf of our economy, we have to make sure that we make these ends meet.

One other thing I just want to add, and this is an AP story, Ms. CLARKE, that the President acknowledged today that the country is suffering a tough period of economic uncertainty. We're going to talk about that when we talk about the Federal budget a little later on, a couple of these charts. You know I love charts. But we're going to talk about that, this economic uncertainty and how we get there because I think it ties into what our colleagues were talking about on the other side of the aisle, talking about all and every last tax cut is a good tax cut. And some tax cuts, especially when you're borrowing the money, I mean, we've got to talk straight to the folks, Ms. CLARKE, this economic stimulus package that's going to benefit 130 million Americans, is borrowed money. Let's just go ahead and put it out there now. It's borrowed. I think it's important that we, if we're going to stop borrowing so much

money, then we have to be able to set the stage to allow Americans to see exactly what's going on, especially during the political scene. Folks have all these great proposals. Is it paid for? That's my question.

When I got here, Mr. Speaker and Ms. CLARKE, it was, we're selling the future generation. Now I can honestly say that we're selling today when we talk about some of these charts, especially with the President releasing this budget.

But with those opening statements, I yield to you, Ms. CLARKE, at this time.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you so much, Mr. MEEK. It's great to be back here once again with the 30-Something Working Group in what I call my sophomore year of my freshman term. I wanted to just share some reflections on the economic stimulus package, because I think before we even get to the point of looking at where our economy is today, there should be a moment to pause and look back about 7 years ago when our Nation's budget was in surplus. And in such a short amount of time we've seen our economy just totally get out of kilter, get out of whack, a lot of hocus-pocus being done in the markets, particularly around subprime mortgages, in addition to the fact that there's just been a slow economic growth in some of the sectors that have traditionally provided that economic growth and boost in our economy.

But it's great to know that we all recognize the writing on the wall, and that there wasn't the type of struggle that we have seen around other pieces of legislation with regard to economic stimulus. It was bipartisan effort, and we recognized that it was important and critical that we do this timely, we do it targeted, and we make sure it's temporary because, as my colleague, Mr. MEEK, has already stated, we're borrowing this money. But we know it's important. It's important to jumpstart our economy. It's on life support right now, and this is just the type of jolt that we need. It, as has been stated, gives hundreds of dollars to people who will spend it. That is the ultimate goal here is that we spend this money, that we get it back into the stream of economic growth as quickly as possible.

□ 2015

And that will be going to 130 million American families and seniors, including about 8.3 million families in my home State of New York. And what we were able to determine is that the average rebate for New York families would be about \$807, putting an estimated \$6.7 billion into the hands of New Yorkers, into the hands of those who really, really need it.

And I think what is so crafty about the stimulus package that the Democrats led here in our caucus was the fact that we looked at the struggle that our parents are having; that for our children there's going to be a re-

bate for each child in the family; that there will be an ability for us to make sure that our small businesses are able to invest in new equipment and that workers will have half a million jobs by the end of this year.

We are looking at providing relief for lower wage and part-time workers by guaranteeing at least \$300 for those who are making at least \$3,000 in earned income.

This is phenomenal. It's unfortunate that we have to come to these measures, but we know that this stimulus is going to be going directly to those who have suffered the most in our economic crises right now. And I think that the Democratic caucus has certainly led the way with innovation with regard to this stimulus package, and I want to commend, to the extent that I can, the folks on the other side of the aisle who saw that this was a much needed measure and did not spend a whole lot of time debating it but putting it in place, so that by May of this year, we should begin to see some of this really kick into effect across this Nation. It's extraordinary.

You know, our Democratic Party worked with our Republican counterparts in the House and the Senate and the administration to pass this quick relief to help prevent a full-fledged recession, but we didn't get everything we wanted. We really didn't just get everything we wanted. We got it done quickly.

I believe that we need to expand upon the stimulus to keep the relief coming, because even after the rebate checks come, there are people who will continue to be hurting. We need to increase funding for food stamp programs and unemployment benefits, then we need to address the infrastructure problems in our country, Mr. Speaker, including needed repair to our schools, waste water systems, transportation systems, which will also create jobs. We need to invest in affordable housing. That creates jobs. But it also creates local economic development.

