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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. McINTYRE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 10, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE McINTYRE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS ARE ON THE SIDE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the American people are hurting. Congress was right to take action to get this economy moving, but higher taxes and massive Federal spending is not the cure for what ails this economy. The American people know that, too. They know we cannot tax and spend and bail our way back to a growing economy.

Raising taxes during a recession on almost every American is a prescrip-

tion for economic decline. The stock market and other indicators are showing that.

More than half of the Americans paying higher taxes under the Democrat plan are small business owners filing as individuals. Raising taxes on small businesses where a majority of Americans go to work every day will not put American families back to work. Raising utility rates on every household in America will place an undue burden on families struggling to make ends meet. Cutting deductions for charitable giving will harm higher education, scientific research, and religious organizations struggling to do good in our society.

Democrats are on the side of more government and more taxes. House Republicans are on the side of the American people. And let me talk just a minute about that so-called stimulus bill which passed here a couple of weeks ago.

We were told that the stimulus bill had to be passed, had to be passed immediately because it was going to create 3 to 4 million new jobs in this country. Now, some of us were skeptical about that from the very beginning, but we want to make sure that what is promised is kept.

Now, I come from the State of North Carolina, Mr. Speaker, as you do. The State's motto in North Carolina is "To Be Rather Than to Seem." I think it is a good motto for all of us to live by. And let me give an example of how the stimulus package is a package "to seem" rather than "to be."

Here's a Democrat stimulus myth in the State of Montana. A press release from Senators BAUCUS and TESTER claimed that \$1.3 million in stimulus money would create 40 new jobs for the Flathead City County Health Department; sounds great, sounds like a good excuse for voting for a waste of money. But here's the reality; the money will simply provide another year of funding

for the Department's community health center, which already has 10 full-time positions. The community health center plans to add only two more jobs—two, not 40. We need to be dealing with what is rather than what the Democrat majority and the President want the American people to believe.

Let me say again, the budget, the stimulus, spend too much money. They tax too much—the largest tax increase in history. They borrow too much money—the highest level of borrowing ever. This is not the way to get our economy back on track. The Democrats are going in the wrong direction.

House Republicans understand that the American people are hurting. We had an alternative plan that created twice as many jobs for half the cost, but it was summarily dismissed.

Republicans aren't saying "no" to everything, we're presenting better alternatives, but the Democrat majority and the President want you to believe that all we're saying is no. That's not right. We're "being" rather than "seeming."

BETTER CHOICES FOR AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to my good friend from North Carolina with her interpretation.

You know, it's interesting. My Republican friends simply had no solution other than to gut the infrastructure investments that are so critical, the important health care initiatives, and replace them with more tax cuts, most of which would not meet the needs of people who need help the most.

I will tell you, I invite people to look at what we did. Indeed, the \$6 billion that is flowing to my State of Oregon

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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over the next 2 years has made a critical difference to support State services, to be able to invest in cleaning up the environment, to save and create jobs. I've posted a guide on my Web site to each and every one of those provisions—62 pages in all—where people can track for themselves. There are not, for example, tax increases for most Americans. My friend from North Carolina is just flat wrong. If she would research the bill that we approved here on the floor, she would find that in fact 95 percent of the people get tax cuts. Nobody is having tax increases over the next couple of years, even the very wealthy. And it's what, in fact, America has asked for.

I would suggest that it's time for us to step back from some of this goofy back and forth because I think there are a wide range of areas that we can agree that reform needs to be made.

I like what I heard from President Obama on the campaign trail and what I heard from the rostrum here when the President addressed his first joint session of Congress. There are a number of areas of health, energy, tax, and agriculture that actually can bring people together. Now is not the time for commissions and study groups or for mindless political bickering; now is the time to actually do what we know we can accomplish.

There are multiple areas where it isn't so much picking low-hanging fruit, it's actually picking that fruit up off the ground. We need to articulate a vision of how we're going to accomplish that. For example, in the area of agriculture, it's not just the problem in the past that rich sugar farmers have had more clout than poor hungry children. There are ways in reforming agriculture that we can put more money in the pocket of more ranchers and farmers and less into the pockets of the wealthy few who don't need it.

We can implement reforms to help change the bureaucracy with things like crop insurance reform, that independent observers have identified for years, but Congress hasn't had the will to follow through on fixing it. We can pay farmers and ranchers to protect the environment, not to damage it. We can concentrate on strengthening American agriculture and producing more healthy food rather than a few commodities, frankly, that the world has enough of.

