

The last report we have was submitted to President Bush in December of last year. It covers data for the previous year—2006. For 2006, the entire private sector workforce growth occurred in small businesses with 500 or fewer employees. For 2006, over half of America's private sector employees worked in these firms—over half. For 2006, these small businesses accounted for over half of the Nation's private sector gross domestic product.

Drill down deeper into the data, and you will be worried even more. Two-thirds of that small business payroll came from firms that employ between 20 and 500 workers. If we go back to the NFIB question, we will find that the owners of these small businesses are the ones most targeted by Senator OBAMA's tax increase proposal.

Finally, Mr. President, I don't want you to take my word for it. Listen to what small business folks have said about the importance of lower marginal tax rates. Take a look at the chart I am now putting up. The chart is a copy of a letter dated March 14, 2003, from three principal small business grassroots organizations: the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the Small Business Legislative Council, and the Small Business Survival Committee. I would like to read the second paragraph of that letter. It may be too small for you to see on the screen, but it sums up the reality of the effects of the marginal tax rates on small business.

Approximately 85 percent of small businesses file their tax returns as individuals. An increase in tax refunds means small firms will have more resources and more capital to put back into growing their businesses. A series of studies by four top economists examined the effect of the tax rate cuts on sole proprietors. Their results indicate that a 5 percent point cut in rates would increase capital investment by 10 percent. And they found that dropping the top tax rate from 39.6 to 33.2 percent would increase hiring by 12.1 percent.

That kind of tells you what a business force small business can be and how tax increases are negative or tax decreases are positive for small businesses to hire and to grow. What these small business groups said was that their tax policy priorities included a reduction in top marginal rates. You see it there in the letter from small business advocates.

Now, let's think about this. As the small business folks say in their letter, there is a link between tax relief, economic growth, and jobs. We have seen the evidence of that linkage in the year past. Tax relief kicked in, the economy started growing, and jobs started coming back. Why would we want to go in reverse gear?

Senator MCCAIN and Senator OBAMA agree on the policy objectives of growing jobs. Why would you aim a 17-percent or 33-percent marginal tax rate increase at the businesses that grew all the jobs in the most recently studied year? Senator MCCAIN's plan recognizes this job-loss risk. Senator OBAMA's plan goes in the opposite direction.

Let me conclude with a challenge to the proponents of raising marginal rates on small business. When I say critics, I am referring to political leaders, pundits, and even some in the media. I think the data I presented speaks for itself. If you disagree with the analysis but hold the position that higher marginal tax rates won't affect small businesses, would you agree to exclude small businesses from the 17- to 33-percent marginal rate increases that are being offered? I await your answer.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009—Continued

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I think Senator WARNER is just about to enter the Chamber. I would ask the indulgence of my friend from Vermont for one more moment.

Even though there is not too much evidence, the fact is, we have made some significant progress today in some significant areas on the Defense authorization bill. Now that Senator WARNER is here, I always welcome his good wisdom. This is where we are now, as I was saying. We made some significant progress on the bill, even though it has not been that obvious and apparent.

Today we have been able to make some important progress. We will be here tomorrow. Senator WARNER and I will be here tomorrow. We urge Senators to come over to see if we can debate their amendments, to discuss their amendments. We are going to work with them to get these amendments offered tomorrow so they would be in line when voting time comes.

We will be here, that is true, even though there are no votes tomorrow, we understand. We will be here tomorrow. The Senate is in session. Senator WARNER and I will be here. It is very important that Senators who have amendments they intend to offer come here, work with us to try to get them in line for a vote, to see if we can get them offered tomorrow. That will take unanimous consent, but we will make an effort.

But we need Senators to come Monday afternoon. We will be here Monday afternoon. We will be here Tuesday. There are no votes Monday, but we will be here for the purpose of debating and discussing amendments, trying to again have them offered.

So it is also, I am authorized to say, that there will be no further votes

today. Cloture will be filed tomorrow. I thank Senators who are working with us. We have lots of amendments we can clear if we can get unanimous consent to clear a managers' package. The managers' package, we are ready to go with that at any time. We are going to continue to add amendments to that package. We will be working with Senators during these next few days so we can, hopefully, get this bill passed and voted on on Tuesday.

