

and to help highlight the economic challenges that we face around our Nation, but especially in southeast Michigan. I want to thank you, Jay Leno. We in Metro Detroit welcome you, and you have our sincere thanks.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

(Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address our current economic crisis and the careful and responsible investments in America that President Obama and this Congress have made. The Federal Reserve has predicted that without action, our economy will contract by \$2 trillion over the next 2 years. With a recession that has persisted since December of 2007, we cannot expect an overnight cure. However we are cushioning the fall.

There was no one cause for the economic collapse. Instead, we have taken a number of positive steps in various areas to address the various facets of this economic decline. The second half of the TARP funding will help stabilize the financial sector. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will create millions of jobs, including 9,300 in my district. The Help Families Save Their Homes Act will keep millions of honest, hardworking Americans from foreclosure and help stabilize the housing values of their neighbors not currently in crisis. The Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Act the House recently passed adds crucial investments in public safety, energy efficiency, clean water and mass transit.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the fact that this Congress has joined with the President in responding to the financial crisis.

THE TRUTH WILL GET YOU SUED

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, they say the truth will set you free. Well, maybe not. Now the truth may get you sued. Here is why.

The Staples Company fired an employee for lying on his expense account, and then sent a warning e-mail to all other employees on this action. The former employee sued, saying the company's actions were "malicious and harmful." A Federal court in Massachusetts ruled with the employee, even though the statements were true.

Mr. Speaker, it has long been the law in this country that libel and slander only occur when the statement is false and malicious. But not anymore. So what is going to happen when the New York Times has a headline tomorrow morning saying "Bernie Madoff, Worst Thief in American History, Goes to Jail?" Even though that statement

might be true, while old Bernie is in the big house, he may decide to sue, saying his reputation is ruined.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution protects free speech and a free press. The Federal courts in Massachusetts were wrong to say that truthful speech is unlawful if it offends somebody or hurts their little feelings.

And that's just the way it is.

DISPELLING A HEALTH CARE MYTH

(Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as we begin in this Congress a potentially transformational debate on the future of health care, I think it is time that we start dispelling some of the myths about American health care. So let's start with this one.

If I told you that the country which spent the most money on health care also ranked among the highest in wait times for care, opponents of health care reform would scream, "Well, that is what you get with socialized medicine." The sad fact is that I'm describing our own health care system. A recent study published in Business Week showed that amongst the six top industrialized nations, the U.S. ranked fifth in medical wait times. We ranked behind New Zealand, Britain, Germany and Australia. In addition, 26 percent of Americans reported going to the ER for treatment because they couldn't get in to see their doctor, and ER wait times for heart attack patients has nearly doubled in the last 5 years.

So when you hear these anecdotes about people waiting for care in other countries that guarantee health care, know the facts. Americans wait longer.

□ 1015

CONGRESS SPENDING \$1 BILLION AN HOUR

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, folks in America ought to be outraged. They have a right to know that Congress has spent roughly \$1 billion an hour since the new President took office.

Recently, Michael Allen of Politico wrote about a speech in the other body. He described a crafty Senator's efforts to express his deep concern that the Nation is spending way too much money, and America can't afford this free-for-all spending Congress.

In just 50 days, the Congress voted to spend about \$1.2 trillion between the stimulus and the omnibus. That amounts to \$24 billion a day, or about a billion dollars an hour, most of it borrowed money.

Congress spending \$1 billion an hour? Pew.

HONORING CORPORAL BRIAN M. CONNELLY

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Corporal Brian M. Connelly, who was killed in Iraq on February 26 when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb. Corporal Connelly was a combat engineer and was in the vehicle's gunning position at the time of the attack.

He lived in Union Beach, New Jersey, where he had recently married Kara Connelly. His job in Iraq as an engineer involved protecting the way for other soldiers. He lost his life essentially helping his comrades in arms.

His family and friends remember him as a man who had a great sense of humor and loved fishing and boating and being out on the water.

I attended the memorial service of Corporal Connelly in Keyport this past weekend to pay my respects to the corporal and his family and friends.

Too often we are tragically reminded of the human costs this war has placed on our country's citizens. His family kept a "Bring Our Troops Home" banner above their home, reinforcing their hopes that Brian would return home safely as soon as possible.

Corporal Connelly was an American hero. He was my constituent, and I am proud to pay tribute to him in our Capitol today.

DIFFICULT TIMES IN AMERICA

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, during these difficult times, families and small businesses across the land are making hard choices to make ends meet. Sacrifices are being made everywhere, except in Washington, D.C.

