

areas, and the size of the government grows, as we've just seen—it wasn't just 8 percent today, but you add the 8 to all of that before from the "porkulous" bill, we're talking about a massive increase in government.

And the Republicans did make some mistakes. We spent more money than we should have, but it's nothing on the scale of what we're talking about here.

We're joined by a very distinguished colleague of mine from Louisiana. And, Congressman SCALISE, we'd appreciate if you could join us.

And I yield time.

Mr. SCALISE. Thank you. I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri. What we've been talking about is the concern that a lot of us have with the runaway spending we have here in Washington.

And as we all sat in this Chamber last night and listened to the President, there were a number of things he said that I think we all agreed with. One of the things that he harped on was the concern about adding more money, billions and trillions of dollars, to the national debt, and I share that concern.

But I think what's even of more concern is that, if we look at what's happened in these last 6 weeks, we've seen not a reduction in spending, not a reduction in debts, we've seen a dramatic increase. In fact, in just the last 6 weeks since Barack Obama has been President, we've seen over \$2 trillion added to the national debt. That's a 20 percent increase in the national debt. And that's the burden that our children and our grandchildren are going to have to inherit.

Mr. AKIN. Reclaiming my time for a minute.

You're saying a 20 percent increase in the national debt. So you add up all of the national debt since the country was born, you put that all together, and you're saying we added 20 percent to that in a period of 6 weeks?

Mr. SCALISE. In a period of 6 weeks between the spending bill that was passed and signed into law last week, added \$800 billion in new government spending—not a bill to help stimulate our economy; a bill to massively grow the size of government, many programs, as you discussed, that are permanent programs, not one-time infrastructure spending.

The other thing—and tomorrow there will be a bill filed; the President will be presenting his new budget. The expectations of what we're hearing is that that budget will be over \$1 trillion out of balance. More money added to the national debt.

And on top of that, a bill that a lot of us that are concerned about this runaway spending voted against, but a bill that passed today was this omnibus bill: \$400 billion of additional spending, representing an 8 percent increase in government spending at a time when States and families across this country are cutting back their spending because of tough economic times. Seems

like Washington's the only place going on a spending spree.

It's hard to picture when yesterday you hear somebody talking about the dangers of adding more money to the national debt, ironically on Mardi Gras day, and it seems like today and tomorrow, when these bills are filed, adding trillions more debt, it seems like the same people are trying to act like the King of Carnival, throwing beads and trinkets to people with more government spending.

This was a picture that was actually in the New Orleans newspaper yesterday on Mardi Gras Day, and it talked about and it shows people throwing money, literally throwing money from a float. And it's titled "Stimulus," and they said, "We'll worry about the hangover tomorrow."

And the sad part of it is, it's not our money that they're throwing. It's not only the taxpayers' money, but it's our children and grandchildren's money that they're throwing, because this is money we don't have. This is money that's going to go out and be printed up on a printing press because we don't have that money sitting in a bank somewhere.

And so it adds more money—over 20 percent in 6 weeks has been added to the national debt. And that's the burden our children and grandchildren will inherit. And this has to end.

Mr. AKIN. Reclaiming my time.

You're talking about, in the last 6 or 7 weeks, we have added 20 percent to the debt. And yet, when you take a look at the money that we've spent, it's not going to do any good to help us with joblessness, it's not going to get the economy going, it just is flat not going to work. Because we can already see that it didn't work when you used the same approach during the "Raw Deal" or the New Deal. Henry Morgenthau says it won't work. He's the guy that engineered the plan. He says it won't work. And the Japanese tried it, and it didn't work for them. And yet we have solutions to the problem that will work which are being ignored.

You know, gentlemen, one of the things that I think we have to be careful of: We are in a very difficult time in America right now, and a lot of people recognize that.

And we'll have to continue this next week on Wednesday. And I really appreciate my good friend from Louisiana joining us, Congressman SCALISE.

REVISIONS TO THE 302(a) ALLOCATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2008 AND 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HALVORSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, under section 301(c) of S. Con. Res. 70, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009,

I hereby submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD revised 302(a) allocations for the Committee on Appropriations for fiscal years 2008 and 2009. Section 301(c) of S. Con. Res. 70 directs the chairman of the Committee on the Budget to adjust discretionary spending limits for certain program integrity initiatives described in section 301(a) of the concurrent resolution. A corresponding table is attached.

DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS—APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE 302(A) ALLOCATION

(In millions of dollars)

	BA	OT
Current allocation:		
Fiscal Year 2008	1,050,478	1,094,944
Fiscal Year 2009	1,011,718	1,106,112
Change for H. R. 1105 program integrity initiatives:		
Fiscal Year 2008	0	0
Fiscal Year 2009	968	892
Revised allocation:		
Fiscal Year 2008	1,050,478	1,094,944
Fiscal Year 2009	1,012,686	1,107,004

□ 1815

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, we are here to convene what has unfortunately become a little bit more infrequent in this legislative session, our 30-Something Working Group. We're so glad that the Speaker of the House has once again convened the 30-Something members of the Democratic Caucus to work on issues affecting not only our generation of Americans who are struggling like everyone else with this very difficult economy, but also on behalf of all Americans who are crying out right now to the Obama administration, to this Congress, to both Democrats and Republicans, to step up to the plate and help them start making ends meet.

And we're going to be here today with my colleague, Mr. ALTMIRE—hopefully we will be joined a little bit later by one of our new members of the 30-Something Caucus, Mr. BOCCIERI—to discuss really what I think is becoming a historic moment in this Nation's history as President Obama challenges this Congress and this Nation to do two things; to step up to the plate and enact short-term stimulus to create jobs in this country, to put people back to work, to make banks start lending again, and to get our economy recovering, but also to do something else; to recognize that this economy has been imperiled for a very long time by a weak energy policy, by a crippling health care system with rising costs, and a relative lack of investment in education compared to those countries that we compete with. And his challenge to us last night was to do what we need to do now and to come together to rebuild this economy in the short term, but also in the long term.

