

THE RECESSION IS REAL

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the recession is real.

In my home State of North Carolina, we have 100 counties. All of them experienced an increase in unemployment during the month of January. Seventy-two of the 100 counties had a 10 percent or higher rate of unemployment. Across my district, 23 counties, we now have an average unemployment rate of 11.2 percent. The highest county is 15.6 percent. That is unacceptable.

These numbers are staggering, and people are hurting. We must remember, Mr. Speaker, that we have met these challenges before, and we will meet this challenge now. North Carolina will benefit from about \$6 billion as part of the stimulus package, which will create or save 105,000 much-needed jobs.

I am further encouraged by the efforts to ease the credit squeeze afflicting small businesses by buying up to \$15 billion of securities that are linked to small business. This is an important step, Mr. Speaker, in encouraging lenders to make more money available to entrepreneurs and small businesses.

I encourage the President to continue with his economic recovery.

GYRATION IN THE STOCK MARKET

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, as you can see here in this graph, what the President called gyrations of the stock market, in February of 2008, a year ago, the Dow Jones Industrial Average sat at just 13,000 points.

Just before Congress passed the so-called rebate check package worth \$168 billion of borrowed money, Speaker PELOSI said, "This package gets money into the hands of Americans struggling to make ends meet . . . and stimulates our slowing economy."

Yet since then, the market has lost nearly half its value. That's trillions of dollars in wealth wiped out in 1 year from retirement accounts and the savings of hardworking families across America.

The rebate package a year ago was just the first in many attempts to borrow and spend our way out of this situation. Here we have the \$300 billion housing bailout, \$200 billion for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, \$700 billion in TARP funds. Look at the drop after that: \$14 billion, auto bailout; \$787 billion, stimulus, before the market dropped.

Our actions have economic consequences.

WE'VE GOT TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF THIS NATION

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friends on the other side of the aisle. The problem is they forget, and they're kind of revising history. It's the Republican President and a Republican Congress that drove this country into the ditch financially and economically, and what we've got to do is change the course of this Nation.

That's what the President is undertaking to do, by providing small business with tax credits, with assistance as to funding of their particular projects, because that's where the real engine of our economy is—in small businesses.

So, last week, the President announced various initiatives to assist small business to make credit available to them for their various projects, to purchase their loans so that they could go forward, so small banks could make loans to small businesses.

This President is making available to 95 percent of us tax credits. So for 95 percent of the American public, they will see their taxes go down.

So my friends on the other side of the aisle forget the history that brought us here. The Republican administration, by giving tax cuts to the wealthiest while prosecuting a war, put us in a very difficult position, but we will get it out by changing the direction of this Nation.

THRUST FOR POWER

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, political liberty is founded on economic liberty, and history teaches that liberties are attacked during a crisis. The White House Chief of Staff has said never pass up an opportunity inside a crisis.

Secretary Geithner wants Congress to give the executive branch authority to seize any financial institution in America. It is an awesome power that will be quickly abused after just one Federal Reserve Board vote among all Presidential appointees. No judge would rule. No vote of the Congress would happen. This is a historic lunge for power.

Americans, remember, it was government agencies, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, that caused this crisis. I am from Chicago, and I know about government abuse and corruption.

We should reject Geithner's opportunistic thrust for control or rue this Congress when it gave only one branch of this government such a corruptible economic authority.

WE NEED ALL HANDS ON DECK IN THESE SERIOUS ECONOMIC TIMES

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, we are in very serious economic times. Unprecedented challenges confront this

country. It is a time when we need all hands on deck.

Unfortunately, all we've heard from the other side of the aisle is hyperbole: we're spending too much, we're not doing this, we're not doing that. We need ideas.

The best in America has always come because of a conflict of ideas, because of ideas converging and taking the best and assimilating them into policies that benefit all Americans. We're not getting the help we need from our Republican colleagues. Again, we need all hands on deck.

Just this Sunday, one of the Republican Members was on a national talk show and said our faith in God is going to get us through this. Well, maybe it will, but faith in God, as important as it is, is not an economic policy.

We need the best that America has to offer from all sides of America. I invite my Republican colleagues to participate in this debate and help get us out of this economic challenge.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 1111

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

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, each year there are two things that can get in the way of thousands of visitors seeking the picturesque vistas of Montana and all that it has to offer: high energy prices that make the trip too expensive and a blanket of smoke from out-of-control wildfires.

I've introduced legislation that brings some Montana common sense to those problems by literally harnessing the energy of a forest fire to generate electricity.

You see, nature wants to let the fires burn in order to preserve healthy forests, while man continues to try and put them out. When we interfere with nature, we wind up with overgrown forests that burn hotter and longer, wasting a potential renewable energy source. My bill restores these forests to a more natural and healthy density, while using the excess wood to create biomass energy.

Join me in cosponsoring H.R. 1111 to reduce the cost of wildfires and the cost of energy.

□ 1215

HEALTH CARE MYTH: HEALTH REFORM WILL LIMIT PATIENT CHOICE

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Another health care myth—if we reform our health care system, patients will lose choice. Again, this is simply not true. First, it begs the question: What choice do patients have today?

In America, we have choice, but too often it lies not with the doctor or patient, but with the insurance company.