Creating jobs through many different means, and the buzz word is "green" jobs, which is, of course, looking at renewable energies and how we really embed that into our economy, so that as we wean ourselves off of the dependency of foreign oil, we see the growth of industry across this Nation from the rural parts of our Nation to the urban parts of our Nation, like New York City, where green jobs can be a major engine for sustainable growth in our Nation.

Of course, we have looked at summer jobs, which is critical. This is a way that we can immediately impact, particularly on our young people and their families, is by giving them that opportunity for exposure to the workplace in the summer job capacity, job training for our workforce, to reorient them to a lot of the emerging industries that we have. We just need the jobs.

So we have a full plate ahead of us. Economic stimulus is just the begin-

ning. That is just shocking the system so we can begin to put the treatments in place to repair and restructure it, and I'm really looking forward to that, because coming out of this Democratic caucus had real innovation, real forward thinking, and real focus on the needs of our people.

As has been stated, Mr. MEEK, you are struggling with the foreclosure crisis in your community. I'm struggling with it in my community where we're in the process of rolling out a series of clinics so that people will feel free to come forth and have their financial situations assessed, their mortgages assessed. Those that can be refinanced, we want to get them in the stream right away, because this is predicted to be a foreclosure phenomenon that will last a number of years.

So we want to try to head it off at the pass for those who may be struggling today. And this economic stimulus package can at least put some funds into the stream by helping homeowners who are struggling with their mortgages and who are in danger of losing their homes.

So I'm excited about the fact that the President signed the package today and that we can get the wheels of the bureaucracy moving to get this stimulus into the stream, into our communities, into the hands of our families as quickly as possible. It's really an important measure, and I look forward to seeing it implemented in each of our communities.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, let me just say, I think it's important that you talk about our stimulus package, talk about the realities of the stimulus package, this bipartisan package. And I think it's important that everyone pay very close attention to not only what we are saying but what we must do. This is a perfect example of how we worked in a bipartisan way. And I have always said bipartisanship is only allowed when the majority allows it to happen. And how we came off of the recess, came back here to Washington, DC, to respond to the crisis that's facing the country. It is not over. It is a temporary fix. You have a Band-Aid box. This is one of the medium-size Band-Aids in the box. It is not one of the big Band-Aids that's there.

I think it's important, and you gave the numbers out, on what happens in New York. But we have 8.3 million households on average that will receive \$819 for those that are eligible for this stimulus package. And, Mr. Speaker, it was targeted towards the working families and seniors and those that fall under certain thresholds that we will be talking about in further detail here on the floor when we can talk about the stimulus package and talk about some of the benefits, especially for some of the working Americans who are trying to figure things out.

A lot of the folks, they like to sit down at their dining room table and kind of work this whole piece out on their taxes. Everyone doesn't go into

what you may call an H&R Block or something like that to get their taxes done. Some folks sit right there at the dining room table and try to work it out themselves.

So I think it's very important that it's really no secret when we provide tax incentives for rebates for small businesses so that they can grow, and also when we provide those rebates for those families that are eligible, especially the tax child credit, because a lot of folks miss out on that. They're not paying attention to what is going on. And even sometimes individuals that are preparing your taxes, you have to kind of know something when you sit down at that table.

There are Americans in all parties and those that are nonaffiliated parties and those who have not even started voting yet, there are a number of people that you sit down with your tax person, you don't want to sit there with your mouth hung open not necessarily knowing what is going on. You need to know a little bit about what is happening. It is almost like walking into a car lot. You want to know something about the Blue Book value of the car. You want to know the sticker price. You want to know list. You want to know all of those things so that you will have at least some level of knowledge and edge on what is happening.

So many Americans leave money on the table, and I think, Ms. CLARKE, I have asked some of my staff members to get with the Ways and Means staff to talk about how much money is left on the table every year that Americans are eligible for, working Americans are eligible for, small businesses are eligible for that they're not aware of.

So they sign that tax document, not the person that's preparing. I mean, they do, too, but ultimately, the taxpayer has to sign it. And you are responsible for what is on it and what comes back to you, if you have anything that's coming back.

Ms. CLARKE. What I found interesting was our commitment to small business in the stimulus package. I think that too often small business is overlooked and forsaken for the big, megacorporate folks who are always getting the tax breaks. But this stimulus package also takes into account our small business, our "mom and pop," our emerging new start-ups and other organizations in our communities.