Now, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, I got to hear just the end of the presentation of our colleagues who spoke before us on the floor. And it is, I think, amazing to many of us to see this newfound interest on behalf of the Republicans on this floor of the issue of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction.

As President Obama pointed out last night, this administration has inherited the largest debt in the history of this Nation. Coming after the Bush administration, which took a national debt from \$4 trillion to nearly \$10 trillion, who racked up more debt for this Nation in one administration of 8 years than every single other President combined, that's what this Congress inherits.

The Republicans who controlled this House for 12 years sat by idly as our children and our grandchildren were put in hock. They ignored the growing weakness of our health care system and the burden that it placed on small businesses. They ignored the fact that our energy system was being held hostage by those who produce oil and gas overseas. And they let our education system and our investments therein wither away, as Head Start got cut, as special education funding got cut, as higher education and financial aid funding got cut. And all of a sudden we woke up overnight to the fact that our economy was in great peril and that we owed \$10 trillion to the rest of the world.

For 8 years, the Republicans and the President stood here on the floor of this House and down Pennsylvania Avenue in the White House and allowed all of this to happen, meanwhile, pursuing a system of vast deregulation and laissez-faire policies on Wall Street, which then ultimately created the crisis that occurred last summer. A lack of investment in health care reform, an inattention to energy policy, and a withdrawal from education investment combined with a strategy of whatever Wall Street wants Wall Street gets, and we find ourselves where we are today.

So I appreciate hearing from our Republican friends that now we should start paying attention to the debt. We absolutely should. And President Obama set a mission before us last night to halve the American deficit in the next 4 years. We're going to accept that challenge. But the fact is that the Republicans are Johnny-come-latelies to this debate. We wouldn't be in the situation that we are today if we had had more friends on the Republican side of the aisle who practiced what they preached when it came to fiscal responsibility.

It's the very reason why Mr. ALTMIRE and Mr. BOCCIERI and myself are here. We were sent to Congress to fix this mess. We were sent here to represent districts that were represented by Republicans for a very long time because people in our districts are waking up to the notion that if they really cared

about the debt that was being levied on their kids, that maybe it wasn't the Republican Party that was best to carry that banner.

We're going to talk about positive steps that this country and this Congress can take from here on out to start lessening that burden. We're going to tighten our belts, we're going to get our revenue and expenditure policy straight, we're going to start stimulating this economy again. We're going to talk about positive things. And I bet you there is going to be plenty of opportunity for Republicans and Democrats to agree on that. But I think we should also agree on what the history of this institution is and the fact that this President and this Democratic Congress inherited an absolute fiscal mess from the Republicans.

So I appreciate the charts and the graphs and the Newsweek covers and the political cartoons that get brought up here in the Republican Special Orders, but there is a certain amount of revisionist history that's happening here. And the 30-Somethings have always been about trying to talk about how we can move forward, but also about making the record very clear for the American people. And I think it is appropriate that we do a little bit of both today, that we talk about our path forward—the very difficult one that we are going to have to chart—but we also make it very clear what the division is on these issues and what our history has been, Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And I thank the gentleman from Connecticut. And the gentleman is absolutely correct on a number of points. He mentioned that he came to this Chamber for this discussion just as the previous group was wrapping up. I had been here a little bit longer and got to hear some of what they had to say, Mr. MURPHY and Madam Speaker.

Mr. MURPHY mentioned that we have a Republican Party that is joining the debate and having the discussion. I didn't hear a whole lot of joining the debate going on. I heard a lot of, as the gentleman from Connecticut said, revisionist history. And one of the items of revisionist history that I'm most intrigued by that you hear not just during these Special Order debates, but from talk show hosts around the country, and others, is the revisionist history that Franklin Roosevelt had nothing to do with the recovery that took place after the Great Depression. I don't recall learning that in school when I was growing up. I don't recall that talking point being a part of the discussion. But now we're hearing a lot about, well, the New Deal really didn't work, and nothing that was accomplished by that administration solved any of the issues that they inherited during the Great Depression.

And I think about that when I hear some of the discussion that our colleagues on the other side bring to these Special Orders. And many of them have become friends and colleagues and peo-

ple that I admire. But the discussion that I hear, I wouldn't consider that to be a debate. I don't think that we're hearing good faith efforts to reach compromise and to work together. I think what we're seeing is a lot of finger pointing. I think we're seeing a lot of blame being cast around and a lot of passing the buck because, as Mr. MURPHY said, we have not yet heard anyone own up to the fact that this Nation is in the economic crisis that it is in today because of the policies of the very recent past. And we can point fingers and we can cast blame, and that's not what this is about, that's not what we're doing today.

But it is instructive to think about how we got to where we are. And when you hear prescriptions being put forward for getting us out of this incredibly deep ditch that we find ourselves in, the people who are bringing forward these prescriptions have a record, they have a record of success or not. So I think the reason it's instructive to look at the decisions that were made in this Congress that led us to where we are today, when you hear people stand on the floor and say, here's my point of view, this is where I'm coming from, this is the way I think we can get ourselves out of this economic situation, let's take a walk down memory lane. Let's think about, well, what is that person's track record in voting for economic plans?

And I do want to remind Mr. MURPHY and Madam Speaker that we have a country now, eight straight budget deficits, these deficits are now forecast as far as the eye can see, we all know that. And we're going to talk about the economic recovery plan tonight and we're going to talk about the details of what was in that plan and what was not in that plan, equally important. Because I heard a lot of discussion about things that weren't even related to what was in the economic recovery plan. We'll have that discussion in a moment.