That is the situation we are currently in.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the chairman has quite accurately stated the work that has been done thus far, our willingness as the two managers to continue working with Senators. We will both be present tomorrow as well as Monday. It is hoped that other Senators can be in a position to come forward with their amendments.

I might inquire, can the Presiding Officer advise us on the number of amendments on file? An approximation is satisfactory.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are over 220 amendments.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

That presents clear evidence to colleagues of the magnitude of the task before us. I guess we have said this many times, but this would be the 43rd consecutive authorization bill for the men and women of the Armed Forces passed by the Senate. It is my hope that we can add No. 43.

I commend the chairman for his efforts. I have worked with him through this day. I believe we have had some helpful discussions with staff and colleagues on the means by which to make progress. We are here. It is imperative that this bill pass.

I remind colleagues of the military construction section of our bill which is so vital for the current and future needs of the U.S. military. This bill is the sole bill that can carry that important piece of annual legislation through and get it into a conference.

Mr. DEMINT. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. WARNER. Of course.

Mr. DEMINT. I appreciate having the opportunity to discuss our amendments. I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and that I be permitted to call up amendment No. 5405.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I will object. We are more than willing to discuss this amendment tomorrow. We realize this is one of the amendments that will have to be addressed if we are going to get to this bill. So it is not as though we are expecting to complete action on this bill without addressing the amendment of the Senator. However, this is not something I can agree to at this time but would be happy to tomorrow or Monday.

Mr. WARNER. Will the chairman yield for a question?

Mr. LEVIN. I am happy to.

Mr. WARNER. Would it not be to the benefit of the two of us as managers, as we have had a great deal of discussion together today on it, to hear from our colleague so we have clearly in mind his goals?

Mr. LEVIN. The reason I am reluctant to agree to that is because the Senator from Vermont was dissuaded from addressing the Senate until we had a few minutes to talk about plans for the future. I held up the Senator from Vermont for, now, 10 minutes when he was here and had a right to debate.

Mr. WARNER. Is there any way we could accommodate both Senators?

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I don't think I am able to tonight. But for clarification, this amendment is two words and a number: Strike section 1002. I hope we haven't come to the point in the Senate when a Senator would not be allowed one amendment on such an important bill that is to strike a section. I can talk more about it later. I know we are being encouraged to bring up our amendments. This amendment has been filed for a few days. I think at least the staff is well aware of what it is. I will certainly not hold up the other Senator. I appreciate the chairman's commitment to giving me an opportunity for a vote on this amendment before it is all over.

I yield the floor and thank the ranking member.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I wonder if the Senator from South Carolina will be here tomorrow or on Monday? We may be able to discuss his amendment. It may be three words, but they are mighty important words and have a huge impact, way beyond any description of a three-word amendment. Nonetheless, in order to let the Senator from Vermont proceed, I am wondering whether it would be possible for the Senator to be here tomorrow or Monday so we could discuss his amendment? I would be happy to discuss it.

Mr. DEMINT. I will not be here tomorrow. Since we had understood that Monday was a no-vote day, I made other plans. But I can assure my colleague I can deputize my staff to work out any agreement that would be workable for the chairman and Senator WARNER. It is not our intent to hold up this bill. There is a managers' package that we will not agree to until we have a commitment for this one vote. I want to expedite this, as Senator WARNER does, and the chairman. But if the Senator would like to work with us, I am sure we can work this out tomorrow or Monday without my being present.

Mr. WARNER. The Senator has the floor, so if I could ask him to yield for a question?

Mr. DEMINT. Yes.

Mr. WARNER. This is of such vital importance to the bill. While it is just a few words, it does have very significant ramifications. It deals with the

relationship of the legislative body; that is, the Congress, the executive branch, and the fulfillment of our constitutional responsibilities versus the ability of the executive branch to exercise certain powers.

