

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the gentleman is aware, as all of us are, about the tremendous job losses that we have experienced in America of late, 650,000 plus jobs just last month.

There is an announcement yesterday that we all read about, that the card check bill was introduced. Along with that introduction, there was a new nonpartisan study that was published that predicts that passage of card check legislation will result in the immediate loss of 600,000 jobs.

So I would ask the gentleman, number one, when he expects to bring that card check bill to the floor, and if, in the interim, if he is considering that if the Senate is to act, and we are to act in these economic times, why would we be doing that if we know, through nonpartisan studies issued, that it's a job killer? Why would we be bringing that to the floor?

I yield further to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. First of all, let me respond. We don't know that. Somebody reported that. We don't know that at all and, very frankly, we don't accept that figure. We don't accept the figure that we will, in fact, lose jobs.

We on this side of the aisle feel very strongly that the working men and women in this country have the right under law to organize and to bargain collectively for wages and benefits and working conditions. We think that is inherent in the rights, in the free market.

Very frankly, I would tell my friend that I have traveled, as he has, in many parts of the world, and rarely have I seen a successful democracy that didn't have a free trade union movement. So we feel very strongly about that. We feel very strongly about the right to organize, and that means that it is the employee's choice of how to organize.

Now, having said all that, let me also say that we have observed that there has been, in many ways, a relationship between the decline in union membership and a decline in the buying power of the American worker.

And the greatest disparity between what average workers make and what the bosses make now exist in our country to a greater extent than any other place in the world. We think that's a problem.

Consumerism is what drives this economy. Consumerism is down, incomes have been frozen, and you see, in my opinion, some of that result.

I don't, by any stretch of the imagination, want to say that the reason that we are in the decline that we are in today, and facing the challenge that we are today, is a direct result of the fact that union membership is down.

But, certainly, I believe that one of the results is the reduction in the buying power of average Americans in this country.

Now, having said that, we passed this bill. We passed it pretty handily. We

passed it in the last Congress, and it's our expectation that the Senate is going to be dealing with this legislation. They have not yet considered it; and it is my belief that we want to see whether they can pass it. We believe they can.

□ 1445

We are going to be interested in what action they take.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman.

For the record, any democracy has also in it the elections that afford one the right to a private or secret ballot, which this bill completely takes away from the workers of this country.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CANTOR. Not yet, Mr. Speaker. I would say again that our economy is not just built on consumerism, our economy is built on investments and, frankly, the rebuilding of this economy will take place with job creation. And if we know that card check is a job-killer, folks across this country have got to be scratching their heads right now, wondering what in the world is Washington doing passing a piece of legislation that has been proven to kill jobs, not promote jobs.

Mr. HOYER. Let me say that, as I said before, we don't believe it's a job-killer, number one. But, number two, the gentleman and I have a disagreement factually as to what the bill does. We don't believe this kills the right of the employees to have a free election at all. Period.

We believe in fact the employee has that choice. The employee has the absolute right to respond, "No, I don't want to sign your card. Let's have an election. And I will sign it for that purpose, and that purpose only, to give you the 30 percent you need to get the election."

I think I'm right on 30 percent. But, in any event, we believe this is the employees' choice of how they want to organize, not the employer's choice.

So we are not and did not by passage of this legislation take away from the employees the right to have an election if they so choose.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman.

One remaining question, Mr. Speaker. Can the gentleman inform us as to whether the public lands bill will be brought back up under a rule in this House.

Mr. HOYER. We think the public lands bill that failed just by two votes yesterday is a very good bill. Overwhelming support. Essentially two-thirds of this House supported it. Two-thirds of the Senate supported it. Actually, I think it was probably even more than that.

In any event, we believe that bill is a very, very good bill. We are hopeful that a number of your members will conclude that maybe they should have voted for it. We will see on that.

So the answer to your question is that we may bring it up either by rule or by suspension, but we want to see

this bill pass. Having said that, let me say that Leader REID, the senior leader of the Senate, has indicated that he is going to file for cloture on that bill in the Senate tomorrow. So they may well move on it as well.

There are a number of options for us to pursue. As you will not be surprised, we are going to pursue the one we think is most successful.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2009

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning-hour debate.

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

There was no objection.

TRACKING THE TARP FUNDS

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Yesterday, our Domestic Policy Subcommittee held a hearing about how the Treasury Department has accounted for TARP funds. The taxpayers of the United States have already paid \$700 billion of their tax money into this bailout program. We found out that the Department of Treasury doesn't track the funds after they give them to the banks and, as a result, we have seen that, of these funds that were supposed to go to help the U.S. economy, \$8 billion has gone through Citigroup to Dubai; \$7 billion through Bank of America to China; \$1 billion through JPMorgan Chase to India.

I want the American taxpayers to think about that because with all the pressing needs we have here with the people who are starved for credit—businesses are dying because they can't get loans from banks—banks are taking our tax dollars and they're shipping them abroad.

It's time that we started to take care of things here at home. It's time that we started to ask the Treasury Department to keep track of these TARP funds and make sure that they're intended for the purpose that the American people want them to be spent for, and that is revive our American economy.