But what's important to think about when you consider what individuals have credibility and what groups have credibility when talking about the budget deficit and which do not, it has to do with the fact that these eight straight budget deficits that we've had followed four consecutive budget surpluses that President Bush inherited. And one of the things about the economic situation that we find ourselves in is when we get out of this—and we will, as a Nation, get ourselves out of this, as the President said last night—when we get out of this, we're going to be able to step back and look at the fiscal policies that worked and didn't, and look at the people who were in power that made those decisions that led to success and lack of success on the economy. Because it's a pretty clear discussion that you have when you say, here's the economy that President Clinton had, a very slow economy, to put it kindly. He had an enormous budget deficit—the largest budget deficit ever recorded was under President

Bush's father up to that time—President Clinton inherited that situation. When President Clinton left office, the four straight budget surpluses that I was just discussing—and those surpluses were forecast as far as the eye can see, the 10-year budget projection, as we've talked about many times, Mr. MURPHY, was \$5.6 trillion over 10 years. That was in surplus. If we had just kept in place the fiscal policies that we had at that time when President Bush put his hand on the Oath of Office—Bush 43—if we had just kept in place those fiscal policies, we could have nearly paid down the entire national debt as it existed to that time now 8 years later. But of course we didn't keep those fiscal policies in place, we went in a completely different direction, which is the way it works; when one party controls the White House, they implement certain policies, when one party controls Congress, they implement certain policies. When the same party controls both the White House and Congress at the same time—as happened during the first 6 years of President Bush's term—they chose to take the economy in a completely different direction, and boy did they ever. The economy went in a completely different direction than those four straight budget surpluses and one of the fastest periods of expansion and growth in economic history in America.

So now we find ourselves with a new administration. And yes, that administration has a Congress that is of the same party affiliation, and we will see how that plays out. But where I'm going with this, Mr. MURPHY, is, policy discussions in the future, you will be able to see very clearly what happened during the Clinton administration with the economy, what happened during the Bush administration; where did they begin, what did they leave their successor? And of course history has yet to be written about where President Obama leaves the economy. But I think it's safe to say it couldn't possibly be worse than what he inherited.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Would the gentleman yield? And you have to look at all of the different ways that we got here and all of the different ways we can start to repair this. And I just think of one right now. You talk about what would have happened if we just continued the policies of the Clinton administration. Obviously one of the things that changed the financial dynamic in this country is the fact that we decided to go wage a \$700 billion war. And if that wasn't bad enough, we did it all off budget.

And that's one of the great untold stories of the Bush administration. No matter what you think about the war in Iraq—whether you think that we should have never gone, that we should have left earlier, that we should leave now, that we should stay for another 5 years—the fact was that maybe the first year of funding could have been deemed emergency off-budget funding, and maybe even the second year, but in

the third and the fourth and the fifth and the sixth year, this wasn't a surprise to anybody. But one of the ways that we masked the amount of money that we were using for that war was we put it all off budget, and so it didn't make the annual deficit look as bad as it really was.

□ 1830

With one stroke of a pen, President Obama changed that. He said, you know what, no matter how bad it's going to make the numbers look on a yearly basis, we've got to start having some honest books here. We have got to start having some real accounting. So President Obama said, listen, from here on out, and he said this last night in his speech and he said it when he made this change in budgeting rules on Friday, we're going to put the cost of the war in both Iraq and Afghanistan online. It's going to be part of the budget; so we're going to have to pay for it. We're going to have to pay for it.

Now, frankly, Mr. ALTMIRE and Mr. BOCCIERI, when it comes to protecting the American people, I think people are willing to step up to the plate and make some sacrifices to do that. Now, we may disagree about what that entails, but in the days after September 11, this country was ready to step up and sacrifice. This country was ready to step up and pay for whatever it took to protect this country. And I really congratulate President Obama for stepping forward and saying, listen, yes, I want to get out of Iraq; yes, I think I need to step up our commitment in Afghanistan; but for however long that takes and however much it costs, we're going to do it in the confines of a budget. We're going to have an honest budget, an honest document. The American people are going to see the numbers however raw or bad or ugly they may be, but we're going to be honest about it.

And I think that's what people out there are asking for, Mr. ALTMIRE. I mean we're back in our districts every weekend, and as bad off as people are right now, as difficult as the times are, I think they're willing to sort of see a path forward. They know it's going to be hard, but they want to know how hard it is, how big the challenge is, and then they are, I think, ready to step up. But we've been masking the problem up until now. And I think President Obama has got some room right now in order to basically put it all on the table, be honest with the people about what the problem is, and then ask us to step up to the plate and solve it.

And he's facing right now Republican opposition, if I may make one more point, whose answer to every solution is let's do nothing. Everybody on the Democratic side has agreed or disagreed with different parts of the economic recovery strategy, but at least we're over here trying to think of a way out of this. The response from the other side has been essentially to just

sit back and let the economy tumble into chaos. The American people want action. They want to know how big the problem is, and they want to step up to the plate and help solve it, Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman.

And as I indicated earlier, one of the things that I think the American people find so troubling about the direction the debate is taking, let alone the policy implications, is exactly what the gentleman from Connecticut talked about, that there appears to be a strategy of betting on success for the Democratic side and the Republican side appears to be betting on failure. I will leave it to others to speculate on what their desire is for the outcome. We will trust their motivations, but they certainly think that we're in failure mode.

Now, I find that to be very troubling because I want to have a Congress that works together where all sides are heard. And President Obama made every effort to reach out to the Republicans and solicit their opinions. And I do think, Madam Speaker, that when you hear things like we heard earlier, a discussion on how this economic recovery plan that we passed was going to lead to government-run health care, well, there is no provision in that recovery plan that alludes to, relates to, correlates to, leads to government-run health care. It is not in the bill that we passed, which is now law. There is no provision for the field mouse in San Francisco that we heard so much about. There are no earmarks in the bill. We heard when the President referenced earmarks, there was derision from the other side last night during the President's remarks, which I think the American people find disingenuous because there are no earmarks in the bill. There are zero earmarks.

So when I'm thinking about how I'm going to vote and I'm thinking through what's in the bill and what my constituents want me to do and I have people weigh in with an opinion, one of the things I'm going to consider is what's their motivation in offering that opinion, but is it an informed opinion? And if an individual comes up to me and complains to me about field mice in San Francisco or earmarks in the bill or how the bill is going to lead to universal health care, it's pretty clear that person has either not been truthful about what's in the bill or not made an effort to learn what's in the bill. Neither of those leads to good policy decisions. And I think that's what the gentleman from Connecticut and I are getting to.

