

face this situation today because the last administration acted above the law and looked down on anyone who challenged its right to do so. It followed the law when it was convenient, and ignored the law when it wasn't. It ignored good advice, and was quick to call its critics traitors and al Qaeda types rather than respect their viewpoints. It favored its rose-colored view of the world over reality even when the truth came crashing down around them.

The new President understands the importance of learning from these mistakes as we rebuild our country and as we restore our Constitution. Since the Democrats took back the Congress in 2007, Mr. Speaker, we have aggressively sought to uncover the truth about the last administration. Hearing after hearing has shown abuse of power, disregard for the law, and contempt for Congress. Congress will continue with subpoenas, lawsuits, hearings, and questions. We will reaffirm that no one, not the President and not the Vice President, is above the law.

As we move forward, Congress must address past abuses and failures. From keeping working families in their homes after record numbers of foreclosures, to reinvesting in health care and education for everyone, we will fulfill the priorities of the American people that have been so neglected. From closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay to banning torture, we will restore America's standing in the world. From ending the occupation of Iraq to protecting America's civil liberties, we will be a government that respects the Constitution and the American people.

By correcting the mistakes of the past and reinvesting in our country, we can return equality and justice for all. By looking forward and renewing the promise of America, we will right the wrongs of the last 8 years. By working for the American people instead of working around them, we will return to a government by the people, for the people, and of the people.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DRIEHAUS). The Chair will remind occupants of the gallery that they are not to manifest approval or disapproval of the proceedings.

TAX CODE TERMINATION ACT

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, it has become abundantly clear that the Internal Revenue Code is no longer working in a fair manner for our Nation's citizens. Many Americans look at the dim state of our economy and the billions of their tax dollars that are being given to private businesses, and they want to know why their Tax Code

is so unfair. The Tax Code Americans are forced to comply with discourages savings and investment, and it is impossibly complex. It has become all too clear that the current code is broken beyond repair and cannot be fixed, so we must start over. For this reason, I rise today to reintroduce the Tax Code Termination Act.

This bipartisan legislation, which I have introduced with nearly 70 cosponsors, will accomplish two goals: It will abolish the Internal Revenue Code by December 31, 2012, and call on Congress to approve a new Federal tax system by July of that same year.

At a time when Americans devote a total of 7 billion hours each year to comply with the Tax Code, we need tax simplification. A few years ago, Money Magazine asked 50 professional tax preparers to file a return for a fictional family. No one came up with the same tax total, nor did any of the preparers calculate what Money Magazine thought was the correct Federal income tax. Results varied by thousands of dollars.

The need for tax simplification is further highlighted by the tax problems experienced by some of President Obama's cabinet nominees. These are highly educated individuals, some of whom claim specialized knowledge of the Tax Code, and one of whom will actually be in charge of ensuring compliance with the Tax Code, Treasury Secretary Geithner. And even they cannot correctly file their taxes.

In addition, in today's Politico, there was an article detailing the problems that members of the Senate have in filing and complying with the Tax Code. In fact, the title is, "For Senators, Tax Questions Are Taxing."

If it is this hard for government officials, including those who write and enforce the Tax Code, to comply with the code, then imagine what it is like for the average American family to comply with it. All Americans find the Tax Code, well, taxing.

While almost every Member would recognize that our Tax Code is no longer working in a fair manner for Americans, nothing has been done to create a more equitable Tax Code. Congress won't act on fundamental tax reform unless it is forced to do so. My bill will force Congress to finally debate and address fundamental tax reform.

Once this bill becomes law, today's oppressive Tax Code would survive for only 4 more years, at which time it would expire and be replaced by a new Tax Code that will be determined by Congress, the President, and the American people. This legislation will allow us as a Nation to collectively decide what the new tax system should look like. Having a date certain to end the current Tax Code will force the issue to the top of the national agenda. Although many questions remain about the best way to reform our tax system, I am certain that if Congress is forced to address the issue, we can create a

Tax Code that is simpler, fairer, and better for our economy than the one we are forced to comply with today.

Whichever tax system is adopted, the key ingredients should be a low rate for all Americans, tax relief for working people, protection of the rights of taxpayers, and reduction in tax collection abuses, promotion of savings and investment, and encouragement of economic growth and job creation. Taxes may be unavoidable, but they don't have to be unfair and overcomplicated. Just like other programs that require reauthorization, the Tax Code must be reviewed to examine whether it is fulfilling its intended purpose, and then Congress must make any changes that are necessary.

America's future depends on overcoming the handicap of the current Tax Code. There is a widespread consensus that the current system is broken, and keeping it is not in America's best interest. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and end the broken tax system that exists today.

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

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

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF KOSOVA

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Kosova who next week, on February 17, will be celebrating their first anniversary of statehood.

The people of Kosova, born out of the former Yugoslavia, are among the most pro-American people on the face of the earth. I have had the pleasure of visiting Kosova many, many times, and I can tell there is no country that welcomes Americans as happily as the people of Kosova.

Last year, I had the great honor to address their parliament, being the first foreigner to address the Kosova parliament since their independence. I was there with our colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio, JEAN SCHMIDT, and we had a wonderful time.

There are many problems in Kosova. Unemployment is rampant. There is a de facto division of the country which must not stand. But the people are going about their business, working as hard as they can to build a new nation. More than 50 countries have recognized them, and I have urged and will continue to urge every country on the face of the earth to recognize the new independent nation of Kosova.

When Congresswoman SCHMIDT and I were there, their Constitution was formally adopted and turned over, and I

can tell you that they pattern themselves after what we have done here in the United States.