Patients are denied physician-prescribed treatment, doctors are denied reimbursement for necessary care, and increasingly restrictive networks of coverage mean restrictive choice for patients.

A survey of the leading proposals for reform shows that no one is talking about limiting patient choice. In fact, a publicly sponsored plan, with a potential network of millions of Americans, would likely have one of the most robust networks of providers in the system, since doctors and hospitals would want and need to have access to this large pool of patients.

A public plan itself increases patient choice by allowing families to decide whether they want to continue with their private insurance plan or move to a publicly sponsored plan that might provide better coverage due to lower administrative and profit costs.

Health care reform limiting patient choice? It's just another myth about our health care system.

STOP JOB-KILLING TAX INCREASES

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, we will not recover from this recession unless small business leads the way by growing jobs. A small business owner from my district, Paul Robinson of Sterling Critical Products in Bloomington, was just in Washington last week. The message he has for Congress is that we need to provide incentives and access to capital for small business—and we need to make sure that no job-killing tax increases are added to their burden.

The \$1.4 trillion tax increase that is on the table in the current budget proposal would drive a stake into the heart of our Nation's job creators. The proposal to raise taxes on asset creation by 33 percent would dry up badly needed capital and keep them from creating jobs.

My constituents are living within their means and they're cutting expenses. They expect Washington to do the same. But this budget spends too much, it taxes too much, and it borrows too much.

In these difficult times, we demand solutions that put people back to work. Let's reject these job-killing tax increases and start growing jobs now by supporting small business owners like Paul.

UNINSURED WEEK

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon the Congress to reform our health care system. It's important. Forty-six million Americans currently have no health care insurance, yet health care costs have risen dramatically in years.

Insurance premiums in California have risen at a rate more than twice the rate of inflation, eating up a larger and larger percentage of household incomes. With the recent economic downturn, far too many families are losing their employer-based coverage and unable to afford the cost of health care on their own.

Like it or not, we taxpayers are paying for the health care in some of the most expensive ways possible, through the emergency room, for those who are uninsured. Last year, hospitals in my district provided nearly \$200 million in uncompensated care. Clinics in our Central Valley alone have provided care for over 600,000 who have little insurance or none at all.

This system cannot and should not continue. The bottom line is we are paying for the uninsured today—the 46 million Americans who do not have insurance. We ought to do it in a better way.

Our citizens' health and our Nation's fiscal health depend on meaningful reform. Let's begin that effort.

IALOGUE WITH THE PRESIDENT

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Yesterday, Father Jenkins, the President of my alma mater, Notre Dame, explained his decision to give President Obama an honorary degree, in spite of his opposition to the culture of life expressed by that university and the Catholic Church. He explained it as an invitation to dialogue with the President. Let us hope so.

Let us hope there is a dialogue on the President's support for partial-birth abortion; on his opposition to the born-alive baby legislation; on his reversal of the Mexico City policy; on his support of Federal funding for embryonic stem cells where, denouncing it, he gave the back of the hand to Catholic moral teaching; and, in vitiating the Federal regulations guaranteeing the conscience clause, which is aimed at Catholic hospitals, doctors, and nurses.

Will this be an invitation to dialogue? Will the commencement address be an opportunity for the President to question his prior decisions? God only knows.

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK WITH A CALL FOR COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, this is Cover the Uninsured Week, March 22–29, and I call for enactment of comprehensive health care reform this year.

Reforming the Nation's health care to lower costs, improve quality, increase coverage, and preserve choice is

a top priority for Congress and the President. Our Nation's health care system, which costs more every year and leaves more than 45 million citizens uninsured, and millions more underinsured, is in bad need of reform. We simply can't afford to wait any longer to make the changes necessary to ensure greater access to quality health care.

The problem of the uninsured and its impact on the entire health care system continues to grow. The Federal Government estimates that over 45 million individuals lacked health insurance coverage of any kind during the last year, 2008. Approximately \$56 billion is in uncompensated care.

We need to change that.

PROTECT PROSPERITY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. My constituents are tired of Congress spending money they haven't made yet for programs they don't want. According to the CBO, total spending in 2009 is going to be over \$4 trillion. The price tag on the President's budget is over \$3.6 trillion. Our country can't afford this budget because it spends too much, it taxes too much, and it borrows too much money on our future.

The CBO predicts that this budget will push our deficit to 9.6 percent of GDP in 2010. That's historical. CBO predicts that this country will run historically high deficits for the next decade. The global demand for American debt will only continue if our economic policies are sound.

Although we don't know the limits of the debt market, this budget is going to push us into uncharted territory. As lawmakers, it is our duty to preserve and protect prosperity. If we pass this budget, we will be abusing the economic opportunity for our children and our grandchildren. What kind of protection is that?

BREAST CANCER PATIENT PROTECT ACT OF 2009

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

Ms. DELAURO. An estimated 184,000 cases of invasive breast cancer were diagnosed last year. I rise today in support of every breast cancer patient who has ever undergone a mastectomy and then been told by her insurance company that she has to leave the hospital in 24 hours or less before she has had time to recover.

I'm reintroducing the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act today. It's a bipartisan bill that overwhelmingly passed this House last year by a vote of 421–2. Simply, it ensures that after breast cancer surgery, a woman will have 48 hours to recuperate in the hospital, no matter which State she lives