So I am going to have the very, very high honor at this time of doing something that we don't do very often here in the 30-Somethings. We have five core members, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida, Mr. RYAN from Ohio, Mr. MEEK from Florida, who are the leaders and the originators of the group from back before Mr. MURPHY

and I were able to win election to this House. Mr. MURPHY and I have participated and are going into our second term now. So we are very honored tonight, and as everyone knows, Madam Speaker, who watches this over the airwaves, we have just a tremendous fan base for the 30-Somethings. There are countless individuals.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. At last count, Mr. ALTMIRE, it was up to seven.

Mr. ALTMIRE. A handful of people that do actually pay attention to the 30-Something Group. So for them this is a very exciting moment because we are tonight going to initiate a new Member into the 30-Somethings with his maiden 30-Something speech, a great Member also from Ohio; so he is very close geographically to both Mr. RYAN and my district, which is in Pennsylvania. And at this time for all of those 30-Something junkies that are out there and pay attention to what we have to say, the very small group that that is, I would turn it over to Mr. BOCCIERI from Ohio.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Thank you, Mr. ALTMIRE, and thank you, Mr. MURPHY, for allowing me to participate in this great experience of serving in the House of Representatives here. It's truly an honor and truly a privilege for a grandson of a carpenter and a coal miner and a steelworker, who my parents were the first in their families to go to college and I have two successful brothers. One's a chemist and a pharmacist and the other is in the military. So to serve here is truly an honor.

And, Madam Speaker, I will tell you that people are listening and they do care and they do want to learn about what we're doing here in the House of Representatives. And I said this when we were debating the American Recovery Act and the bill that was going to help put America first. We talked about how this great Nation is in a great recession and that we are finding ourselves in nearly almost double-digit unemployment in Ohio, a great State, a great manufacturing State that has suffered disproportionately to the rest of the country. We have seen jobs pack up and move overseas, families struggle. We have seen families lose entire pensions, lose their way in terms of finding health care for their family, being able to put bread on the table. And I will tell you the good people of Ohio want to work. They want a job. They want to punch a time clock. They want to carry a lunch pail because they believe that hard work and perseverance are what has built this country and made it strong and made it what it is today.

But yet we find the decisions that we have made here, and both Democrats and Republicans, in my humble opinion, share the culpability of this, but the decisions that we have made here need to empower our country, empower our workforce so that we can build roads and bridges and build the new technologies of tomorrow right here in our great State, like what is happening

in Pennsylvania, like what is happening in Connecticut, in the northeast, in New Hampshire. All over this country, we have people who believe, like my grandparents did, that with a little bit of hard work and perseverance that America is the place where your hopes and dreams could be realized. And they played by the rules. They punched the time clock. They worked for 30 years at a steel mill. But yet when that company packs up and moves overseas and they give all the money back to the holders of their common stock and the like and those folks who have invested in the company, but yet the people by the sweat of their brow punched the time clock, helped build America for what it is today are left with nothing when that company packs up and moves overseas, like we have seen repeated over and over and over again in Ohio.

And it's time that our generation of Americans stands up and demands more and demands that we put America first, that we invest in our workforce, our greatest asset of people, that we invest in the things that are going to make our country and our economy stronger.

And I pledge to you, as a 30-Something here with this great, fine distinguished group of legislators, that we will work to find answers to things that plague America, that challenge America, but not answers that will divide us along a partisan divide because at the end of the day, these are not Democrat or Republican challenges, they're not conservative or liberal challenges; they're American challenges. And they deserve an answer from both sides of the aisle. But we can't have the same politics of yesterday if we are looking towards tomorrow. And that's what I hope this group speaks about. That is what I hope this group will continue to champion.

I have heard you on the floor before I was ever a congressman. I've seen both of you stand up for what is right and what is honorable for our country to move forward.

And as a matter of point for this Economic Recovery Act, I will tell you this: That I think America is obviously in a great recession, and we will be judged as Members elected to lead this Nation in two measures: by action or inaction. And I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who just want to talk about small parts of this bill that perhaps may draw a little bit of emotion but when you look at the entirety of the bill, it's about investing in our country, in our people, and what will make America and our economy stronger. And we will be judged by what we do, whether we act or whether we don't, whether we block or whether we lead.

But we didn't hear from those who are opposing this when we spent a trillion dollars in Iraq to rebuild roads and bridges over there to make sure that they have new wastewater treatment facilities, new hospitals. We didn't hear

about the fact that we're spending unbelievable amounts of money to make sure that they have the access to capital over in this country. While they're running up surpluses with their oil revenue, we're running down deficits. And in 2004 former President George Bush's Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson, flew to Iraq with one of many billion dollar checks in hand to make sure that every man, woman, and child in Iraq had universal health care coverage. A trillion dollars, my fellow Americans, are over in Iraq making sure that Iraqis have universal health care coverage while we have families in Ohio that right now will not send their kids to the dentist because they can't afford it because they lost their job. There's a huge disconnect.

So we need to understand, are we going to block or are we going to lead? Are we going to invest in our people and in America or are we going to rebuild Iraq? This is a defining moment for our country because a trillion dollars invested in our country at the end of the day is going to make our country stronger.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. BOCCIERI, you're seeing on the ground in Ohio what Mr. ALTMIRE is seeing in Pennsylvania, what I'm seeing. People look at Connecticut sometimes and they have an image of Connecticut as one big suburb of New York and they think that we're all set and the economic downturn isn't going to affect a place like that. Let me tell you there are cities in my district, small cities of 50, 60, 70,000 people, that started this recession at 12 or 13 percent unemployment. That's what's going on even in Connecticut where you look at the per capita income across the board, and we are one of the wealthier States in the Nation. We have pockets of unemployment and poverty that will rival any other place in this Nation. They are cities in my district that used to be the brass city and the silver city and the hardware city, places that made things. Well, they don't make things anymore, in part because of the neglect that the prior administration showed for our manufacturing base as they allowed these jobs to bleed out into our foreign competitors. We didn't reinvest. We didn't protect our manufacturing base, but we also didn't try to find what was next.