The plan will double the amount small businesses can immediately write off their taxes for capital investments made in 2008 from \$125,000 to \$250,000, and for purchases of new equipment up to \$800,000 from \$500,000. And that's significant because with the cost rising for materials, and there is a rising cost for oil, and people don't recognize what the rising cost in oil alone does to small business, particularly for those who have to have their goods or their services trucked or shipped. All of that goes into the bottom line of someone who is trying to operate a small

operation. It also provides immediate tax relief for all businesses to invest into new plants and equipment by speeding up the depreciation provisions so that firms can write off an additional 50 percent off of investments purchased in 2008. That is extraordinary.

That is extraordinary because, again, because small business is really saddled with the weight of an economy that has been skyrocketing, particularly with the cost of oil and with the cost of doing business overall just escalating each and every year.

And we expect that there will be about \$7.5 billion sent out to small business and small business investments over the next 10 years, close to \$44 billion in 2008 alone.

So we have looked at every sector of our economy that may be struggling as a result of the sluggishness of the economy at this time, and a recession in some areas; some folks would say even depression in others. But for our businesses, it's important that we provide that buffer so that they're enabled to continue to grow, notwithstanding the challenges that they're facing right now.

So we have covered many bases with this stimulus package. We have covered both the home and the family as well as the small business environment of our communities. And I hope that, as you've said, everyone will take advantage of the rebates and the incentives that have been built into this stimulus package because we are counting on you to spend it out there. It's important. We want to make sure that we can provide the life support to our economy that's required so we don't fall in any deeper into economic crisis.

And this is just the opening salvo. We have a lot more to work out for our communities, for our Nation with regard to sustainable job development and job growth, and I'm looking forward to that part of the conversation, because we are in the 21st century here. We've got the talent, the expertise. We've got the ability out there. We have to be able to make sure that we drive the process of economic growth right here starting from the Hill.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy when the two of us, Ms. CLARKE and I, are on the floor because I like that New York-Florida thing going on, and I tell a lot of folks, Mr. Speaker, whenever I'm in New York, I will always smile at New Yorkers because I think eventually they're going to be my constituents one day in Florida. But it's always good to work with Ms. CLARKE who is a public servant and who has served in the local government and where the rubber meets the road as it relates to that.

Mr. Speaker, as we start to talk about the budget, I want the Members to have the information that I am providing and Ms. CLARKE is providing here on the floor. And all of this infor-

mation can be found on-line on www.majorityleader.gov. It is a budget clearinghouse that's there. Everything that we show here on the floor will be eligible on www.majorityleader.gov. And they will be able to pull this information down. And I think it's important to share and have transparency as we look at this budget. I think the success of the 30-Something Working Group that we have had over the years is that we've shared the good, bad, and ugly as it relates to not only budgets, but also to initiatives that we are trying to push through Congress.

But like I said, just 2 weeks ago we were talking about holding the line on bipartisanship and making sure the stimulus package passed, and I'm glad we were able to do it and we can all stand under one flag.

I'm going to try to kind of zip through these charts real quick because I know Ms. CLARKE and I have some back-and-forth to do in discussing this budget and what it means, but I just want to frame the debate here.

□ 2030

As you look at this dramatic deterioration in the budget picture, you have to look at the deficit in the billions. These numbers you see are in the billions. The last Clinton administration, when you look at after President Clinton left office, there was a \$1.28 billion surplus that's there. You can see that right after President Bush took office, we automatically started deficit spending. This chart is not a chart that was put together by me independently. This is what the Office of Management and Budget has put forth. These are the numbers from the Office of Management and Budget that is overseen by the President's administration, and so these are their numbers.

When you're looking at \$158 billion in '02 deficit; \$378 billion in '03; \$413 billion in '04; and in '05, \$318 billion; '06, \$248 billion, '07, \$162 billion; and here we are in '08, for the FY09 budget, the President is looking to carry us to \$110 billion. And then following in '09, \$107 billion. This is his proposed budget.

Now let's just talk about this one chart just for a second. I just wanted to shed some light, and then we will move to the next one very quickly.

It's important that Americans understand what we're talking about. So when you hear folks on the floor start talking about tax cuts for the very wealthy and those who did not ask for tax cuts and saying that has to stay alive to be able to help our economy, I want you to reflect back to this chart here. This chart can be seen on majorityleader.gov.

