

the fiscal infrastructure, but also on health care. We not only can address housing needs, rebuilding America's infrastructure, but we can also get people the health care they need in this country. We can enable children to stay in school or to go back to school.

We really have the opportunity to take control of our own destiny again. But we can't go back to the same old same old. Trickle-down economics, the trickle never gets down. The invisible hand of the marketplace is in the pockets of the American taxpayers.

□ 1430

The invisible hand in the marketplace is in the pockets of the American taxpayers. Let's rebuild America. Let's reclaim our economic destiny, and let's do it as a Congress—united, working with the new administration.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY AND HONORING BRIGADIER GENERAL RED BROWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, this weekend, a very important event will take place at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. My friend, fellow Texas Aggie, constituent, and citizen soldier Colonel James "Red" Brown will be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. This American hero deserves to have tribute paid here today on the floor of the United States House of Representatives for his outstanding and devoted service to this country. Red's experiences and accomplishments are far too extensive to be able to cover during my limited time, but it is clear he is an example of true patriotism.

Newly promoted General Brown received his commission in the United States Army in May of 1980 from the ROTC program at Texas A&M University. He is a graduate of Armor Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms Staff Services School, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

He had served as a company battalion and brigade commander. Colonel Brown, soon to be General Brown, had also served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Military Affairs in Bosnia-Herzegovina during Stabilization Force Seven, as well as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations of the 49th Armored Division for 3 years.

Just a few of his awards include the Bronze Star for bravery and gallantry as well as the Combat Action Badge awarded in Iraq, three Army commendation medals, several Meritorious Service medals, and the Legion of Merit.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he commanded the 56th Brigade Combat Team, which was comprised of six battalions with 31 companies and over

4,000 soldiers. When his 56th Brigade was sent to Iraq, it was the largest deployment of troops from the Texas reserve since World War II.

It was a great honor for me to be there at Baylor Stadium in December of 2005 to be part of the massive homecoming, welcoming these brave servicemembers when they returned home from Iraq.

During their commitment in Iraq, Colonel Brown and his men conducted convoy escort and route security missions throughout the country. As you will recall, that was quite an historic year for Iraqis and for those all over the world who value freedom, because thanks to the heroic efforts of then Colonel Brown and his 56th Brigade and so many others there in the United States military, the Iraqis elected their first true representatives to lead a democratic form of government. Though terrorists tried to instill fear among the locals with prevalent threats of persecution and death, the Iraqis were determined to venture to the polls and to participate in democracy because the hope they were given by the supportive American servicemembers, such as Red, was greater than any fear.

I have hanging in my office a photo, very dear to me, of Colonel Brown and of other members of his brigade, proudly holding an Aggie flag that I had taken over when I had visited there. It is framed and signed by all of those in the picture there in Iraq.

My friend General Brown has dedicated his life to and has risked it for the service of this great country. There are countless people across the world who will never know the benefits and inspiration they've experienced as a result of General Brown's sacrifice. His sacrifice did not stop while he was on active duty.

As a civilian, he is also heavily involved in service to our local area—serving on the board of directors of the Boys and Girls Club of East Texas, the Lindale Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Council of the Lindale First United Methodist Church. He was even elected to the Lindale School Board where he has served also honorably and as president of the board. I know he doesn't do it for recognition or for praise because I know his heart, but General Red Brown deserves to be honored and thanked for his unwavering example of patriotism and selflessness.

So congratulations are extended on the promotion to Brigadier General. No one is more deserving of such an honored promotion.

May God bless General Red Brown, his wonderful wife, Jane, and his delightful, beautiful children Hannah and Crystal for being such a great blessing to this Nation.

Madam Speaker, I would like to yield at this time to the gentleman from New Jersey, who is a dear friend. It's hard to find anybody more insightful in this body.

Mr. SCOTT GARRETT from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman for that and for the insightful comments. Maybe I should just begin with the gentleman from Utah for his comments with regard to the economy and the stimulus.

The gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Thank you. I appreciate that pass-off very quickly here.

The comments of Congressman GOHMERT about General Brown, I think, are appropriate as a beginning for this entire discussion about the stimulus. As he has been sacrificing his all for this country, it is our job to try and make sure that there is a country that is worthy of that sacrifice and that commitment that he will have.

I just want to talk very briefly because we have some great experts here on the economy of this country who will say something.

Just on a personal approach, I am one of those who was a product of kind of a "yours and our" family. My father, who was a newlywed with a young son—my oldest brother—during the Depression, lost his job during the depths of that Depression, and my mother was a recent widow with two young sons under 5 with no job at the same time. My father went for 2 years during the depths of the Depression without a full-time job. I realize the difficulty in talking to him of what he went through and of what the family went through. Indeed, he was saved by the creation of a government job during that time period.

I came around about 20 years after this event, and my father always cautioned me at the time that the government job that saved him was a temporary job, that when the government decided to close the program, the job went away at the same time, and he was back to the same issue of finding a job that had been created on the economy, an economy created job.

So, as we deal with the stimulus issue, I recognize that this stimulus package that we have without any details—it's just a concept still floating around—that is taxpayer-funded can have a profound effect on individuals and can have a profound effect on the economy, but if it is to be successful in the long term, it must be successful in encouraging and in stimulating private-sector jobs in the economy. That's the long-term solution.