And what President Obama talked about last night was, as I said at the outset, a twofold strategy. Let's put a plug in the dike right now. Let's stop this bleeding of jobs. This stimulus package that we supported is going to create or save 3.5 million jobs in this country, thousands of jobs in each of our congressional districts. But it's also going to start us on a path forward to try to replace a lot of the lost manufacturing base, much of which may not be coming back. President Obama said, listen, energy, clean, green technologies can be the future of this country, and he challenged us as a Congress to step up to the plate and chart a new path forward.

Mr. BOCCIERI, you rightly said that the real focus of this group, the 30-Something Group, needs to be on trying to talk about how we can come together. We would have loved for some of our Republicans to join us on the stimulus package that, by the way, in a new poll that came out has shown to be supported by 65 percent of Americans. By a 2-1 margin they support this stimulus bill. They are just as concerned about the debt as they are about any subject out there, but they recognize the need to do something right now.

□ 1845

And we came down here in the first days of the last session, as we pursued our "100 Hours Agenda" of starting to roll back a lot of the damaging policies of the Republican Congress. And we showed that, on bill after bill, we had Republicans supporting us on every single one of those measures, whether it was the minimum wage, whether it was the College Affordability Act, whether it was the stem cell legislation, the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission being implemented. We had dozens and dozens of Republicans supporting us on all of those measures.

And we are going to get that type of bipartisan cooperation again, because what we are going to put out there, what President Obama is going to place before the Congress is going to be an agenda for America, whether you are represented by a Republican or a Democrat.

So I know there is a lot of focus on the cable news shows right now, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, on the division in this place. But I do believe, Mr. BOCCIERI, that we are going to chart a course forward, both in the short term and the long term, that can bring both of these parties together.

But we've got to convince our Republicans that the solution is not, as you put the dichotomy, inaction; that they have got to commit themselves, and the American people wants them to, to action. Once they do that, we will be able to forge a path together.

Mr. ALTMIRE. The gentleman was correct in pointing out where the middle-class Americans in this country were before this recession even started. And the economic policies that were in place actually led to a decrease in real dollars of median household income over the 8 years President Bush was in office. And that was the case even before the recession started in December of 2007, a real decrease in median household income over the term in office.

Now, that's not something that people in western Pennsylvania want to hear. That's something that was a cause of alarm that was not dealt with in previous Congresses or by the administration.

And, unfortunately, what we had was, in the early part of the administration especially, the enormous spending that took place, without pay-as-

you-go budget scoring—which we have talked about many times—without that offset that says, very simply, you have to have money on one side of the ledger if you want to decrease revenue or spend more money on the other. It's a very simple concept. We all do it in our own home checkbooks and every business in America has to do it, balance budgets. If you want to spend more, you have to pay for it somewhere else in the budget.

Well, that wasn't happening, and the outrageous spending that took place, running up literally trillions of dollars in debt, was running the country on a credit card. We have talked many times about the policies that were put into place as a result of that, all the spending that took place. They were running the country on a credit card. Well, guess what? Like any credit card that any American would use, eventually the bill comes due. And that's what this recession is about. The bill has come due.

Now, with any credit card, there is interest that's accumulated with that. And we have talked before and it's incredibly important to the discussion to think about when you think, where are we going to go with this stimulus plan, is this the right course of action. One of the largest line items in the entire Federal budget is interest on the national debt. It's going to be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$300 billion this budget year for just interest on the national debt—\$300 billion. That's a lot of money. That's money that's going to interest.

And that's because of the decisions that had been made in the past, but there is nothing we can do about that. There is nothing we can do about what was in place when President Obama took office and when the 111th Congress took office. But what we can do something about is where do we go from here. So we have talked enough about how we got here. Where do we go from here?

It was the vast majority of the American people and certainly the majority of both the House and the Senate believed that the best course of action was to immediately inject some funding into the economy, yes, in the temporary way that's going to increase our debt even more, which is what we heard from the previous special order. But the cost of doing nothing would have increased the debt even more.

Because when you have a downward spiral in the economy like we have, when you lose 500,000 jobs in November, 550,000 in December, 600,000 in January, and you see that that is going to be the continuing process if we do nothing, those are people that are no longer taxpayers, because they are out of work. Those are people that, in many cases, are now receiving social services, often Federal money; that, instead of paying into the system, are receiving from the system by the hundreds of thousands every month with no end in sight, if we do nothing.

The economy, the economic slow-down, the lack of credit, the foreclosures that take place, all of that, along with unemployment, increases our debt more in the long term and even the short term than we had to do with our stimulus. So that's what that was about. It was about putting money back in the hands of the American people through tax cuts that affect 95 percent of the American people, a tax cut for 95 percent.

It's about putting money in every sector of the economy, spreading it and casting that net as wide as we possibly could to connect to every community in the country and make sure that they can share in the economic recovery that we hope this plan leads to.

There is no guarantee of what that level of success is going to be. In fact, there is no guarantee of success at all. We are very hopeful, but there is one guarantee: If we had done nothing, the situation would get worse. That is the guarantee.

Mr. BOCCIERI.

Mr. BOCCIERI. I agree with the gentleman from Pittsburgh. I have heard from all of our orientations and briefings that we received from nearly 200 economists, the most conservative to the most liberal, have all said that the United States Government has to do something.

And there's only two things that we can do. We can work with the administration and the Federal Reserve to manage interest rates so people can get an auto loan, so they can go and take out a student loan or go to college, or they can take out a mortgage and buy that dream home that they have always wished for, or we can inject huge amounts of capital into the market to help stimulate the economy, to help recover our economy. This isn't going to be the be-all and end-all of economic woes.

In fact, I have told many Ohioans that this will act as a backstop against further job loss and create jobs along the way and invest in America. And that's what it should be about.

I mean, leadership is about action, not just a position. Leadership is about action. And when we take action to invest in our people, invest in our roads, rebuild our bridges, rebuild our schools, and invest in what is our greatest asset, the American people, we are going to make our country stronger.