Ms. CLARKE, I know you're familiar with this chart. This chart has been an ongoing chart in the 30-Something Working Group. We talk about President Bush more than doubles the foreign-held debt. It took 42 Presidents 224 years to build up \$1 trillion of foreign-held debt. What do we mean by foreign-

held debt? This means that foreign countries like China, OPEC, oil-producing countries, this means that Taiwan, this means that Japan, this means that India, this means that countries that we may have issues with, Argentina, a number of countries, they have bought our debt and we borrow money from them.

What does this mean? Forty-two Presidents, \$1.01 trillion, 224 years of history in the country, from 1776-2000; 7 years of George W. Bush, some of it is with a rubber-stamp Congress until recently, until the American people spoke in the last election, and we're looking at \$1.33 trillion in foreign-owned debt.

What does this mean for the country? I can tell you exactly what it means. It means that countries now look at America in a totally different light. It's almost like you having a friend, Ms. CLARKE, and you borrowing some money. If I was to come to you and say, goodness, Ms. CLARKE, YVETTE, can I borrow \$20? Okay. But you see me 3 weeks from now and on your mind, right here in the center of your forehead, you're thinking about that \$20. You're thinking if I am ever going to pay you that money again. So, now my influence as it relates to being a "Member of Congress" has been altered a little bit because you're now judging my ability to handle my own finances. We make the same money and all that kind of stuff, and you're saying, why does he have to borrow \$20, and, better yet, has no real will or desire to pay me back? So that's where we are right now as it relates to the country. I think that people need to pay very close attention to that chart. And that was just updated in December of last year.

What's left out of Bush's budget? The cost of the war beyond 2009. I think that's very, very important because when you look at this cost of the war, it is not included, and budget analysts have said that it will be \$489 billion over the next 5 years. But then again, the President says he is going to balance it very soon.

The AMT, which is alternative minimum tax reform, beyond 2008 is not there. That means that those middle-class families that you're not even recognizing in the President's budget, the spending policy details and beyond of 09 as relates to discretionary is not there. So it's kind of like saying we're going to balance the budget, but we're going to leave major ingredients out to be able to balance it and show how we're going to do it.

The President may only have one more year in office, but the responsibility as chief executive officer goes beyond that to be able to set the stage. What you want to do when you come into a job or you're leaving a job, just for anyone, if you're leaving a job, what do you do? You get everything in order for the next person to come in and to be able to have something to work with when he or she gets there. I

think that it's important that the President does that. You're talking about the chief executive of the United States of America.

So look at what he was left with, a \$128 billion surplus. And look what he is proposing to leave for the next woman or man to take office. So he had a very ideal situation. And now I'm not blaming this on the President, I'm just saying the Republican majority that we're trying to work with to get out of it now proposing to leave for the next woman or man that deficit.

So when we look at the President's proposed deep cuts and key priorities, I want to make sure that every law enforcement officer, which I used to be a State trooper, Ms. CLARKE and Members, when you look at the COPS program, that's the Community Oriented Police, these are your bicycle patrol, these are your individuals that prevent crime, don't show up after it's done, but prevent it, and provide other alternatives to youth so that they don't get into trouble. The President cuts that 100 percent. And so when you look at that in the 08 budget, and what we fought for here, we started out with \$587 million, I think it's important that everyone understands that that has been cut 100 percent.

Weatherization, and this is important in Ms. CLARKE's area especially. This is the home heating and all the things that our seniors and financially challenged folk need, 100 percent cut. When you look at Department of Homeland Security, State first responder grants, 78 percent cut. First responders, police officers, pay attention to what I'm saying because I want to make sure when folks around here are ho-humming and talking about, well, you know, I'm in support of the present situation as it relates to the White House, I want you to pay attention. This is not my budget. This is the President's budget that I'm talking about here that is not reflecting the priorities of the American people.

The EPA clean-up for water grants, 21 percent cut. When we look at community development block grants, these grants build fire stations, they build community centers that allow local government to be able to do something with Federal dollars for the betterment of their community, a 20 percent cut. And the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which is again for those that are financially challenged in the country, they're receiving these deep cuts.