One of the former leaders of this body once said, "Between invention and innovation, you have to have investment, and investment only happens if there is an expectation of return." If we do not include as part and parcel of our attempt to reinvigorate this economy an aggressive tax reduction policy, not only for individuals but for business, we do not promote that expectation of return. An aggressive tax reduction policy for the business sector will provide stability to the business and will encourage them to reinvest real money into real long-term jobs that will not be dependent on the taxpayer largess to take place.

I think, just from my personal experience and from the experience and insight my father told me, that is what we have to look at as we look into this overall package. I would add just one last comment as well.

You know, we talked a great deal about energy a while ago. I hope it was not one of those things that we mentioned in August so we can check it off the box because gas prices are down again, but the reality is OPEC has already voted to cut oil production. Chavez has said he needs the cost of a barrel of oil to double if he is going to continue on with his foreign involvement policies and practices. If this country wants to have a good economic future, we have to have energy security that is self-sufficient. If we cannot in all of our efforts to try and build a healthy economy secure our economic future, we will never secure long-term economic health.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity of being able to just interpose myself in this discussion of whatever this stimulus package may be since there are no details with it yet.

I would yield back to the gentleman from New Jersey, and I appreciate the words of the gentleman from Texas as an introduction to this, and I look forward to the rest of the discussion.

Mr. GOHMERT. If I may reclaim my time briefly, I want to thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) for being a dear friend and colleague.

I heard your comments earlier about the University of Utah. What an extraordinary year they've had. I get the impression nobody has given Utah anything. They have gone through a season undefeated because they worked hard and they earned it. So what we've seen with football teams that get giveaways is that they don't tend to do as well, and they don't have the discipline. Utah certainly has that. Now, if we would just get to a 16-team playoff, then we could give everybody that same opportunity to claim the national championship.

I thank my friend from Utah, and I would yield back to my friend from New Jersey, Mr. GARRETT.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Again, I thank the gentleman from Utah for your comments. They are always insightful, and that's why I led off by referring over to your for those insightful comments. Now I will just make a couple of comments.

I appreciate the gentleman from Texas for leading this Special Order this afternoon, this Friday afternoon, as Congress goes back to their districts. As the gentleman from Georgia indicated earlier, this is an abbreviated session of Congress. I'm not sure why we spend 5 days in a week to do about 2-days' worth of work, but this gives us the opportunity to talk about an issue, of course, that is extremely important to the American public, something that they are looking to Washington to begin to address, albeit over an extended period of time and in discussion as opposed to legislation.

I am just going to make three points while I'm at the microphone. The first point is: Who pays? The second question is: For what? The third point really goes into what the gentleman from Utah was referring to a moment ago: For how long?

The first point of who pays: As for the gentleman from the other side of the aisle, who was just speaking previously, the gentleman from the great State of Ohio, I agreed with him on a number of his points that he was making with regard to the expansive powers of the Federal Reserve and the necessity for Congress to reexercise its authority in fiscal and in monetary matters and to address that issue.

I did have a question for him or a concern with one point that he made. He said, right now, when it comes to infrastructure projects across the country, there is a great need, and I concur with that, and he raised the question or the statement: But they cannot be paid for by the local or State or—and I assume he also means—county or municipal governments right now. So he's inferring that, if they can't pay for it, somehow or other, the Federal Government can.

You know, at the end of the day, when it comes to paying for any of our services, all of the money that we have comes out of our own pockets as taxpayers, whether you pay your local town tax or your county property tax or your State income tax and so on and so forth. It all comes out of our own taxpayer pockets. So it really doesn't matter whether you say the States or locals can't pay because, at the end of the day, come April 15, those same citizens will be paying the Federal Government for those very same projects.

So as to the question of who pays: It's the American taxpayer who is going to be on the hook for those very same infrastructure projects whether local, State or county pays for it or whether some miraculously comes out of the Federal Government's Treasury as well.

So the point is: Who pays? You do. The American taxpayer will pay for whatever this stimulus package may be whether it's \$100 billion, \$500 billion, \$1 trillion. We're looking at right now a \$1.2 trillion deficit as we speak, care of Senator REID and NANCY PELOSI from the 110th Congress. Basically, that is what Senator Obama is inheriting, and it's on top of that that we'll be spending, maybe, another \$1 trillion. Who will pay for that? Well, it is the American taxpayer.

The second point is: For what? What will we be paying for—earmarks? Well, the other side of the aisle will say, no, there aren't going to be any earmarks in this, but mark my words; there will be things akin to earmarks, and I think that the American taxpayer is smart enough with this. It will be pork. Let me give you just an example. Again, the idea is, well, we'll pay for infrastructure, and that's all good when you talk about infrastructure

being roads and bridges and water and sewer supplies and what have you. Well, let's see what some of the requests have already been to this new administration.

Down in Florida in the city of Miami, they're talking about some great infrastructure projects such as a water slide, BMX dirt bike or trail bike trails, a beach museum. That's the type of infrastructure they're talking about looking forward to going back to the States. How about in the great State of Rhode Island where they're talking about such things as a polar bear exhibit or better soccer fields up there as well?

□ 1445

That's the type of thing that your tax dollars will be going to.

How about over in Vermont? They're putting in a request to spend \$150,000 of your tax dollars to go to a more efficient street sweeping machine. Now, I'm sure they will be able to suck up a lot of the dirt and debris around the town a lot better with your tax dollars going into it. And isn't that really the problem, that this machine really will be sucking up more of our tax dollars as will this entire stimulus package?