And Senator WEBB said in his book recently—I will throw him a shout-out here, you know, Senator WEBB said the health of a nation, the health of a society should not be measured at its apex or at its top, but at its base, at its base. Because that's where the majority of the people work every day to make the living, live the American dream. And they are what are America is about, the hope and promise of America that was often talked about on the campaign trail last year.

You know, I just look at my family's history. The hope and promise of

America is in my family. And they have worked so hard to allow that to happen, but they couldn't have done that without a strong government that understands that measured approaches to help put our people back to work, measured approaches that will invest in key things and strategic things that are going to make our economy stronger and our people stronger are about what we should do.

And I can tell you that when we look at this American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, it's just exciting what we are talking about doing here. And the President said this yesterday in his speech to the Nation, when he said that we are going to have a visionary approach to how we approach the 21st-century economy.

Those green energy jobs, that in 3 years we are going to double our green energy production. We are going to invest in plug-in hybrids like we are researching right here in the 16th Congressional District in Ohio. We are going to invest in fuel-cell technology like we are doing right in the 16th District in Ohio. And we are going to invest in biomass research like we are doing in the 16th Congressional District.

Those are going to create jobs back home. Those are going to put people to work, move away from our dependence on foreign oil. And God only knows that we need to move away from our dependence on foreign oil. Forty percent of our Nation's demand comes from the Middle East, and we allow our country to be subject to what OPEC decides for us? No, we can inject this capital to create the jobs of tomorrow and move away from our dependence by research and technology.

This is what we have done. This is what we have done to make our country stronger. So I submit to you that leadership is about action and not just position. We have to do something to make our country stronger.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. BOCCIERI, just to give you a little perspective on what the folks that are running local governments, the folks that are at the real foundation of our system that are struggling every day with this company going out of business or this company not being able to expand, let me tell you what they are saying, all right?

The mayor of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Tom Beehan, says, "The stimulus package is going to be huge for Oak Ridge. There is money in the stimulus package for environmental cleanup, and it's heading this way."

The mayor of Columbus, Ohio, Michael Coleman, says, "The stimulus package will stop the freefall, and it is going to lead to growth in the future."

The Phoenix mayor, Phil Gordon, "This will actually create jobs with the private sector in all different areas."

Alabama State Representative Jimmy Martin says, "Until the stimulus passed, Alabama was looking at laying off 8,000 teachers next year, in-

creasing class sizes to historic proportions and, in the process, wiping out the progress we've made in the past 5 years. The stimulus package will change that reality."

And the Wisconsin insurance commissioner, Sean Dilweg, says, "We know the cost of health care premiums for unemployed workers makes it difficult for them to purchase coverage. The COBRA subsidy in the stimulus bill will make it much easier for families to continue their health care coverage."

These are local leaders with boots on the ground talking about how this is going to affect their community. They are backed up, as I said, by the 65 percent of Americans, in today's survey, that support this bill as well.

And, Mr. BOCCIERI, talking again about that contrast between action and inaction, well, for those of us who listened not only to President Obama's address last night but listened to the Republican response, listened to our former colleague here, Bobby Jindal, give the response to that speech, well, you know, maybe we are not giving him enough credit, there were a couple of alternatives that they posed, but essentially the alternatives were to go back to the economic philosophy and the economic strategy that got us into this mess in the first place.

The alternative to our plan for action seems to alternate between inaction or a reversal back to the policies of the Bush administration; in effect, trying to use and leverage this economic crisis as a means to further decrease taxes for people in this country making enormous incomes who, frankly, right now in this moment of economic crisis, don't need that additional subsidy from the government.

I think, going forward, that we are going to have cooperation here. I think, as our friends on the other sides of the aisle do go back to their districts, they are going to hear a command from their constituents to come to the table and try to be a part of the solution. They are going to hear what I just enunciated for my colleagues from local officials who are crying out for this help in the private sector and, frankly, on the public side.

This package is going to predominantly, to a large extent, create jobs in the private sector. That's our focus right now. But it is also going to protect the jobs of some teachers and some firefighters and some cops out there that our communities badly need, Mr. ALTMIRE.

It's a prescription to get this economy back up and started towards recovery. Mr. BOCCIERI is right; you know, this isn't salvation, this is a life raft. This is something that is going to be able to bridge us to real recovery. And I hope that, in the end, we are going to get a little bit more bipartisan cooperation on it, Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman.

Tomorrow, on Thursday, we expect the President to drop off his budget

here in the Congress so we can all have a look at the details of the plan that were discussed last night.

And what I find so exciting and so refreshing about the approach that we are going to see with this budget is we are going to consider the economic policies, moving forward, in their entirety. What are some of the major issues that affect every family, every individual, every small business, every business in this country? Well, energy, health care, and education. Those are three things that have been neglected for a very long time in Congresses both Republican and Democrat.

But that is over, because we have a President, as we heard last night, who understands that the only long-term solution to the economic problems that we have today is to solve our energy crisis, our dependence on foreign oil that Mr. BOCCIERI referred to.

We have to find a way to improve our health care delivery system, to increase access, so that we don't have 43 million Americans that lack any health insurance, we don't have small businesses that experience double-digit cost increases year after year. Less than half of small businesses in the country are able to offer health care to their employees at all.

And by including in the discussion on the economy health care, energy, and education, we are taking a comprehensive look at the future of America, at the issues that are going to allow America to remain the preeminent Nation in the world for knowledge and innovation and technology.

And that's something that, by looking at it together, we are going to be able to continue that success, dig our way out of the ditch that we are in right now with the economy, but not forget about the issues that have to be a part of that, moving forward, including a look at government spending, as we have talked about, and the other policy issues.

Mr. BOCCIERI.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Thank you.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania is very appropriate in his remarks. And I will tell you that, you know, from a freshman's perspective, I think this bill that made it through the Congress was the eighth wonder of the world. And you out there listening may wonder why: Because there were no earmarks in the bill, and there were no earmarks to specific districts in the bill.