I'm coming in for a landing here and I know, Ms. CLARKE, you're going to take it home for me. What Bush inherited and what Bush is leaving behind. I started to tee that up, and that's a golf term, before I got to this chart. A record \$1.6 trillion surplus. \$400 billion annual deficits. You've got to look at it from this standpoint, and this is available from that Web site I gave you. On track to pay down all publicly held debt when he came in. Exploiting debt burden, short term, so that folks

can understand what's going on. The strongest economy in three decades. Economic slowing down sharply, on comparisons. When you look at a robust job growth, and then also when you look at what Bush is leaving for the next person, the weakest job growth since the Hoover administration.

I think when you look at this, I am teeing this thing up, and the way I'm trying to line it up, and Ms. CLARKE is going to share with us, also, is the fact that the only way we can bring about change is in a bipartisan way that Democrats and Republicans work together and do what we did in the economic stimulus plan. Everyone didn't get what they wanted, but the American people are going to be the short-term winners of being able to receive those dollars and being able to make ends meet. And it was an emergency situation. But I think as it relates to our fiscal situation, that is an emergency. And I think it is something that so many folks should be able to pay attention to.

The costs that weren't there, as I turn it over to Ms. CLARKE, the \$187 million that was left out of the President's budget. Also alternative minimum tax costs not included, some \$408 billion over the next 5 years. The costs for the war not included, \$489 billion over the next 5 years.

Again, all of this information is on majorityleader.gov "budget clearing house" for you to see this information, Democrat, Republican, individuals that are concerned about what's going on here in Washington.

Ms. CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. MEEK, I think you're being too kind. We have to put this where this is. The President released his last budget, and this budget is devastating. It's a Republican budget that plunges our country deeper into debt, a debt that we will pass onto our children, our grandchildren, and maybe even our great-grandchildren if we don't turn this situation around and turn it around quickly.

In the area of health care alone, the types of cuts in Medicare and Medicaid for our seniors and to low-income Americans, it's unconscionable. Again, we're facing a crisis in health care. And what are we seeing? Cuts. Cuts to the SCHIP program that are almost \$20 billion over the next 5 years. After all we've done to try to expand the program for all eligible children, the National Institutes of Health funding frozen just as we're about to have some breakthroughs in research around Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease and cancer and other diseases that we're desperately looking for treatment and cure for. I mean, in the area of education, and this is supposed to be the leave-no-child-behind administration, we see that the budget totally eliminates crucial programs that provide to the States for technology in classrooms. It eliminates vocational education programs altogether. It completely eliminates the supplemental

educational opportunity grants, Perkins loan programs. I mean, our commitment to the development of our Nation has to include a robust educational system.

We are in competition with nations from around the world. And in other nations they're cranking out their engineers and their scientists by the hundreds. We're struggling to keep up. We're struggling to be competitive. This Republican budget does nothing to aid in our cause to go forward in a robust manner. It reduces the funding for after-school programs by over 26 percent.

These are the areas where our communities, our States across this Nation need the support systems in place now that we have a 21st century society where parents are working, where they're not going to be there necessarily all the time at 3 o'clock to pick up their children from school. This is that period of time where all law enforcement agencies will tell you that children get into trouble between 3 and 6 o'clock. Here we see this Republican budget does not take into account the realities of the lives of the constituents that we present. So we're going to have to bring that to the table and make sure that is a part of the conversation as we move forward to shape what has been presented to us, which is really something that is devastating to our Nation at this time.

Homeland security. Now this is an area that really hits home for me. Coming from New York City, knowing what has gone into just building out a new bureaucracy to address our concerns for safety and for real protection of our homeland, to hear after all that our first responders have done to really bring themselves up to speed to be able to meet the needs of their jurisdictions, to then have the Federal Government renege on its commitment to them is a shame and it's a sham. To cut assistance to firefighters where local fire departments have needed equipment to keep our communities safe is unconscionable, totally unconscionable. For example, in New York State where New York City's FDNY are considered national heroes, almost \$32 million have been cut in funding. Where do they get that money from? Where are these departments around this Nation going to be able to make up for the shortfall of the commitment made to them by our national leader? Unbelievable.

Cuts to homeland security grant programs, which funds every State based on risk by \$750 million, that's an ounce of prevention there, and we see it being pulled away.

□ 2045

The important Urban Area Security Initiative, UASI, homeland security funding received an increase of only \$5 million, which is not even enough to keep up with inflation. So what are we talking about here?