In the Armed Services Committee, this matter was brought up. I put forward an amendment in committee not unlike what the Senator from South Carolina has pending before the Senate. It was not accepted. It was a 12-to-12 vote; therefore, a tie. It did not carry.

I understand the goals the Senator is seeking. But I point out, if we could have a few minutes so colleagues have some idea of the significance of this and they can reflect on it. If the Senator is not going to be here tomorrow—he has heavy commitments, as do others—nor Monday, it would be only Tuesday morning before we could really begin to get other Members of the Senate more fully acquainted with the complexity of this issue.

Mr. DEMINT. If I may offer one clarification, this is not the same amendment that was offered in committee.

Mr. WARNER. I understand that.

Mr. DEMINT. What my amendment does is restore basically the format of the Defense authorization bill to the same format it has always had. The way it is set up now, the language that references the report language and makes it, in effect, law is an unprecedented way to deal with report language. What we would do with this amendment is make it like every other Defense authorization bill that has ever been passed.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, that is correct. But in the intervening period, there has been the issue of Executive order. Therefore, we cannot, as a legislative body, be unmindful of what the executive branch has enunciated through Executive order. That Executive order will carry forward after this administration concludes and be a part of the next administration. That clearly states that the President is not going to observe the means by which the Congress, specifically the Armed Services Committee in the many years' pattern of doing much of its work, both in the report language as well as bill language.

Mr. DEMINT. If the intent is to get around the Executive order, then obviously that is a matter for debate. It also gets around the many statements made on this floor about the transparency of earmarks and to disclose what we are doing.

Again, this is a very simple amendment. All I am asking for is an up-or-down vote. I am not asking for passage.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, let me just quickly say again, if the Senator from Virginia is also willing, could we let the Senator from Vermont proceed? We could come back. I am happy to debate this amendment tonight, if it is the only time we can debate it. It has ramifications way beyond what the Senator from South Carolina says. We

made a commitment to the Senator from Vermont that he would be recognized next to speak. I was waiting for Senator WARNER to come over. The Senator from Vermont was generous enough to hold off. I thought this would only be a few minutes laying out the path ahead. It is much more than that. I could come back and will be here tonight, if the Senator from South Carolina will stay here. I would be happy to give the position which is so terrifically different, very different.

Mr. DEMINT. I thank the chairman. We will not abuse the time. I have the floor, and I would like to yield for one question to Mr. COBURN. Then I will yield the floor.

Mr. COBURN. Let me say how much I appreciate the hard work done on this bill. It is a hard bill. It is important. My question would be to both the chairman and ranking member: How are we to be afforded an opportunity to amend earmarks if none of them are in the bill, yet they carry the force of law as if being in the bill?

Mr. LEVIN. That can be done by amendment, like any other amendment. But what this amendment does is to say that not just the earmark, the entire budget, including the President's budget, which is currently in that committee report, which is incorporated by reference, that that no longer carries the force of law. So the DeMint amendment goes exactly in the opposite direction of what Senator MCCAIN and others were trying to do, which was to incorporate into law all of the earmarks and the President's budget. We want them in law. We want them to be in law. We got a letter, however, from Senate legal counsel saying it cannot be done technologically.

I am not able to argue with him. I would be perfectly happy, and I hope they can be made part of law. But the DeMint amendment goes in the opposite direction. Instead of making them part of law, it wipes out their legal status by saying they will only be part of a committee report which is not incorporated by reference, and, because of the Executive order, the agencies of the Government are directed to ignore the committee report. Previously, the executive departments would comply with committee reports. That is no longer true under the Executive order.

So what this amounts to, the DeMint amendment, is an abdication of the power of the purse totally, not just over earmarks but over the President's own budget which has been adopted by the Congress. This is the opposite of what Senator MCCAIN and others have urged, which is that earmarks and other appropriations be incorporated into law. This goes the other direction and says they have no force of law whatsoever.

We have to debate the DeMint amendment. I am more than willing to debate the DeMint amendment. I would come back tonight to do it. But I don't think, in fairness to the Senator from

Vermont, that we should not allow him to proceed for his 10 or 15 minutes, whatever he wanted. I would be happy to come back.