In the area of health, the research is in. There are a number of communities across the country that are low cost, high performing where people live longer and get sick less often. In fact, we see some of the areas of the country where we are spending the most government money in Medicare actually is not helping people. Rather, many of those areas actually have worse results because people get unnecessary tests and procedures, not concentrating on things that will make them healthy. We can reward the low-cost, high-performing areas while we send signals to those that are spending lots of money

and not performing very well. Let's send the message there's a bipartisan consensus that we're going to fix that.

In the area of transportation, there is a vast coalition that has emerged around the country that wants to help the Federal Government get more money and streamline the Federal partnership. They are willing to work with us so that there are more choices, higher standards, and sustainable revenue. The Chamber of Commerce, organized labor, environmentalists, transit advocate bicyclists, all combine in an approach to make America's transportation partnership with State and local governments better and stronger.

We don't need to rely on the same old patterns. We can, in this Congress, take action that unite people all across the spectrum all across the country. We've got a President who can use the bully pulpit. I strongly urge that we work with him for a new vision, more value, better choices for Americans, and to do it now.

2009 OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the omnibus spending bill is not an example of change here in Congress and continues the Democrat's spending spree in the first 2 months of the 111th Congress. Even a record \$1.4 trillion budget deficit has not stopped Congress' culture of spending on special projects. While families and business owners are cutting back and bringing their budgets under control, Congress, under Democrat leadership, is spending and earmarking as if nothing has changed.

Here are a few highlights of the bill that is being debated in the Senate right now. There is an 8 percent discretionary spending hike. After passing an unprecedented massive spending bill that is the largest this country has ever seen, the Democrat leadership ushered through this House an omnibus bill that will give a staggering 80 percent increase to discretionary programs when coupled with a \$1 trillion stimulus package. This bill will contribute to a permanent \$2,000 per household tax hike for every household. It contains 9,300 special funding requests, projects that cost nearly \$13 billion. Now, the argument is made that Members have a right to make these special district funding requests, but I, for one, would gladly place a moratorium on all district funding requests until the economy is corrected.

Let me say again, this omnibus spending bill increases discretionary spending by 8 percent when less than 3 weeks ago Congress and the President, under Democratic leadership, ran through a massive stimulus package where the same discretionary programs received much of the unprecedented \$1.1 trillion in government spending.

Now, counting those funds, this omnibus spending bill will institute an 80

percent spending increase for those programs in 2009 from \$378 billion to \$680 billion. This spending increase by the Democratic Party is unprecedented in American history.

The domestic spending programs which the omnibus focuses on have not been cut in the past decade; in fact, they have only increased from 2001 through 2008. These programs grew 23 percent faster than inflation, including increases for education at 35 percent, health research at 37 percent, and veterans benefits at 54 percent. It is apparent that during these fiscally challenging times these programs could have survived without some of these large increases.

Regrettably, the omnibus bill does not offset this new spending. It does not attempt to cut spending or institute reductions in inefficient or duplicate or worthless government programs. And let me just give you further example, Mr. Speaker, where some savings could be made; \$55 billion in annual program overpayments, \$60 billion for corporate welfare, \$123 billion for programs for which government auditors can find no evidence of success; \$140 billion in potential budget savings identified in the CBO Budget Options document.

Program duplication: There are 342 economic development programs; 134 programs serving the disabled, they're all duplicate; 130 programs serving at-risk youth, these are duplicate; and there's 90 duplicate early childhood development programs.

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While some of these programs may be important, I find it hard to believe that each of the 342 economic development programs paid for by the American taxpayer, each and every one is vital to the American people. This has been identified, all these programs that duplicate.

Unfortunately, taxpayers should not expect change in the future. The administration and the Democrat party have already signed into law a large expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, putting middle class children who already have private health insurance on taxpayer-funded, government-run health care programs; weakened the 1996 welfare reforms in the \$1.1 trillion stimulus package; and instituted permanent government growth in the areas of education, infrastructure and Medicaid.

Last year, President Bush signed an executive order stating that Federal agencies must ignore earmarks that appear in nonbinding conference reports and instead implement only those in the bill text itself. That executive order currently remains in effect. President Obama, who campaigned on ending politics as usual in Washington, could strike a blow to the earmark culture in Congress by simply leaving this executive order in place. Doing so would eliminate all earmarks that Congress has not incorporated by reference