In 1999, when the then-dictator of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, was trying to do his ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo, the United States intervened and bombed and prevented ethnic cleansing from happening. And so today, Kosovo is a multiethnic society, and will continue to be so. And minority rights of Serbs and others must be and will be protected, and institutions, religious institutions, monasteries, orthodox monasteries must be protected, and will be. I know the president and prime minister of Kosovo very well and know the political leadership, and know that they are all committed to building a multiethnic society.

But problems remain. The Serb officials have occupied the northern part of Kosovo. The city of Mitrovica is a divided city. The mine in the north, Trepca, is occupied by Serb forces, and that must not be allowed to stand in the long run. Kosovo must not be partitioned, whether it is de facto partition or de jure partition. Kosovo's borders must be respected.

The United States has a very, very important role to play, and we will continue to play that role. First under President Clinton, then under President Bush, and now under President Obama, we must continue to let the people of Kosovo know that the United States stands with them every step of the way.

And when I mentioned that they are a multiethnic society, the majority of the population is Muslim. They are secular Muslims, and they debunk the theory that somehow the United States is opposed to Muslim religion, which of course is not true. And these people understand that the United States is the best ally and the strongest ally, and will continue to support them.

As co chair of the Albanian Issues Caucus, along with the gentleman from Illinois, Congressman KIRK, I want to say to the people of Kosovo that we will continue to support them, to be with them, to watch them as they build their nation, and the democracy and freedoms that the United States stands for and that the people of Kosovo stand for will always be strengthened.

And let me say in conclusion, on last February 17, when Kosovo declared its independence and there were flags all over the capital of the Kosovo, Prishtina, there were Albanian flags around, there was the Kosovo flag. But the American flag was being waved more so than any other flag in the country. That is still true today.

The people of Kosovo want to continue their great partnership with the United States, and I say to the people of Kosovo: We will be with you, we will stand with you, we will help you build you a new democracy, and we will work together and continue to welcome you into the league of free nations of the world.

I again congratulate the people of the Kosovo for their 1-year anniversary as a free and independent nation.

STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I just got off a call with Carolyn Greco, a constituent of mine from Lumber City Borough in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. Now, this young lady, who is now retired, has voted in every primary and general election since her 21st birthday; yet, she has never called an elected official before to voice her concern regarding legislation until this now so-called stimulus package.

When asked why, her response was somewhat heartening: "I had faith in the system," a notion that she is now questioning for the first time in her life based on this legislation alone. Let me repeat that. She had faith in the system, a notion she is now questioning for the first time in her life based on the stimulus package alone.

Mr. Speaker, the more the American people have an opportunity to evaluate and dissect this massive spending measure, the more frustrated they grow. Does Congress need to act? Absolutely.

House Republicans stand ready to work with our counterparts across the aisle, if given the opportunity to sit at the table, to craft a package that creates and preserves jobs, invests in our roads and bridges, and offers tax relief to middle-class Americans and small business owners. I don't think you can find one person in this Chamber who believes that we should wait this out.

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But this backroom deal is not what the American people want nor deserve. Yesterday the Secretary of the Treasury spoke about accountability and transparency. It is time for the House and Senate Democratic leadership to heed the Secretary's advice and instill that same transparency and accountability into the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, for the past three decades, I have been working, prior to coming to Congress, as a health care professional. And the first rule you learn as a health care professional is "do no harm." And as I look at this stimulus package, I find few good provisions that will fulfill the intent of an economic stimulus within the period of time dictated. Other provisions I find ineffective at best. And overall, I find this bill is harmful, harmful in the sense it will lead to a deeper and a worse recession through deficit spending which will lead to increased inflation, and it will provide a legacy for this Congress of a bloated national debt well beyond where we are today. It enhances and increases our foreign financial dependence. And it provides

for non-stimulus, wasteful spending that will only detract from the true strategic priorities and the real needs that our country faces.

Mr. Speaker, there are 435 able-minded Members of this body. And while we all come from different corners of the country with differing opinions, and I do believe that is what makes us stronger, and unique backgrounds, this is the people's House where debate should be encouraged and thoughtful deliberation should be the standard. This backroom style of politics is not the change President Obama promised. And it is not the change the American people voted for in November.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN JOHN DINGELL

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, 5 minutes is not nearly enough time to do justice to Congressman JOHN DINGELL's record-breaking 53 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives, but I wish to highlight the profound impact his work has had on the lives of Americans.

It is not the length of time you serve here but rather what you do with that time that counts. Today we are honoring not only JOHN DINGELL's record tenure but also his many successes over the past 53 years that have improved the lives of all Americans and made our country a better place. Whether it was passage of landmark environmental laws, implementation of Medicare or passage of the Civil Rights Act, the history that dominates the past half century was being shaped by JOHN DINGELL.

From his first days in the House, Mr. DINGELL has carried on his father's fight to provide health care for every American. He has proposed a national health insurance bill in every Congress since 1957.

In April of 1965, Mr. DINGELL was presiding over the U.S. House of Representatives for the historic vote to create the Medicare program. Those who have had the pleasure of visiting Mr. DINGELL's office know that the gavel he used on that occasion sits on his desk. Congressman DINGELL was there to see history in the making as President Johnson signed the Medicare bill into law at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

More than 40 years after that historic day, Chairman DINGELL was instrumental in expanding and improving Medicare, to make it a widely successful effort at improving health care for our Nation's elderly and preventing them from falling into poverty.

In 1993, Mr. DINGELL took the lead in the House in working with the Clinton administration to push for universal health insurance coverage for all Americans. Although Mr. DINGELL