Mr. COBURN. If I might through the Chair ask another question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time is held by the Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. COBURN. And he yielded to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator COBURN is now recognized.

Mr. COBURN. I say to Senator SANDERS, I will finish this very quickly.

My concern is, I have talked to the MCCAIN folks. They are very unhappy with this provision. The reason they are unhappy is there is no way the Parliamentarian will allow me to amend report language on the floor because it is not part of the bill we are discussing. I would be happy to work in the background with both the chairman and ranking member to move all of this to the bill so it is not a question.

That is what I would ask that you, please, try to accommodate us on because having the debate and amending things—and I will raise that out of the \$5.9 billion worth of earmarks in this bill, the vast majority are noncompetitive bid. In other words, there is no competition for value for the American taxpayers' dollar. They are direct mandates that certain money will be spent with certain companies with no estimation, no competitive bidding.

So I will not delay this any longer. I would ask that the chairman and ranking member—I think the Senators have done a great job on the bill. I do not think it is significantly different in terms of earmarks than what it has been in the past. But if, in fact, we could figure out a way to make them where we could have them at least discussed and have an opportunity to amend them, I would appreciate that deference.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I will be happy to yield.

Mr. WARNER. Can the Senator visit with the two of us off the floor such that our colleague can proceed?

Mr. COBURN. Absolutely.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Presidential document to which I referred, dated February 1, 2008, be printed in the RECORD as a part of the colloquy.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Federal Register, Feb. 1, 2008]

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

TITLE 3—THE PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13457 OF JANUARY 29, 2008:
PROTECTING AMERICAN TAXPAYERS FROM
GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON WASTEFUL EARMARKS

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Policy.* It is the policy of the Federal Government to be judicious in the

expenditure of taxpayer dollars. To ensure the proper use of taxpayer funds that are appropriated for Government programs and purposes, it is necessary that the number and cost of earmarks be reduced, that their origin and purposes be transparent, and that they be included in the text of the bills voted upon by the Congress and presented to the President. For appropriations laws and other legislation enacted after the date of this order, executive agencies should not commit, obligate, or expend funds on the basis of earmarks included in any non-statutory source, including requests in reports of committees of the Congress or other congressional documents, or communications from or on behalf of Members of Congress, or any other non-statutory source, except when required by law or when an agency has itself determined a project, program, activity, grant, or other transaction to have merit under statutory criteria or other merit-based decision-making.

Sec. 2. *Duties of Agency Heads.* (a) With respect to all appropriations laws and other legislation enacted after the date of this order, the head of each agency shall take all necessary steps to ensure that:

(i) agency decisions to commit, obligate, or expend funds for any earmark are based on the text of laws, and in particular, are not based on language in any report of a committee of Congress, joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference of the Congress, statement of managers concerning a bill in the Congress, or any other non-statutory statement or indication of views of the Congress, or a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff thereof;

(ii) agency decisions to commit, obligate, or expend funds for any earmark are based on authorized, transparent, statutory criteria and merit-based decision making, in the manner set forth in section II of OMB Memorandum M-07-10, dated February 15, 2007, to the extent consistent with applicable law; and

(iii) no oral or written communications concerning earmarks shall supersede statutory criteria, competitive awards, or merit-based decisionmaking.

(b) An agency shall not consider the views of a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff of the Congress with respect to commitments, obligations, or expenditures to carry out any earmark unless such views are in writing, to facilitate consideration in accordance with section 2(a)(ii) above. All written communications from the Congress, or a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff thereof, recommending that funds be committed, obligated, or expended on any earmark shall be made publicly available on the Internet by the receiving agency, not later than 30 days after receipt of such communication, unless otherwise specifically directed by the head of the agency, without delegation, after consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to preserve appropriate confidentiality between the executive and legislative branches.

(c) Heads of agencies shall otherwise implement within their respective agencies the policy set forth in section 1 of this order, consistent with such instructions as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may prescribe.