So what is this money going for? It will be going for all of the same sorts of earmark pork projects that you have seen and been dismayed about out of the Congress in the past but be magnified to the extent of \$1 trillion.

And the third point is for how long—and this is what the gentleman from Utah was making—for how long.

We will go on for as long as the trillion dollars pork project will continue to be spent out of Washington. It will not really be making permanent jobs. The Obama administration talks about wanting to create 3 million new jobs, 80 percent of them they hope to be private sector jobs. That means, of course, 20 percent of them will therefore be public sector job. I can do the math in my head. That comes out to be around 600,000 new public sector jobs, which is around 50 some-odd percent if he threw the postal service out of the Federal Government as we exist right now.

Where will those jobs be in a year from now or so after this project is spent? They will be out. So if you have got one of those good paying jobs, those jobs will end, and so will this program.

So who pays? The American taxpayer pays. For what? For more pork. How long will it last? Only as long as this largesse out of the Federal Government lasts.

What we need in the end—and I can conclude on this and yield back to the gentleman from Texas—is a program that will create new jobs, that will create jobs that will be new careers for individuals in this country, jobs not on the public dole but in the private sector. How do you accomplish that? By creating a private sector jobs initiative to incentivize the private sectors to take their literally trillions of dollars

that are on the sidelines right now and to invest them into the economy, to invest them into the creation of new jobs. And if you do that, that will move the economy forward. The banks will be more than willing to lend again because the individuals out there will have jobs to be able to pay back their loans, and we will be reestablishing the strong economy that this country was known for for decades and for centuries as well. That is the direction we should be going for.

And that's why I thank the gentleman from Texas for leading this talk in this special hour tonight on how to really stimulate the economy and how to really create jobs for this country.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank my friend from New Jersey. Great insights, great points, three great points. Dear friend pastor from Tyler, Paul Powell, said when he was in seminary, he asked one of his preaching professors, How many points should you have in a perfect sermon? And the professor said, I think you ought to have at least one.

So I really appreciate the gentleman having three excellent points, and I appreciate the contribution.

At this time I would like to yield to someone who has an amazing mind that got him CPA certified, and here he is in Congress trying to help the laws become better and especially on financial matters. So I would like to yield to my friend, Mr. MIKE CONAWAY from Midland, Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank my colleague from Tyler and Longview and Marshall and Henderson and all points east of Fort Worth. I appreciate his hosting this hour today.

As we talk about President-elect Obama's stimulus package, I am very mindful that he currently has something north of a 65 to 70 percent approval rating. So you really don't want to pick a fight right off the bat with a fella who's in that high regard across the United States. But so I think as a minimum, we ought to give him a chance to begin to put some meat on the bone of all of these great ideas that have been kind of at the—not even the 10,000-foot level but at the 50,000-foot level and looking forward to the actual legislative language as to how some of this stuff is going to work.

I applaud him for calling for no earmarks and for transparency and accountability. That's exactly what we want to do. I'm particularly encouraged that Vice President BIDEN has committed to oversee the spending of every single dollar personally. Given the growing size of this bill, he is going to be one very busy Vice President as he puts his green eyeshade on, his garters, and pulls his sleeves up, gets out his pen, and actually watches the writing of each one of those checks as he committed to doing the other day.

I am a bit discouraged, though, that the overall process that was announced yesterday that he believed—our new President believes that he can spend, or we can collectively spend our way

out of this current economic recession, depression—whatever you want to call it, whatever title you want to give it—I'm concerned that that's not an accurate way to do this.

One way to look at this would be to say, all right. If government spending is a panacea for the economy, if it will build a great economy, then looking at the spending, the government spending for the last 2 years—which I believe this Federal Government has spent more money in the last 2 years than any other 2-year period in history—that certainly didn't drive a wonderful economy. We're in a bad economy right now. So if the premise is government spending builds economies, then we ought to be in a good economy right now. Quite frankly, we aren't in that economy.

The centerpiece, as both of our colleagues have talked about, is job creation. And at the end of the day, it really should be about jobs.

I participated in a needs assessment in Midland County back in the United Way days. It was a zillion years ago. It was a process where you went through and asked people what was going on in their homes, what was going on in the neighborhoods, in local communities, what were the problems, what were the issues. We culled that down through some science to the top 10 needs for the Midland community.

If you looked at those 10, nine of those 10 would have been favorably addressed by a job, by somebody having a job. And so it is—in an arena where hyperbole is the norm, it's difficult to overstate how important jobs are to an economy. And that's just the foundation, the base of those.

I would also argue, though, that government jobs—and my colleague and I from Texas have two really good government jobs. These government jobs that we have, we make money at it, and they are here forever. And some government jobs will always be here forever.

But the jobs that would be created with the program that's been, you know, kind of highlighted at the 50,000-foot level, those jobs shouldn't be forever. And when you don't talk about forever with a job, then that job is, by nature, temporary; and since it's temporary, it's hard for families to make plans based on a temporary job. It's hard for communities to plan on those—the impact that those jobs have.

So that temporariness of those government jobs lends itself to continued uncertainty, to continued anxiety about what happens when this ends, what happens when this is over as opposed to a business that comes into or locates into a community, begins to put down roots and build jobs and build wealth, add to the local tax rolls. All of the kinds of things the private sector jobs do, those have a sense of permanency to them that is just right. That makes sense to us.

