

schools in Kentucky, Connecticut, Michigan and Ohio. And because of that, these kids are raising funds to build this World War I memorial for all that lived and died in this war.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we as a Nation honor all that fought in the four great wars in the last century. And it is a shame we haven't built a memorial to them. But I can tell you something, Mr. Speaker. America's school kids will not be denied because they are the grassroots campaign to build that memorial, and they are raising funds to do it.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more powerful than American school kids that have made up their minds, and they have made up their minds that America shall honor the war dead of World War I, the Frank Buckles and all of those four million-plus that served with him. And we're going to build this memorial whether the Federal bureaucrats like it or not.

And that's just the way it is.

SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN THE EFFORT

Terryville High School, Terryville, CT
 Bristol Eastern High School, CT
 Kingwood High School, Humble, TX
 Creekwood Middle School, Humble, TX
 Riverwood Middle School, Humble, TX
 Zeeland public schools, Michigan
 Buckeye public schools, Ohio
 University of Arkansas at Montecello
 Michigan State University ROTC Program
 Hudsonville Public Schools, Michigan

□ 1530

CELEBRATING THE 33-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, the covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States of America defines the unique relationship between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States, recognizing United States sovereignty but limiting, in some respects, applicability of Federal law. The commonwealth accordingly enjoys a greater degree of autonomy than most United States territories.

The covenant was negotiated over the course of 27 months, from December 1972 to February 1975, by the Marianas Political Status Commission, made up of representatives of the Northern Mariana Islands and a delegation representing the United States.

The proposed covenant was signed by negotiators on February 15, 1975, and unanimously approved by the legislature of the Mariana Islands District of the Pacific Islands on February 17, 1975.

On June 17, 1975, the covenant was submitted to Northern Mariana Islands

voters in a plebiscite. At the time, 95 percent of eligible residents had registered to vote, and of the 95 percent of all registered voters who cast ballots in the plebiscite, 78.8 percent voted to approve the covenant.

The covenant was subsequently approved by this House on July 21, 1975, and by the Senate on February 24, 1976.

On March 24, 1976, President Gerald Ford signed Public Law 94-241, enacting the covenant. Some provisions became effective on that date. Remaining provisions became effective on January 9, 1978, and November 4, 1986.

On January 9, 1978, the Northern Mariana Islands Government was established, and the first elected governor took office.

On November 4, 1976, qualified residents of the Northern Mariana Islands became United States citizens.

On May 8, 2008, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 110-229 and gave to the Northern Mariana Islands the seat in Congress that I presently have the privilege to occupy.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands mark the 33rd year of the date when the covenant took effect.

The 33 years of our political relationship, Mr. Speaker, has been beneficial to both the Northern Mariana Islands and to the United States, such that the political agreement continues to be celebrated by very proud citizens in that most western part of the United States. I join my people in their celebration and bring their joy to this Congress.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this joyful and historical day with Congress, the Nation and with the American people.

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

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

THE BUDGET

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express grave concern regarding the budget that the Budget Committee is acting upon this week and which some have proposed be brought to the floor of this House next week.

I would suggest that it is very much in need of dramatic changes and would ask that the leadership of this Congress take that budget back and start over again because a debt of the magnitude that this country is already facing, added to the projected deficit for next year alone, now up to \$1.8 trillion, is a staggering sum of money, and it is not something that is sustainable.

We have known this for a long time. In fact, one of the namesakes of the an-

nual dinners that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle hold, the Jefferson-Jackson dinners that are held all across the country, he has been known throughout American history for his strong stand against piling on greater and greater public debt. In fact, late in his life he said, "There does not exist an engine so corruptive of the government and so demoralizing of the Nation as a public debt. It will bring on us more ruin at home than all the enemies from abroad." And we are, in fact, seeing this statement made long ago coming to haunt us in very severe ways at this time in our history.

You know, we had up until last year a \$9 trillion national debt that had been accumulated over more than 200 years of our Nation's history. And yet the projection now is that in the next 10 years, according to this budget—and that is based upon optimistic projections I would say with regard to government spending—the liabilities the government already has for a number of different programs, but the projection already offered by the administration is that that debt will increase by one-and-a-half times in the next 10 years.

That is staggering to consider that we could outstrip all of the spending that has taken place over all of that period of time in such a short period of time, and I want to show you exactly how that works with this chart.

This chart shows the doubling of the debt held by the public in a very short period of time. Projections now are that it will be even greater than this. This one shows that it grows to \$16 trillion. We now have a new projection that says \$23 trillion will be the national debt in total.

The public portion of the national debt, that portion of the debt that we owe to American citizens and other people around the world, will grow to \$16 trillion from less than \$6 trillion just last year. That is a stunning figure, but this doesn't even tell the whole story because what this shows is just the public portion of the debt.

Every year, the Congress borrows from the Social Security trust fund, and other trust funds, additional funds, and the government simply puts an IOU in those trust funds, funds so important to our senior citizens and others who are counting on those funds to be there in the future, to make sure that Social Security and other programs are actuarially sound, and yet the money has been borrowed, such that the total amount of our national debt by 2019 will come to \$23 trillion.

We have in this budget that has been offered in this Congress too much spending, too much taxation and, what we're focusing on today, too much debt. Let me call the words of President Jefferson to mind again: To preserve the independence of the people, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty or profusion and servitude—and that is

truly the crossroads that we have reached today.