(d) The head of each agency shall upon request provide to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget information about earmarks and compliance with this order.

Sec. 3. *Definitions.* For purposes of this order:

(a) The term "agency" means an executive agency as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, and the United States Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory

Commission, but shall exclude the Government Accountability Office; and

(b) the term "earmark" means funds provided by the Congress for projects, programs, or grants where the purported congressional direction (whether in statutory text, report language, or other communication) circumvents otherwise applicable merit-based or competitive allocation processes, or specifies the location or recipient, or otherwise curtails the ability of the executive branch to manage its statutory and constitutional responsibilities pertaining to the funds allocation process.

Sec. 4. *General Provisions.* (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) authority granted by law to an agency or the head thereof; or

(ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented in a manner consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 29, 2008.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I appreciate the indulgence of the Senator from Vermont, and I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that also as a part of this colloquy be printed in the RECORD the letter from the U.S. Senate Office of the Legislative Counsel explaining why it is technologically impossible for him to incorporate at this time, with current software, all the items into the law. That is the problem; otherwise, I would be totally agreeable to having every single one of these items—the President's items and the add-ons by Congress—made part of the law. That is not a problem for me. However, technologically it cannot be done at this time. We ought to try to make sure it can be done promptly. I ask unanimous consent that the June 4, 2008, letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL,

Washington, DC, June 4, 2008.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEVIN: I am writing in response to your letter of May 22, 2008, inquiring as to whether the Office of the Legislative Counsel has the ability to incorporate the funding tables currently included in the committee report of the defense authorization bill directly into the text of the bill. In short, the Office at this time has neither the technical capability nor the resources to convert the funding tables into the necessary electronic format for direct inclusion in the text of the defense authorization bill.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel uses highly specialized and customized software to prepare legislation. This software was developed by the staff of the Secretary of the Senate, in cooperation with the staff of this

Office and the Government Printing Office. The use of this software serves 2 major purposes: First, it allows the Senate Enrolling Clerk and the Government Printing Office to print legislation directly from our electronic files, eliminating the need to retype and proofread each file; and secondly, it allows the Secretary of the Senate, the Library of Congress, and the Government Printing Office to post legislation on the Internet in an easily searchable format.

The current version of the software contains a table tool that allows us to include tables in legislation if the tables fit into one of the templates provided in the table tool. I met this past week with the staffs of the Secretary of the Senate and the Government Printing Office and they have concluded that the table tool does not have templates that can be used to prepare all of the funding tables contained in the committee report. In fact, the Government Printing Office currently scans the funding tables as camera copy in order to print the committee report and does not convert the tables into the electronic format that would be necessary to include the tables in legislation. As a result, this Office is unable to prepare or print legislation which includes those tables.

In addition, even if templates are developed for the table tool, we will not be able to prepare the tables for inclusion in legislation unless the data in the tables can be electronically imported directly into the legislation we prepare. The committee report for the next fiscal year contains at least 180 pages of tables. Since the Office is currently unable to directly import the data in the tables, it would require our staff to spend hundreds of hours to input the data from these tables, proofread the tables for accuracy, and then make any necessary edits. We do not have sufficient staff to do this while continuing to meet our other responsibilities.

In my opinion, this is really more of an information technology issue than a legislative drafting issue. If the Senate decides to require the text of the funding tables to be included in legislation, the Government Printing Office would need to develop the necessary templates for the table tool and the Committee staff or others preparing the tables would have to conform to uniform standards for electronic formatting of the tables to ensure that the data could be imported directly into legislation.

Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information or if you have any further questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

JAMES W. FRANSEN,
Legislative Counsel.

Mr. LEVIN. Now, Mr. President, I ask the Senator from Vermont the following question: whether the Senator would be willing to proceed in morning business.

Mr. SANDERS. Yes.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, a little while ago Senator GRASSLEY of

Iowa was down on the floor critiquing Senator OBAMA's tax plan in some detail. Right now, I am not prepared to refute what Senator GRASSLEY said, although I strongly disagree with his conclusions. But I did wish to talk a little bit about some of the differences I perceive between Senator MCCAIN and the proposals he is bringing forth in terms of what Senator OBAMA has been talking about.