And I would argue that whatever we do on a go-forward basis, that we focus

more on private sector jobs and do whatever we can to avoid creating government jobs because once you put people on the government payroll, it's hard to get them off and it does not build wealth.

I would also like to point out that while our current circumstances are dire and difficult and hard and there is a lot of pain in the country right now, it is temporary. As we've seen, expanding economies are temporary. We've enjoyed about a 7- or 8-year good run with the expanding economy. Everybody enjoys that. New jobs are created, new wealth is created, opportunities. Everybody likes that. But those are temporary as we've now seen with this contracting economy.

Well, the converse is true as well. Contracting economies are temporary. They may last a lot longer than we'd like, a lot longer than we'd enjoy, but at the end of the day, this world economy, this U.S. economy will turn the corner and will begin to expand.

So as we look at what we do to address this issue, let's be careful that we don't take money to be earned by future generations to fix a temporary issue that we're dealing with. I would argue that my colleagues' and my generation, the last 4 years we have elevated this idea of taking somebody else's money—in most instances it's our grandkids and great grandkids and great-great grandchildren's money—and let's fix today's problems. Which means that we have robbed our future generations of the money that they're going to earn that they should have available to them to address their problems. Because they will have problems. There is nothing we can do today that's going to fix everything permanently, and those future generations have a right to the money they earn by the sweat of their brow. The problem is you and I are spending it. Collectively.

There's plenty of blame to go around. This isn't a partisan issue. Democrats, Republicans bear equal blame in this regard that we've constantly become addicted, in effect, to using borrowed money to address issues. And the issue we're going to address over the next several weeks is this economy, and everything I've heard so far is that we're going to use borrowed money.

I was in Fredericksburg, Texas, back in October doing a town hall meeting at an elementary school. If my colleagues have never done a town hall meeting in an elementary school, I would encourage it because you get some of the best questions ever from fifth graders.

I was doing my best Q&A kind of thing, and this little fella in the second row raised his hand, and I recognized him, and he said, Mr. Congressman, what is the plan to pay off the national debt?

And I said, Excuse me?

He said, Yes, sir. What's the plan to pay off the national debt?

And I said, Young man, that is the single best question I have been asked while I've been in Congress.

There is no plan to pay off the national debt. Every dollar that we borrow is, in effect, permanently borrowed forever. Let's just take an example. I'm a CPA so some of this comes a little bit easy to me. We've got \$11 trillion in hard debt. Debt we've got paper on, not counting the promises of Social Security, Medicare, and all of that. We've got \$11 trillion.

In order to pay that off, this government has to run an \$11 trillion surplus counting the interest. It's more than that if you've got interest. Given the history of the last 42 years, we've, I think, run surpluses 3 of those years. Thirty-nine of them or forty-one of them, whatever the number is, have been deficits.

So if anyone in their right mind thinks this Federal Government, given the propensity we have for spending other people's money, can run a \$12 or \$11 trillion surplus in order to pay off the national debt, they are delusional beyond all words.

Now, at a minimum, the first thing that we ought to do is quit doing what's gotten us to this point. Quit spending money we don't have. You know, it's—across the aisle we've got two seemingly desperate ways of doing things. On our side we want to cut taxes, and the other side spends money but doesn't raise taxes. It ought to be this way: If you're going to spend the money, then have the political backbone to raise the taxes; or if you're not going to raise the taxes, have the political backbone to not spend the money.

Well, we've had it on our side where we spent the money and borrowed it, and the other side wants to spend the money and raise taxes. And all we've done is spend money that we don't have. It's not ours. No family gets to do that, no small business gets to do that, no other government entity I'm aware of, other than the Federal Government, gets to do that.

My preference, if we're going to have some sort of a stimulus work, would be to focus on tax policy, the money that's earned by good citizens, and that we, at the point of a badge, take away from them. That tax policy ought to be stable, it ought to be predictable, it ought to be put in place. It allows them to keep more of their money and create those private sector jobs.

Let's take the example of businesses. Section 179 allows businesses to deduct immediately in the year of purchase a certain amount of money that they spend on equipment that they use in their business. By being able to deduct that, the taxes they would otherwise have paid on that amount of money, they can recycle into their business by hiring new people, investing in new product, investing in new capacity. All those kinds of things.

So that, in my view, is a much more appropriate stimulus of the economy than to collect a bunch of money here in Washington D.C. and then begin to try to parcel it out across some of the projects that our colleague from New

Jersey was talking about earlier in terms of how that money is going to be spent under the, quote-unquote, stimulus package and the conference of mayors, you know. The shopping list that they've gone through is, in my view, a much better way to try to stimulate this economy.

Truth be told, at the end of the day, the Federal Government has precious little to do with whether or not the economy expands or contracts. That's driven by the decisions of millions of Americans to decide whether or not they're going to buy something new, whether or not they're making enough money to be able to afford that, whether or not their business—prospects for their business is good enough that they'll go to the bank and borrow money and continue to begin to turn this corner.

□ 1500

Those decisions are made all over the United States, all over the world by good, honest folks and not governments. So we sometimes delude ourselves into thinking that—and most of us are of the kind of personality that we came here to fix stuff; we came here to make this country a better place; we came here to do all those kinds of things. Sometimes it's not our job.

Our propensity is that we want to fix stuff, we want to do things to help this country. And when we see a problem as staggering and difficult as this one, we think that there's something we in fact can do, and we feel almost inadequate when we propose not doing something. But maybe in this instance, letting us absorb the pain and understand that in a deleveraging circumstance, when you're paying off debt as we are right now, that that does not grow an economy, but that does lay the foundation for that future economy that will begin to expand that we will all enjoy on a go forward basis.