I often hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and their con-

cern about border protection. Well, this is it folks. And it's the other side of the aisle that has turned the other way in addressing the priorities through this budget. Cuts to port security, critical transportation infrastructure, targeted infrastructure protection grants programs, and other important homeland security programs, right before our very eyes. And one of the areas that I would have thought we would have really just taken a little time to get fixed up, the Office of Appeals of Redress, which was totally left out of the budget, this department is the department that is responsible for enabling us to travel across this Nation. And for those who have, unfortunately, been put on the terrorist watch list, this is the area where just a little bit of funding would have made the difference between how we are currently conducting business that has shown a low value for our civil liberties and really bringing our processes up to date to meet the needs of real Americans.

So it's devastating. This budget is not reflective of the needs that Americans have been talking about, are concerned about, and it's unfortunate. But it's my hope that we will push, we will move, we will negotiate so that we can get some of this turned around in time for it to make a difference in our lives.

Just think about cuts to child care development block grants, when so many parents now need that extra assistance to be able to make sure that their families are well taken care of as they earn income to keep up with the cost of living. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, as my colleague Mr. MEEK talked about, this is critical in the northeast region where energy costs are skyrocketing and we're seeing some of the worst record winters in my lifetime, perhaps in many folks' lifetime, and not only here but in the Midwest and up the whole northern seacoast.

Social services block grants, these have been the areas where our communities have been just sort of held together by a safety net. It continues to be cuts.

And then of all places, veterans' health care. We talk so much about our concern and our gratitude to veterans particularly in this time of war, and it is just so hypocritical to see the type of budget cuts that are taking place in terms of health care services for our wounded warriors. This is unbelievable.

The Republican budget also assumes that the alternative minimum tax is not fixed. This assumes a significant increase in taxes for over 21 million Americans after 2009, 21 million Americans, and enacting a permanent fix to prevent this tax from taking effect will cost about \$313 billion over the next 5 years, and it is something that we as Democrats are committed to doing. Yet nothing, we receive nothing in this budget that indicates that we are gearing up to address this very important issue for working-class Americans.

The Republican budget does not contain accurate numbers for the cost of

the Iraq War, as has been stated by my colleague Mr. MEEK, and the administration requested \$70 billion, but the average monthly cost of the war is over \$10 billion a month. That means that the true cost of the war will be upwards of at least a baseline of \$120 billion next year.

So as you can see, we have a real dilemma. The dilemma is do we accept the last budget of Mr. Bush, the Republican budget, which continues to plunge our country deeper and deeper into debt, or do we, as we have in the Democratic caucus, continue to push, to organize, to negotiate, to make sure that the needs of all Americans are attended to in this upcoming budget? It's a mammoth task, but I believe, Mr. MEEK, we are up to it. It is critical that we do this. We have to get on good ground going forward. I mean, it's going to take a lot to get us out of this deficit.

First of all, we are going to have to bring an end to this war in Iraq because that's unfettered spending. That's unfettered spending. But, simultaneously, we need to really set priorities for the American people. And that priority has to be demonstrated in the budget that we pass here. It has to be demonstrated in the way in which we fund the critical areas of our growth and our development as a Nation. And, believe me, this budget falls far short of that.

It's time for folks to get their act together. This Republican budget plunges this country deeper into debt. We cannot afford that. We must become much more sober about our work here and recognize that in order for us to grow, we have to make sure our educational system is sound, our health care system is sound, and certainly make sure that our homeland is protected. And based on what we have received thus far, the Republican budget falls extremely short of that, and that is totally unacceptable.

So, Mr. MEEK, I know that our time together here is winding down. I just wanted to say that this is a very important time for this House. And as we look at our priorities going forward, the stimulus package gave us a window into where we are right now, and that is we are in an economic crisis. And anyone who can't see the writing on the wall is walking around with blinders on. When you compound the economic distress that we are in with a budget that doesn't account for hundreds of billions of dollars that can be spent at a moment's notice, particularly in the misadventure in Iraq, and neglects to build the infrastructure of the Nation, areas of education where we become competitive, our talent is cultivated and developed, providing the support systems for working families like child care support, being able to make sure that we are healthy enough as Americans to continue to do the job and being productive, these areas are very important and crucial areas for us to move this Nation in the 21st century.

I think President Bush has thrown up his hands. This was his last budget. This was the best that he could do. And, unfortunately, it fell too short.

I want to thank you, my colleague, for sharing this time. I look forward to participating with you further in the future.