While Americans are finding ways to cut back, the Democrat Congress and our President have gone on an unprecedented spending binge, bailout after bailout, a \$1 trillion stimulus bill. Yesterday, the President signed an omnibus spending bill with an 8 percent increase in spending and 9,000 earmarks. And to make matters worse, the administration has proposed a massive Federal budget that spends too much, borrows too much and taxes too much, and the American people know it. Even a distinguished colleague on the Budget Committee said recently: "This is not an easy budget to market, for sure."

Well, I say respectfully to my colleagues, the problem with the President's budget is not marketing, it is content. The American people want Congress to do what they are doing, make sacrifices, be there for our neighbors and embrace fiscal discipline and responsible plans for growth; not a Federal budget that spends too much, taxes too much and borrows too much.

SPEND, BORROW, AND TAX TOO MUCH

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, in the land of spend too much, borrow too much and tax too much, and in the age of the trillion-dollar deficits, the American taxpayers deserve to know where their hard-earned money is being spent.

After the \$1.63 trillion spent in the stimulus and TARP bills, we need a system for transparency and accountability. That is why I have introduced the TARP and Stimulus Reporting and Waste Prevention Act. This bill requires complete disclosure of the TARP and stimulus spending, and it goes further than the President's "Recovery.gov." It establishes a waste, fraud and abuse hotline that provides protection to all whistleblowers, including Federal employees.

The bill will promote accountability policies for government agencies and companies that benefit from the bailout in the stimulus so that taxpayers know that their money is not going to big bonuses and lavish resorts.

We owe it to the taxpayers to ensure that these funds are being used for designated purposes. It is their money, and they deserve to know.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1262, WATER QUALITY INVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 235 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 235

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1262) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for State water pollution control revolving funds, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee

amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. House Resolutions 218, 219, and 229 are laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 235 provides for a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 1262, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009. The rules makes in order 10 amendments, including all five of the Republicans' amendments considered for consideration.

Among the many challenges confronting us, none could be more elemental than protecting our water. Today, the nationwide system of wastewater infrastructure includes 16,000 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants, 100,000 major pumping stations, 600,000 miles of sanitary sewers, and 200,000 miles of storm sewers. It is estimated that we have already invested over \$250 billion on the construction and maintenance of this system. However, we are now in danger of losing that investment, if we do not act to maintain and improve the system.

The vast majority of the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 is made up of five bills that the House considered and passed during the 110th Congress, four of which were not addressed by the

Senate. With any luck, our colleagues in the other body will be able to address these important issues this Congress.

The need for serious investment in our infrastructure is clear. In 2002, the EPA estimated that there will be a \$534 billion gap between spending and needs for water and wastewater infrastructure in 2019. The EPA's Clean Watersheds Needs Survey of 2004 Report to Congress documented America's wastewater infrastructure needs at more than \$202 billion, and these are numbers from several years ago.

The Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 authorizes \$13.8 billion in Federal grants over 5 years to capitalize clean water State revolving loan funds that provide grants and low-interest loans to communities for water and wastewater infrastructure. These funds are critical to so many communities in the district that I represent. During December and January, it seemed like every local official that I met with had a water or wastewater infrastructure project that was shovel-ready and in dire need of stimulus funds. The funding authorized by this bill will help to address that backlog of need.

H.R. 1262 also authorizes \$1.8 billion over the next 5 years for Sewer Overflow Control Grants programs. Addressing and eliminating combined sewer overflows is one of the biggest financial challenges facing communities in my district and all over the country.

Communities in the Northeastern United States tend to have old and deteriorating sewer systems. Old clay pipes with leaking joints and other weaknesses in the system allow outside water to infiltrate into the system. During heavy storms or spring snowmelt, this infiltration causes the system to overflow and discharge water and sewage into local rivers.

A number of county and municipal water systems in my district are facing multi-million dollar projects to prevent their systems from overflowing into the Mohawk River that runs from west to east across upstate New York and feeds into the Hudson River. Many of these communities have small populations, incapable of simply passing the cost of these projects on to ratepayers.

H.R. 1262 authorizes extended repayment periods of up to 30 years for the SRF loans to help lessen the burden on local ratepayers.

To further assist rural or small communities like these, the legislation also authorizes technical assistance to help them meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act and to assist them to gaining access to financing wastewater infrastructure. In the upstate New York district that I represent, I often hear from rural communities about the difficulties they have in finding and applying for grant and loan opportunities.

The most reliable way to prevent human illness from waterborne diseases and pathogens is to eliminate human exposure in discharged sewage.