So if anybody remembers one thing I've said today, it is, let's begin to look and lay a foundation for stopping fixing temporary problems with permanent debt that we're borrowing from future generations and are hamstringing them and are hobbling their ability to take care of their issues when they are grown and in our position.

So I appreciate my colleague for hosting this hour today.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank my friend from Midland, Mr. CONAWAY. I guess it's that trained certified public accountant mind that sees with such clarity. You know, you've got your debits and your credits, and you come here to Congress and it should balance. And I appreciate the clarity that all your training and experience has given.

I ran across some quotes here that are right in line with what my friend from Midland has been saying. Here's a quote from Dr. Richard Wagner, Professor of Economics at George Mason University. He said, "The government can increase its spending only by re-

ducing private spending equivalently. Whether government finances its added spending by increasing taxes, by borrowing, or by inflating the currency, the added spending will be offset by reduced private spending. Furthermore, private spending is generally more efficient than the government spending that would replace it because people act more carefully when they spend their own money than when they spend other people's money." What an insightful quote.

Another quote, "As Congress and President-elect Obama work together to help middle class families and get our economy back on track, the deficit estimate makes it clearer than ever that we cannot borrow and spend our way back to prosperity when we're already running an annual deficit of more than \$1 trillion. The reality is that the decisions we make today will impact future generations, and burying our children and grandchildren under a mountain of debt to pay for more wasteful government spending would be the height of irresponsibility."

I've come to know so many wonderful people on both sides of the aisle in my 4 years that I've been here. There may be somebody in this body that doesn't like children, but I don't know who it would be. I find a commonality of just a real love for children. You see children come onto the floor under 12 are allowed here. We saw the rostrum, the dais just completely covered up with children as Speaker PELOSI was sworn in. And children just bring a smile when you see these wholesome, refreshing children, bright eyes, full of hope gathered around. But it breaks your heart when you realize the kind of debt we're loading these children up with. I mean, nobody in this body I know of would intentionally go about harming any child, but we're doing it unintentionally.

It has historically been the general nature of mankind, it's not true with all species, but with mankind generally—except for some exceptions of some really horrible people—mankind's nature is to protect our children; and in this body, while I've been here, we've continued to load them up. And President-elect Obama talked about change and hope. And frankly, the Democrats had been spending way too much money in the eighties and in the 1990s up to '95. There were a few years there where Republicans were doing the right thing, and then they couldn't help themselves, they started spending money like crazy, loading up the kids with more debt than they will ever be able to pay. And I was really—and am still—holding out hope that the change that we can get and we need the most from this administration coming in is quit killing our children with debt, just overloading them with debt.

And, you know, the change is not going to come by throwing money at the economy; we've been doing that for the last 4 months, it has accomplished

nothing. There are some great insightful writings and thoughts from economists now that, although it was the most incredibly good of intentions through the thirties, the economy did not get help, despite all the massive spending and government programs, until World War II. So as people here have heard me say many times, I think the number one duty of the Federal Government is to provide for the common defense.

We need to have defense spending. And invariably every time an administration comes in and seeks their cuts by cutting the military, cutting spending with defense contractors, then our military gets at a low point. And as President Ronald Reagan had said, you know, no country ever gets attacked because people perceive it as being too strong, they perceive it as being vulnerable, so they attack it.

It is always a good thing, and preventative, when a nation is strong militarily. We don't need to be cutting the military, we don't need to be cutting defense spending. In fact, when the government is going to spend and help the economy, it ought to be on things that government has to do anyway.

So when we look at some of the proposed projects in which funding is being sought and maybe spent, some of the things that have been listed so far as being ready to go, shovel ready, ready to have money, \$350,000 for an Albuquerque, New Mexico fitness center, we need to make our people more physically fit. I have been deeply troubled that with all the emphasis on No Child Left Behind, we've cut art programs, we've cut music programs, we've cut all kinds of programs that really can make people a more whole person, and that includes physical fitness.

You know, when I was a kid and President Kennedy proposed physical fitness for children, I really didn't like it. I thought he ought to mind his own business, actually. But I can tell you that the physical fitness programs that were instituted—and that wasn't a mandate, it wasn't a requirement, it was an encouragement, he led by encouraging. And schools started having physical fitness programs and the kids got better off physically which made them better off mentally. And to see the obesity that has resulted, we don't need, as a Federal Government, to start telling people you can't buy fast foods, you can't eat this, you can't eat that. Just everybody exercise, and then push that with the children; set those good patterns early and that will take care of itself. It teaches discipline, and that is something that far too many in this body have not been able to overcome.

Now, one of the things that you learn in law school is to rationalize almost anything. You get good at it. If you become a good lawyer, you get good at rationalizing basically any conduct—or you can. And I see people that have been here in Congress for many years, many that did not go to law school,

and they have gotten so good at rationalizing they can rationalize almost anything. We don't need to be doing that. We need to be getting to what helps.