And I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this time during the 30-Something Working Group.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. CLARKE, you are a proud member of the 30-Something Working Group.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I mention a lot on the floor, we just don't come to the floor and say, hey, let's go to the floor and talk to our colleagues, let's give a floor speech. Actually, there are a number of meetings that take place in gathering this information to make sure that it is factual. And I think the reason why we are a solid tree in the forest, the 30-Something Working Group, on both sides of the aisle and dealing with the executive branch is that we do our homework. We don't just come to the floor to say things that we think sound good. It's actually something backed up by fact, not fiction. And I think it's important. If we were to play more in the fact versus fiction arena, I think we would get a lot more done here in Washington, DC.

Some of the things that we talked about in the stimulus package, just to recap, are things that are not there. There were some unemployment issues that folks wanted in there. There were some infrastructure issues and putting Americans to work, need it be building bridges or building roads or what have, to put Americans to work.

Also, there was a great discussion about green collar jobs. When you talk about green collar jobs, a lot of folks hear that out in the political world, but I don't think people really break it down to what it really means. And those jobs where we can reduce energy costs in many of our communities. For instance, if you have a flat or an angled roof, trying to put sod on the top, seal it off and put sod on the top to bring that heating and also cooling cost down, that will be a green collar job. That won't be an overseas job. That will be a job where someone could have dropped out of high school or graduated from high school, those that went on and received a 4-year education, those who went on to a master's, doctorate's, architect's, all of these folks will be employed through those kinds of efforts.

We have had an economy, Mr. Speaker and Ms. CLARKE, that has been really based on borrowing, when you think about it. The economy has been set towards your taking out that second mortgage to keep the economy going, cutting interest rates to encourage more borrowing. Back in the old school not too far along, I remember when folks wouldn't buy a car unless they could pay for it. Now it's just common to say what's that interest rate, or is this the rebate I get back from the

company? And then now I'm all into this thing for 5 or 6 years, and in some instances for some Americans so they can have transportation to move their kids around and make it to their job, 9 years. I have some constituents that are out there for 9 years on a car loan. So it's a serious situation, and it is something that is an accepted practice now.

When you have a home, of course, getting a loan, you know you will get some equity. Hopefully, that value will go up. But because of the economy, because of the slowdown in the housing market, values are not going up on homes. So some people are losing, and that's the reason why we have this whole mortgage piece. Folks got excited again with subprime mortgages, getting people into homes that they couldn't afford, and we are in this situation on a borrowed economy. So I think it's important to be able to break that, to be able to have an economy based on jobs, not borrowing.

And that's the reason why it's important that folks pay very close attention on whom they elect to be the next President of the United States, that they pay very close attention to those they have already elected to be able to govern here in this House and in the Senate, because you shouldn't forestall this off to January of next year when the next President, he or she, raises their hand on the west side of the Capitol and swear to uphold the Constitution of the United States. We know that the President sets forth the budget. We know we also have a say here in the House. The Senate has a say. We should exercise that.

I think, Ms. CLARKE, your presentation was right on target. And I'm glad you said that I was being kind, because I am glad that Brooklyn is represented once again, making sure that people know what they need to know.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to work on this issue of the budget. We want to come back and get into further detail as it relates to incentives that are out there for small businesses and also for families that are eligible for rebates, working families, and also continue to shed light on the Bush tax cuts that are out there. I think it's important that people pay very close attention. How did we get to those recordbreaking deficits, giving people tax breaks that they didn't ask for. And that is not turning over into the economy, because if it was turning over into the economy, we would not have had to pass a stimulus package. We wouldn't be on the floor talking about some of the issues that we are facing right now.

So we are about solutions. That's why we come to the floor this time of night, with the Democratic majority that's willing to work in a bipartisan way with the Republican minority to be able to do what's best on behalf of the American people.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we would like to encourage the Members, if they

have any comments or anyone has any comments based on the presentation tonight, to e-mail us at 30SomethingDems@mail.house.gov.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it was an honor addressing the House once again.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ORTIZ (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of business in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. COHEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PRICE of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, February 14.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on February 12, 2008 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 3541. To amend the 'Do-not-call' Implementation Act to eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal 'do-not-call' registry.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 14, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5321. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Liberia that was declared in Executive Order 13348 of July 22, 2004, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5322. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six