And I considered that the eighth wonder of the world, because Article I, section 1 of the Constitution said the Congress will make appropriations. We will appropriate the funds for the projects, for the public policy that we believe is most important to move our country forward.

We talked about financial stability a little bit, about how we need to make our economy stronger.

□ 1900

Well, it comes with prudent reforms that we need to make within Wall

Street, within the stock market, because it doesn't make any sense at all from this economics major at St. Bonaventure University, the fact that we are allowing speculators to drive our economy.

The laws of supply and demand have seemingly been thrown out the window, and we are allowing people to bet on the price of fuel going up, people to bet on the price of commodities going up, like grain and cereals and those sorts of things, bet on people foreclosing, bet on people failing to pay their mortgage. To me, that sounds like a recipe for disaster, and we need some stability in our financial markets, and we need an administration like President Obama is going to enact to make sure that the Securities and Exchange Commission and those regulatory agencies for our financial markets are going to do the jobs that we empowered them to do and to bring to justice those people who are manipulating the economy.

I can tell you that many people are struggling back home. In fact, people are working so hard. In fact, a recent study that was done late last year found that people of average means, average working-class families, are working 18 percent harder, yet their wages have started to decline and stagnate and go down while their tax burden has gone up.

Now, the top 1 percent of the country has seen their wages increase and their tax burdens reduced because of the last administration's policy that will reward the wealthiest of our country. Those folks who have the means to pay and help determine public policy for our country to invest in the things that are going to make our country stronger, we are giving them the breaks when we should be giving the breaks to the middle-class families. Remember what Senator WEBB said. The health of a society is measured not at its top, at its apex, but at its base, because it is the base that invests the most into this country.

I tell you, I was so proud to hear President Obama say and to be strong as our Nation's leader and perhaps the leader of the free world suggest that we will make it through this crisis. We will make it through this crisis. America has seen tough times before, and he said that the weight of this crisis will not determine the destiny of our Nation. And he was so right, that we have the wherewithal to get through this.

To my friends on the other side who are going to prepare their charts and graphs and talk about exploding Federal deficits, we need to understand that President Obama inherited this. He inherited \$1 trillion that was spent on Medicare part D, but yet families and seniors back home still can't get their prescription drugs and pharmacies are struggling.

We spent \$1 trillion in Iraq to rebuild roads and bridges over there. President Bush thought we needed to make that investment, to make sure that every

man, woman and child in Iraq had universal health care coverage. We gave \$1 trillion in tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

Well, it is time that we focus on the middle class, not on the apex, but on the base of our Nation, and we do that by investing in the people that have made this country stronger and will make this country stronger.

One last point I want to make here before we wrap this up this evening. We talk about the budget deficit. This country since its beginnings has carried some sort of debt, from the Revolutionary War on up through the present time we find ourselves.

In 1946, in 1946, after this country made it through the Great Depression and made it through World War II, the government was spending more and borrowing more than the economy could produce; spending more and borrowing more than the economy could produce. Right now we are at 38 percent of what the economy can produce. After this investment in America and we are on the road to recovery, we will be about 50 percent. We still have to pay this off, that is acknowledged, but we are in a great recession, and we will have the political will and the economic wherewithal to pay down this debt and get it closer to the margins that President Reagan saw back in the eighties, right around 28 to 30 percent. So we need to make those decisions. President Obama talked about that resolve. We will make it through this time.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. BOCCIERI, I think about a company in my district that makes parts for cosmetics containers. It is a company that has been profitable for years. It has had a solid line of business. In fact, during this difficult economic time, it has seen its orders drop off by a few points here or there, but has been stable, has had its revenues remain constant. Yet because the banking system is frozen up, because they can't get access to lines of credit and to inventory capital, they have shuttered that company. They have shut it down. They have temporarily furloughed all of their workers until they can hopefully figure out a means to start operations again.

To them, inaction is not an option. They have done everything right. They have kept their business running. They have struggled to contain health care costs, to get the costs of production down, to continue to reach out and grow their business, and yet they are laying off dozens of employees in my district because they can't get access to capital.

The people they are laying off have done everything that we have asked of them as well. They have shown up to work, made a great product, invested in their company, invested back in their communities. And now they are left without a job. Now they are left without health care. Now they are asking how they are going to be able to

continue to pay for their child's education, where they are going to find the next job.

Well, similar companies all around my district and their town are doing the same thing, and they know that inaction isn't an option either. They are part of that 65 percent of Americans who want this Congress to move forward on a strategy of stimulus. We have to do something, because inaction, because "nothing" simply isn't going to be the answer for this economy.

For that one company, that story that can be told dozens of times over in my district, hundreds of times throughout Connecticut and thousands of times throughout this Nation, that strategy about taking on the lack of access to capital for businesses, that strategy of growing jobs as an alternative to the people who have been laid off, that is going to be the answer.

I am proud to be part of this Congress. I am proud to be ready to answer President Obama's charge that he left us the other night. And I am proud to be part of the 30-Something Group that over the course of the next weeks and months is going to challenge the country and challenge this Congress to come together and provide solutions for those very people.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman. I will take the opportunity to wrap up.

We have, over the last two election cycles, heard the message from the American people. I think the first time around it was a referendum on the policies of the past, that they wanted to move in a new direction and they weren't happy with the way things had gone. But the second election, the one that we just came through several months ago, was about turning the country around and moving in a new direction, and that is what we have done. We can have disagreements. I am sure the gentleman from Texas is going to express some of that disagreement following us, which is great. That is what democracy is all about.

But I do want the American people to consider, Madam Speaker, that they have got what they voted for over the past two election cycles. They got a change in direction. They got new policies in this Congress, new policies at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. And we are all hoping for success. I am sure my friend from Texas is hoping for success as well. We need to turn the country around.

But I do want the American people to know that this Congress and the new administration are dedicated to moving this country forward, to implementing the changes that the American people voted for and asked us to engage on in their behalf.