But I've heard people try to rationalize on this floor, in this Congress in the 4 years I've been here. And I never seek to impose my religious beliefs on anyone else, but I enjoy it when people quote Scripture. And I've heard Scripture quoted on this floor many times, but often it's during tax debate. And I've heard people ridiculing, you know, some of you Republicans say you're a Christian, but Jesus said take care of the widows and orphans; Jesus said, even as you've done to the least of these, my children, you've done to me; Jesus said do unto others as you would have them to do unto you; and here you guys are wanting to cut give away programs to all these different people. But I've searched Scripture, and for those who like to rely on it, you can look, Jesus never said, Go ye, therefore, use and abuse your taxing authority, take somebody else's money and give it away. He said you do it. "You" do it. You do it individually. You help. You reach out. You give with your money, you give with what you have. Don't go abusing your power as a Member of Congress to take from somebody else to give; do it and you will be the beneficiary. That was the teaching, not for government to take other people's money. Because what is taxation? It's theft. Although we legalize it, therefore, it's legal theft. We take somebody else's money and we use it the way we want to use it.

So, that is a concern. Here's another quote from an assistant professor of economics, Justin Ross, from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University. He says, "The empirical evidence overwhelmingly rejects Federal Government deficit spending as the best method for stimulating the economy, and it is generally unsupportive of it having any stimulus effect at all." We saw that all through the thirties. No matter how much money the government gave away, no matter how many government programs, there was nothing permanent about what was done.

Now, we hear a lot of people say that this is the worst economy in 70 years and 80 years, going back to the thirties, it rivals those days. I was mentioning before, but I had a man over 90 years old approach me in my district say he was sick and tired of people saying that, that what we're going through right now has no comparison. For people that are out of work, it even has no comparison to the 1930s because there were times, he said, when we would go a couple of days without even eating, and now people get upset and think they're broke if they don't have two or three cars, computers, cell phones, and that kind of thing. They had none of that.

And you go back to the late seventies, early eighties before the big tax

cut by President Reagan and we had double-digit inflation, we had double-digit unemployment. We're not even close to double-digit inflation. But if we keep throwing away money and printing money like crazy and borrowing and trying to tax more, then we're headed for major, major trouble.

But you go back to the late seventies, early eighties, and the research we've done indicates that key industries that experienced a big downturn as a result of the recession in the late seventies, early eighties were housing, steel manufacturing and automobile production. And these did not see a recovery until much later.

I might also say, for those who look for answers in Scripture I referred to earlier, when people have criticized me for not wanting to take other people's money to give it away to my charity of choice, that they would prefer to do it, I brought that up and someone said, oh, well, that's not being very Christian. And I point them to the example of Zacchaeus. Because if you look at Zacchaeus and his example, the first thing he did after he met Jesus was to go cut taxes. And, in fact, not only did he cut taxes, he gave a four-for-one rebate, as I recall, to those who he had wronged. And I have no doubt that in cutting taxes after he met Jesus that he stimulated the economy all around because it meant the government wasn't getting that money, the tax collectors weren't getting that money, people were able to spend their own.

Now, I was really amazed when some of us, a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, went to China a few years ago, and talking to CEOs and since then talking to other CEOs, why was your industry moved to China? Because I figure the answer is going to be cheaper labor; we didn't have to deal with labor unions; easier environmental—the number one answer was not any of those things. They said our quality control was so good in the United States, Americans just really make good products.

□ 1515

But the number one answer was that the corporate tax rate in China was so much cheaper than it is here. And you look around the world at where economies are growing, and they have dropped corporate rates. They have dropped capital gains rates so people are able to keep more of their own money.

And what we see, we have seen over and over going back to President Kennedy, President Reagan and the early days of President Bush. When you drop the tax rate, the economy is encouraged, expands, and you get even more revenue back into the coffers of the government. So everybody comes out ahead.

Now, some of the other things we've heard about the Democratic stimulus package that is being worked on is that it could virtually triple the current year's deficit. What we've been hearing

is that it will grow a deficit that's about a 50 percent increase over the post-World War II record of 6 percent.

Also, we've been told, as my friend from New Jersey alluded to, that 20 percent of the 3 million jobs that President-elect Obama wants to create are in government. We don't produce a whole lot in government. Some would say what we produce is not worth producing and is more harmful than good. Regardless, we don't need 600,000 new government jobs. That is overloading the economy with government. And as former Senator Gramm used to say, When we have more people in the wagon than pulling the wagon, the wagon's going to stop and the country will be economically dead at that point.

Spending, though, disguised as tax cuts is not a tax cut. As many writers have said, if we want to stimulate the economy, what we really need to do is have a tax cut. That's why I filed in December and have re-filed the first day we were in session this week a 2-month tax holiday bill, H.R. 143. I'm hoping that I will get to talk with someone in the incoming administration because President-elect Obama said he wanted to provide a tax cut for every American who made less than \$250,000. My bill makes sure every wage earner, including self-employed businesses, get a two-twelfths tax cut for the year 2009. It's not just a stimulus package, but that is the result.

But the fact is, if we in this body allowed people who earned the money to choose winners and not give money to people and companies they think are losers, then they make the decisions. And I can guarantee you, they're going to make better decisions than we've seen out of the Treasury department over the last 4 months. It's like we were reading a moment ago, when people spend their own money, they do it more wisely than when they're spending someone else's money, especially when we have the problems with accountability that government always has. It doesn't matter which administration is in office. When there is money to be given away by the government, accountability is a nightmare. It's a huge problem, and despite all the promises, we have got a Republican administration that's been in office the last 4 months during this huge bailout, but we have had a Democratic majority in the House, a Democratic majority in the Senate, and no matter which party is in charge, accountability has been disastrous when it comes to holding people's feet to the fire with government money. So it is not the answer to go throwing money at all these different things.