I, also, most importantly, wish to make the point—and I think Senator MCCAIN would be upfront in admitting—that if he is elected President, what we are going to be seeing is 4 more years of the policies we have seen in this country for the last 8 years, which have been a disaster for the middle class and working families of this country. I wish to spend a few moments on that.

Since President Bush has been in office, nearly 6 million middle-class Americans have slipped out of the middle class and are now in poverty. I can tell you that all over this country—in my State of Vermont but all over this country—people who used to believe they were securely in the middle class, people who looked to the future with optimism, are now lining up in front of emergency food shelves because the wages they are earning are simply not enough to sustain their families. We are seeing a run on emergency food shelves all over America from working families.

I can tell you that in Vermont and throughout the northern tier of this country, people are frightened to death about the coming winter because in many instances they simply do not have the money to pay the fuel bills which will keep their homes warm this winter.

Since George W. Bush has been in office, median household income has declined by over \$2,100 for working-age Americans. That is a huge drop.

Since President Bush has been in office, over 4 million Americans have lost their pensions. People who have worked their entire lives at a company with the expectation that when they retired there would be a defined pension plan available to them—that has not happened in 4 million instances.

Since George W. Bush has been President, 7 million Americans have lost their health insurance and the cost of health care has soared and more and more people are underinsured.

Since President Bush has been in office, more than 3 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, as corporate America has thrown people out on the street, moved to China, moved to Vietnam, moved to any country where they can pay people a few pennies an hour.

Since George W. Bush has been in office, nearly half a million jobs have been lost over the last 6 months alone, and the unemployment rate today is over 6 percent.

I ask you: Do we need to continue these economic policies which have been such a disaster for the middle

class and working families in our country? Do we need 4 more years of these disastrous economic policies?

Since George W. Bush has been President, total consumer debt has more than doubled. Everybody knows that. Everybody we know almost is in debt. We have a personal savings rate in this country today which is zero.

Since President Bush has been in office, home foreclosures are the highest on record. There are huge numbers of foreclosures all over this country. In 2007, the typical American family paid over \$1,700 more on their mortgage payments.

Is that a record, is that a series of policies that this country wants to continue for another 4 years? I think not—not for ordinary people. If you are a millionaire or a billionaire, I could understand that but certainly not for the average American family.

Since George W. Bush has been President, Americans are now paying \$2,100 more for gasoline, \$200 more for food, \$1,500 more on childcare expenses, \$1,000 more for a college education, \$350 more for health insurance, \$600 more for afterschool costs, and so forth.

The bottom line is, the Bush economic policies have been a disaster for the middle class and for working families and the only people who have benefited from these policies are the people on the top. I do not believe we need a President in Mr. MCCAIN who is going to emulate these economic policies to the detriment of tens of millions of working families.

When Bill Clinton was in office—and I have to tell you, as an Independent, I had strong disagreements with President Clinton on a number of issues, including his trade policies, but when President Clinton was in office, 22.7 million new jobs were created over that 8-year period. That is a strong record of job creation. Since President Bush has been in office, we have created fewer than 6 million new jobs. Mr. President, 22.7 million, fewer than 6 million, that is a real difference.

Under President Clinton, 6 million Americans were lifted out of poverty. That is pretty good. Under President George W. Bush, over the same period of time, 6 million Americans have slipped out of the middle class and into poverty. Under President Clinton, 6 million people rise above poverty; under President Bush, 6 million more Americans slip into poverty.

Are those the economic policies we want to continue for another 4 years? We have a national debt right now which is an incredible disgrace. It is a debt we are leaving to our kids and our grandchildren. I always find it ironic that our Republican friends pose as the party of fiscal responsibility. Yes, they are staying up nights worrying about earmarks, worrying about everything.

Under President George W. Bush, the national debt has increased by \$3 trillion. We are closing in on \$10 trillion. Under President Clinton, we had record-breaking surpluses as far as the eye could see.