So I would thank the gentleman from Connecticut and thank the gentleman from Ohio and welcome him to the 30-somethings. And I would say that any American who wants to learn more about Mr. BOCCIERI and the 30-Something Group can go to the House Web

site, which is speaker.gov/30something with the number 30, and learn all about our new member from Ohio and any other member of the 30-somethings they want.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. We are hopeful that, eventually that Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the veterans, will join us down here so that not only can the American people learn something about them on the Web site, but they can see them down here returned to their roots on the House floor as part of the 30-Something Working Group.

I thank the Speaker for giving us this time.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF GRAY PARSONS OF WILKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a fallen hometown hero from Wilkes County in North Carolina. Gray Parsons, a Millers Creek firefighter, fell in the line of duty earlier this month while responding to a fire near Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

Parsons was a dedicated member of the North Carolina Forest Service's Fire Attack Support Team, where he had served for the past 10 years. His funeral was a tribute to his many years of service to the local community as local fire departments from across Wilkes County came out in force to honor Gray Parsons' life.

Many of Parsons' friends and family have said that giving his life in the line of duty was just how he would have wanted to go. He was a committed firefighter, a skilled chain saw operator, and an amazing wizard when it came to repairing anything mechanical.

He was generous with his always-ready smile and his hands were continually working to help others. His coworkers knew Gray Parsons as a man who was dedicated to his work. In fact, the day he responded to his final fire in Wilkes County was his day off, but he had spent the day helping his partner at the Forest Service finish a project. That was just the kind of person he was, generous, hard-working and committed.

The Wilkes community hailed Parsons as a model local hero at his funeral. His life inspired everyone who knew him for his kindness and indefatigable pride in his work and those he served.

He was a true American hero, an everyday man, who took pride in the uniform he wore and who loved to serve his community and protect those in danger.

He will be profoundly missed and will leave a gaping hole in the Wilkes County community, Forest Service and local first responders. My thoughts and prayers are with the friends and family of this great man who gave his life in the service of others.

TREATING ALL CITIZENS EQUALLY

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

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I thank you for recognizing me this evening.

I was real pleased to see our 30-Something Group over there has expanded their folks, a lot of new faces, and new faces are good for Congress. It is good to see them, and even though my in my opinion they are a little misdirected, they certainly are entitled to their opinion. I am not here to debate them tonight. Maybe some other night I might be here for that purpose.

Tonight I am here because I have been raising and talking about an issue here in the last couple of weeks, probably now going on a month, about a change in the tax law that I proposed in the form of a bill that I introduced here to instigate the "Rangel Rule," which would allow ordinary citizens to be treated as nicely as CHARLIE RANGEL, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, who by his own admission on the floor of this House failed to pay taxes for a period of quite a long time, something like 10 years or better. But he did catch up on those taxes when he finally realized kind of, whoops, I messed up for about 10 years, and maybe I ought to pay these taxes. It may have been a longer period of time than that. I don't know. It is not really relevant to the issue. The issue is that he was not assessed any penalties or interest by the IRS.

I really have a hard time figuring that out, because I have talked to a lot of people back home in Texas who have like not filed their taxes on April 15th, but have gotten an extension, and they ended up filing like on August 15th or October 15th, which is not a real long delay, nothing to compare with like 10 years or 20 years or whatever the period was. But they all got assessed penalties and interest by the IRS, and we really don't like to think that just because somebody happens to be the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee that they should be treated any differently than, say, those folks back there that I talked to in Texas or the folks that have contacted me from all over the country on this issue.

So I have been raising that issue, and in all fairness tonight I want to be fair to Chairman RANGEL, because he is a man that, of course, this House highly respects. There are other issues that have to do with Mr. RANGEL. We may go into some of those tonight. But in all fairness to the chairman, maybe I should have expanded this rule a little bit, because there are others who have issues that need to be dealt with, at least talked about.

You know, the current Secretary of the Treasury, Tim Geithner, I guess he had some issues that he had with taxes too. His were very confusing to me, be-

cause the other day, I couldn't find the board tonight, but we had a picture of a letter that a company sent, a fairly sizable check around \$30,000-plus that was sent to Mr. Geithner, telling him here was his money he was supposed to pay his taxes with, and he was signing, by the obligation of this form, he was obligating himself to pay his Social Security and Medicare taxes.

□ 1915

And that he, by the signing of this document said, "I sure will. I promise you. I give you my word, that I will pay these taxes." And then, whoops, he just kind of let it slip his mind for about 4 years. And, in fact, it had completely slipped his mind until he became the subject of discussion in the United States Senate about whether or not he had a clear conscience to serve as the Treasury Secretary of the United States. At that point in time, he realized that, "Uh-oh, I believe I forgot something. I believe I forgot to pay my taxes for 2001 and 2002 and 2003 and 2004 and maybe some more." And so he rushed in and he paid those taxes.

Now, he didn't pay them all because he was slick enough or smart enough or maybe good lawyer, if he's lawyer, enough to know that the statute of limitations had run on 2 years of these taxes he was supposed to pay. And so I think he relied upon that statute to prevent him from having to pay that amount of money. But he, like Chairman RANGEL, he did some hustling and some catching up, and he caught up and he paid his taxes.

Now, you know, it's real upsetting to the IRS when people don't pay their income taxes. They get real upset about it. But my experience of being a lawyer and a judge for, well, going on 30-something years is that they get particularly irritated when you don't pay the Social Security and Medicare taxes you're required to pay, because they kind of feel like that's a whole lot bigger crime than slipping up and miscalculating on your income tax.

And they get downright serious about that. I've seen them padlock people's businesses over failing to pay those taxes. I have a good friend that used to run a place called Big G's in Round Rock, and he got padlocked all the time back in the '70s when I represented him. And he always got slapped with heavy penalties and heavy interest.

But Mr. Geithner, Secretary Geithner, he finally paid some of those taxes, and he paid some taxes, some interest. But once again, just like Chairman RANGEL, he wasn't assessed any penalties for intentionally not paying his taxes. And I say "intentionally" only by the state of the evidence that has been presented and the fact that he signed a document addressed to the IRS in which he pledged to them that he knew that the check they had sent him was for taxes and he knew he was obligated to pay those things.