Thomas Jefferson recognized that 190-plus years ago and pointed out that with economy comes liberty and freedom. With as he called it profusion, or what we call today big government spending, comes servitude of the people to their government. That is not what our Founding Fathers intended when they created the United States Constitution which, in my opinion, is in need of one change that is vitally needed, and that is a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

I will have more to say about this in the future, but I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget and support real fiscal reform, which would be to adopt a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

ADMINISTRATION DESERVES PRAISE FOR NEW IRAN AND STOP-LOSS POLICIES

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call the House's attention to two very positive developments in the administration's handling of foreign policy and military affairs.

First, the administration offered Iran a new beginning in relations between our two countries. He did that on Friday. It was part of his message to the Iranian people and to their leaders on the occasion of the Persian new year.

The President said, "My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and Iran, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran, and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek, instead, engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect."

Mr. Speaker, President Obama is determined to settle differences with Iran peacefully. Of course, I don't have any, nor should any of us have any, illusions that it will be easy to reduce tensions with Iran. That's because they continue to develop a nuclear program which could be used to build nuclear weapons.

But I do believe that diplomacy can produce good results over time. A diplomatic effort can begin within the next year, or in the next week actually, when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attends a conference on Afghanistan in The Netherlands. Iran is expected to attend the conference, and Secretary Clinton could interact with Iranian officials.

The United States and Iran have cooperated in the past over Afghanistan, and this may be one area of common ground. But at the very least, the administration has created an environment where peaceful progress can be made, and I commend the administration for that.

The second development that is positive came last Wednesday when Secretary of Defense Gates announced that he is moving to end the Pentagon's terrible stop-loss policy. Under stop-loss, Mr. Speaker, thousands of soldiers have been forced to remain in the military even after their enlistments have expired.

Ending stop-loss is long overdue. It has been essentially a backdoor draft, and it's one of the policies that has stretched our military to the limit, putting a terrible strain on our soldiers and on their families.

The Army has acknowledged this problem. The Army Vice Chief of Staff told a Senate subcommittee last week that forcing soldiers to take longer deployments has helped produce a "stressed and tired force."

Prolonged deployments, Mr. Speaker, which have separated soldiers from their families for these very long periods of time, have contributed to a tragic rise in the number of suicides among military personnel. The Army has confirmed that there were 133 suicides last year alone, and that's just the Army.

Another serious problem is that many soldiers who have left the military have not had a happy homecoming. The unemployment rate for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan is 11.2 percent, which is higher than the rate for nonveterans.

That is one of the reasons why I support the administration's economic recovery plan, which actually is the third policy development that we should be talking about today, because this plan will produce millions of new jobs. I would have liked to have seen an even bigger recovery plan to create even more jobs, but Mr. Speaker, I have to disagree with the administration on some policies occasionally, and that's stretching beyond where their good intentions are.

I also have to disagree with the administration on some foreign policy issues. But on this occasion, I don't want to go into that. I want to applaud the administration for taking three important steps that can make the world a more peaceful place and that will lift a very heavy burden off our brave troops and their families.

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

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

□ 1545

CAP-AND-TRADE

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

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the urgency that faces the United States—and I

hope every single American engages in this debate.

The economy has certainly taken a great toll on the great State of Michigan, where I'm from, and President Obama's recently offered budget, if enacted, is just one more slap at working people of the great State of Michigan and all around this country.

It creates a cap-and-tax program for the first time in this history. Something that used to be free, you're now taxed to use it.

The National Association of Manufacturers estimate this plan will cost Michigan alone 121,000 jobs by 2030. It also increases gas rates by 141 percent and electric rates by 177 percent. What does that mean to you? If you have a \$70 per month electric bill today, it's going up to \$193 per month just for the enactment of the cap-and-tax program.

If you're paying about \$1.91, as you are at the pump today, if enacted, the cap-and-tax program takes that to \$4.60 a gallon. Good luck in economic prosperity.

If you're a UAW worker in Michigan today and you happen to work in the great city of Lansing, Michigan, you are already paying a State gas tax, a Federal gas tax. You're paying a tax for your driver's license, a tax for your license tag, you're paying a sales tax on the car which you purchased. You pay a city income tax, a State income tax, and a Federal incomes. You pay your FICA tax.

If you go home and if you enjoy a beer after work, there's a special excise tax on the beer that you consume. You click on your cable TV, you pay a tax for that as well. You sit in your Barcalounger. Guess what? You paid a sales tax on that, too.

Mr. President, more taxes will not solve the problem. It will exacerbate the problem. Working families in this country deserve a break, not platitudes, not kind words, not silver-tongued speeches.

These people are right on the edge of losing their homes, and we're going to enact a tax that makes it that much harder for them to make the very payments to stay in their homes today.

Every time you tax a job like this—imagine this. We build cars. Imagine if the taxes go that much up on just your home ownership costs—your electric bill, your gas bill, when you fill up with gasoline—imagine what happens to the manufacturing base that uses energy. The cost for producing that car goes up.

So you're your paying more for gas a gallon, you're paying more for your electric bill. And, guess what? If you want to go out and buy a car, good luck. The cost of that electricity increase is built into the cost of that car.

We no longer will remain competitive. I tell you what—China loves this idea. India loves this idea. Absolutely. They want to make it prohibitive for us to build anything in the United States of America. And how do we do it in this budget? We increase the budget