Other proposed giveaways would be \$94 million for a parking garage at the Orange Bowl in Miami. What a great bowl, what a great venue for football, but there doesn't need to be a Federal giveaway. \$4.5 million for Greton, Florida, to bottle water with recycled bottles, well, that's a wonderful, noble

goal. But what government should do is create incentives for other people to do good things. There's been too much of a problem with Congress that we decide we're just going to give away money, throw it at a problem, and think we have done a good thing.

The highest and best use of this body over and above making sure that we provide for the common defense is encouraging people to do the best that they can with what they have, use their talents, use their God-given potential.

One of the things that drove me off the bench as a district judge and made me want to run for this office to get to serve here was as a judge handling felonies, I kept seeing more and more women come into my court that I had to sentence for a couple of things. One was for welfare fraud and another was for their involvement in dealing drugs. And you get a complete presentence investigation report on people's background, and I was amazed how similar so many of the stories were.

And this is not a racial issue because, when I dealt with it, there were women of all races having the same problem. They would have somebody encourage them, because they were bored with high school, to drop out and have a baby because the government will send you a check. So they would drop out, have a baby, and they'd get a government check. And then they'd find out, it's not really enough for a baby and a woman to live on. So they would have another child and another child, and they kept getting further and further behind.

And you go back to the 1960s and the great society and how well-intentioned that was, but what occurred was the government saw single women having to provide for children with some dead-beat dad out there not helping. So, with the best of intentions and wanting to help, they said let's give them a check. So they started giving a check for every child that a woman could have out of wedlock. And when they come 40 years later to my court to be sentenced, over and over I'm seeing women who are lured into this rut by the Federal Government well-intentioned giveaways, and they couldn't get out. We provided them no incentive to get out.

I hear from people in housing projects that said, you know, we were trying to save a nest egg so we could move out of Federal housing someday and buy our own home. So we're saving up a down payment. Then we were told by some authorities that we had too much money in savings, that we either had to buy stuff or give it away or spend it somehow, get rid of it, or we'd have to move out of Federal housing. I mean, what's wrong with this? The Federal Government ought to be about encouraging people to do what's good for them because ultimately that's good for the country, and instead, we lure people into a rut and we don't let them out.

And so some women would get desperate, and they'd realize I've got to get a job but I also need a handout from the government with the children. So they get a job, they wouldn't report that to the Federal welfare authorities, and they'd come before me as criminals for welfare fraud. Others would see how much money was being made in dealing drugs, and that's no way out of a rut. And it wasn't, because that's bad for everybody.

But you come back to the premise, the Federal Government luring people into a rut with giveaway programs that don't let them out.

Now, I am not sure exactly what the answer was in the 1960s specifically, but I know what the general answer is. The government should provide incentives to do the right thing. So instead of, you know, giving people a check and luring them into this rut they can never get out of, maybe we give them incentives to finish their education, help with day care. If we had done that, we wouldn't see this boom over the last 40 years of children without enough parents that care about them. So that's what we encouraged, and seriously we've gotten what we've paid for.

We could drop the corporate tax. We could drop the cap gains tax. I get sick and tired of hearing people saying we'll never get manufacturing jobs back to the United States. Ridiculous. Of course we can. They've left because corporate taxes are a lot cheaper elsewhere, and people that come on to this floor and say, oh, let's don't tax the people, let's tax the corporations, that is so disingenuous because the fact is, corporations, if they don't pass that on and make their customers and clients pay, then they don't stay in business. The corporation doesn't pay that tax. It's a conduit, but it comes from the individuals getting their services. But it seems to be a good passing of the buck by Congress when we do that.

But The Detroit News itself, home of our automakers, say, Tax cuts work best to stimulate the economy. If Congress agrees to take on this enormous debt in the name of stimulating the economy, it better do everything possible to keep it from becoming history's biggest pork barrel.

The Pittsburgh PAPER said, As Club for Growth's Pat Toomey urges, the elimination of the capital gains rate would be the better solution.

That's what is really needed is what National Review's Larry Kudlow said. A fool bore, supply-side tax rate reduction that could even morph into full-fledged corporate tax reform.

That would be amazing. We'd get those jobs back overnight.

And then with energy, we've had this big energy debate the last 6 months, and now people have gone to sleep on the issue. We should not. We have still got to get energy independent.

And we heard from experts who said if we will simply open up ANWR, and it isn't a beautiful, pristine area that is often depicted on television. There's

nothing there. It's flat. There's not a better place on earth to drill because there's nothing there. Animals can't live there. If the caribou come, they have to pass through immediately because there's nothing there to live on. Drill there. We'd have a tiny footprint, and we were told that immediately we'd have 250,000 new jobs, and by the time they were ready for production, there would be 1 million new jobs. There's a third of President-elect Obama's promise of 3 million new jobs, and we don't have to give money away. We don't have to increase taxes. The private sector will take care of it. All we have to make sure is the environmental concerns are addressed so that we don't hurt the environment.

We could increase the jobs immediately by opening up more of the Outer Continental Shelf. What an incredible stimulus that would be.

A Boston Herald editorial said, a real stimulus bill—the expiring tax cuts are tax increases and history shows that tax increases in a recession, depression or recovery can be deadly. We should not go there.

I often look at the seal on the dollar bill. It has a pyramid with a triangular eye actually at the top, representing the all-seeing eye of God, and the Latin phrase “annuit coeptis”. That's Latin meaning He, God, has smiled on our undertaking.