TRIBUTE TO LEE ANNENBERG

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to share with my colleagues the news of the passing earlier this morning of a very

dear family friend and one of our Nation's greatest citizens, Mrs. Walter Annenberg.

Lee Annenberg was an extraordinary person who lived every day with elegance, generosity, and a dedication to improving the quality of life of her fellow man. Members of this institution will recall countless instances of a strong commitment to the United States House of Representatives and both Houses of Congress.

She in fact made it possible for us to, for the first time since the founding of our country, convene on the anniversary of September 11, when we all went to Federal Hall in New York. She underwrote the bipartisan civility retreat that we held. Several years ago, the California congressional delegation came together at her beautiful home, Sunnylands, in Rancho Mirage, California, to hold the first ever bipartisan California congressional delegation retreat.

Mr. Speaker, no two people have been more personally committed to public service, education, and philanthropy than Lee and Walter Annenberg.

BUILDING TO FIX THE ECONOMY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important as we begin to build the building blocks of fixing this economy that maybe we should give a greater understanding of what the stimulus dollars are to be utilized for.

There are Congresspersons and Senators and Governors and State legislators and others, but the President's intent, the administration's intent is these dollars are to be in the hands of taxpayers.

The good news for those who have been criticizing is the Dow went up this week, and the Governors of the Nation were in Washington to get their instructions on how to make sure that these grants and these moneys are transparent, to make sure that grants are competitive and, yes, that the dollars are in the hands of small businesses; of primary and secondary schools; of hospitals; of municipal governments; of putting shovel in the ground, if you will, fixing utilities, fixing roads.

That should be the message and the work of those of us who serve in the United States Congress. It's my intent to be at home educating those of my constituents on how to use this money effectively.

The only way that they will be successful is if they can count jobs one at a time. That's what the President wants. That's what we are doing. And those who are criticizing need to look at the people who are now working.

CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF THE CHINESE

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, 5 days ago, a U.S. naval vessel was traveling in international waters 70 miles off the coast of China when it was harassed by a Chinese frigate that went dangerously across its bow. Shortly thereafter, it was buzzed by a Chinese maritime aircraft and a demand was given for that vessel to leave international waters or suffer the consequences. When it tried to do so, there was an attempt made to stop it, and then five Chinese vessels harassed it.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we passed a resolution condemning Chinese actions for harassment for the people of Tibet. I filed a resolution that would condemn these actions and make sure that we understand the message the Chinese government was sending to us through these actions was very clear. So far, I question whether we have sent a response that has equal clarity.

I hope that the Members of this House will join in this resolution and let those individuals on that vessel know that we are standing behind them in condemning these actions that were taken by the Chinese government.

THE DEMOCRAT BUDGET

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

Ms. FOXX. The Democrat budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much. Contrary to what Democrats say on this floor all the time, the government doesn't invest. It spends. It spends money it takes from American citizens, to whom the money belongs.

Here's a look at the increase in government spending the Democrats want to impose on the backs of American families. The budget increases spending to \$3.9 trillion in 2009, or 27 percent of GDP, the highest level since World War II. This is simply too much spending and will lead to higher taxes, slower economic growth, and fewer jobs for middle-class families.

Despite their claims, the Democrats' budget promises historically high deficits stretching out to 2019, when the budget deficit will stand at \$712 billion. The Democrats' budget would produce a \$1.75 trillion deficit, or 12.3 percent of GDP in 2009. This deficit level is more than three times the previous record deficits.

Over the first fifty days of the new Administration, Democrats have spent approximately \$1 billion an hour, most of it with borrowed money.

Beginning in 2012, and every year thereafter, the government will spend more than \$1 billion a day in net interest.

Mr. Speaker, American families and small businesses cannot afford all of this govern-

ment spending and the Democrats need to show some fiscal responsibility, just as President Obama promised.

Where is the responsibility and accountability so often mentioned but never embraced by President Obama?

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the phones in my offices have been ringing off the wall today because people are very upset that we just passed the omnibus spending bill for \$410 billion that has between 8,000 and 9,000 pork barrel projects in it.

The people of this country can hardly believe the way we are spending money up here. They all want to see the economy turn around, but I think they realize that the way to turn the economy around is by instilling enthusiasm and confidence in the American people by cutting taxes across the board, including taxes for businesses, such as the capital gains tax.

Mr. Speaker, so far, we passed a TARP bill for \$700 billion, and that TARP bill that was supposed to help get the economy moving and help the financial institutions—we found that \$8 billion of that was loaned by Citigroup to Dubai public sector entities; \$1 billion was invested by JPMorgan in India; \$7 billion was invested by Bank of America in the China Construction Bank Corporation.

□ 1500

And the American people are wondering why the \$700 billion that their representatives voted for is being used to help other countries. That money was supposed to help our economy.

In addition to that, we spent \$14 billion for the auto bailout, almost \$1 trillion when you add in interest for the stimulus bill and the omnibus bill I just talked about. And the budget is coming up, and it is going to cost about \$3.9 trillion, of which \$635 billion is for a new socialized medicine health program. But that is not the end of it.

The stimulus package that we passed, almost \$1 trillion, was supposed to really help get the economy moving, and now we hear that there probably is