When we saddle those dear, sweet children that are alive today and their children with debt because we would not do the right thing, I don't see how God or anybody else can smile on our undertaking. We need to get back to things that bring smiles.

MIDDLE EAST AND THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I plan to use the first two-thirds of my time to focus on events in the Middle East and then the final third to focus on our economy. I would invite my colleagues who wish to address these subjects to come to the floor. I can yield them a few minutes, but if I don't have any company, I'm capable of speaking for a full hour, as some of my more bored colleagues have already seen proven.

□ 1530

Now, even in an hour-long presentation, I am not going to be able to present all of the facts to support my position, and so I invite my colleagues to visit Brad.Sherman@mail.house.gov.

Now, focusing on the Middle East, we all want peace, we all want a sustainable cease-fire. But, instead, our televisions show us blood and carnage. Who is to blame? What do we do to cause it to stop?

Now, as to the issue of who is to blame, the press has a remarkably silly

approach. They take pictures of casualties, and they decide whatever side has suffered the most casualties must be in the right. I would point out that if this is the standard we use, America has been in the wrong in every war we have fought since 1812. It is absolutely preposterous to say that whichever side suffers the greater casualties has morality on their side.

Part of this is a misreading of the just war theory that so many modern philosophers have put together, and one of its key elements is proportionality. The press, skimming rather than reading these philosophical texts, comes up with the idea that there must be proportionality of one side's casualties to the other side's casualties. A true reading of just war theory indicates that the proportionality doctrine is that there must be proportionality between the objective that the just side is seeking and the casualties which are unfortunately borne by both sides.

Well, what is the objective that Israel is seeking? First and foremost, the objective is to end a situation where 1 million Israelis every day and every night face daily attempts to kill and maim as many of them as possible. By this standard, this is a just effort by the Israeli Government to safeguard its people.

Now, Hamas has sent, since 2005, well over 6,000 rockets and mortars into southern Israel. Now, I want to clarify one issue as to the number, because often you will hear a figure roughly half of 6,000. That is the correct figure for the number of rockets or for the number of mortars. But if you add together the rockets and the mortars since the year 2005, the number stands well over 6,000.

Why do we pick 2005? That is because that is the time when Israel withdrew completely, unilaterally, without concession, without compensation, from the Gaza Strip, leaving behind valuable assets, which were trampled on rather than used by Hamas extremists.

So we see some 6,000 rockets and mortars from a territory that is hardly under Israeli occupation. We are told that, well, Hamas should be regarded as morally virtuous because so few of these rockets hit their target. It is true that the vast majority of these 6,000 projectiles have failed in their attempts to kill Israeli women and children and civilians, but that doesn't mean that Hamas has good morality. It simply indicates that Hamas has had aim or, more specifically, that they are using ordnance, which is very difficult for them to aim.

Every one of those rockets and mortars had a single objective, kill as many Israeli civilians as possible. Not a single one of them was targeted at the Israeli military. So we are told, well, let us count only the casualties. Let us ignore the over 6,000 attempts at murder from Hamas. We cannot ignore those missiles. From a moral standpoint, it is just as wrong to fire a missile that fails to hit its civilian target as one that does hit its civilian target.

Now, earlier today, the House passed H. Res. 34. The vote was 95 percent in favor, 1 percent against, the remaining percent either voted present or wasn't present, 95 percent to 1 percent. Let us review some of the provisions of that resolution. I will read some, and then I will comment.

“Whereas Hamas was founded with the stated goal of destroying the State of Israel;

“Whereas Hamas has been designated by the United States as a Foreign Terrorist Organization;

“Whereas Hamas has refused to comply with the Quartet's,” and here we are referring to the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations, that Quartet's “requirements that Hamas recognize Israel's right to exist.”

Then it goes on to say that Hamas has launched thousands of rockets against Israel's population centers since 2001 and has launched more than 6,000 such rockets and mortars into Israel since Israel withdrew both its military and civilians from Gaza in 2005.

The resolution also states that in June, 2006, after that withdrawal, Hamas illegally crossed into Israel, attacked Israeli forces, and kidnapped Corporal Gilad Shalit, whom they continue to hold today. The resolution then points out that Hamas is getting some very substantial support from Iran, and I will address that later, and is using innocent civilians as human shields.

Let me give one illustration of that, and that is Nizar Rayyan, perhaps one of Hamas' top 5 leaders.

He stored weapons at his home, sophisticated communications designed to act as a communications center for Hamas. So what did Israel do? They called him at his home. They told him that in order to avoid civilian casualties, they were giving him 10 or 15 minutes notice, that's enough time for people to leave the area, but that it was important to Israel to destroy those weapons, to destroy that communications equipment.

What did Mr. Rayyan do? Having boasted that he wanted to die as a martyr, he not only stayed in the house, but he kept with him several of his wives and children. That is the use of innocent human shields at its worst, a man doing everything possible to lead to the death or cause the death of his four wives, of many of his children, all so he could claim that Israel was responsible for the deaths of those civilians.

Let us continue to look at key provisions of the resolution that passed the House.

“Whereas Israel has facilitated humanitarian aid to Gaza with hundreds of trucks carrying humanitarian assistance . . .”

Let me provide the specifics. Just today some 89 humanitarian shipments went from Israel to Gaza, including 2,227 tons of food, medicine, plus 315,000