

made in the Energy and Commerce Committee. He said that his intent was to bring his tobacco bill to the floor under suspension. I appealed to my good friend not to do that. Allow Congress to work its will, just as you did at the committee.

When this bill came before the committee, it was all Republicans voted for it and all Democrats voted against it. I was surprised by that. I was surprised by that because we, Mr. MCINTYRE and I, looked at this from a bipartisan perspective, and we were seeking to improve public health. And when you try to work to improve public health from this perspective this isn't one of these fights about socializing medicine or something that defines political parties. This one really surprised me that within the committee, that there was a partisan vote. That should have never, ever have happened at the committee.

And what I am hopeful here is that Mr. WAXMAN, when he makes his appeal to the Speaker for his legislation to come to the floor, that he actually goes through regular order, that he goes to the Rules Committee, and that Mr. MCINTYRE and I be permitted to have our bipartisan substitute be debated here on the House floor.

And please, do not bring—this is too important of a public health position to come up on suspension. This is a bipartisan bill. And to bring it up on suspension denies the rights of a lot of Members for this public, harm reduction strategy in which we seek to improve public health.

So, if, in fact, if Mr. WAXMAN brings his tobacco bill to the floor, my appeal would be to all Members to vote against the suspension. Now, the purpose of voting against the suspension isn't necessarily on the substance of the bill itself. It is about the process. We have got the process and procedure and you have substance. To bring a bill this important on public health under suspension and denying the right of a substitute, now we have a process issue. And Mr. MCINTYRE and I will be appealing to Members to vote "no" on suspension. We shouldn't be suspending the rules and denying amendments and the substitute here on this floor. The Congress should work the will of the American people, and that is, that all views and opinions and amendments and substitutes should be made in order here. And what this has really been done now it is narrowed down to two positions.

And since Mr. WAXMAN will not incorporate this, the least we can do is have this issue heard here on the floor. And that is my appeal.

So let me conclude with this. Mr. WAXMAN, I appeal to my good friend, allow this to come to the floor. Do not put your bill on suspension. If your bill comes to the floor on suspension, then Mr. MCINTYRE and I are asking for all Members to vote against the suspension and for the clear purpose that our right to be heard.

I will yield back.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAVEL IN OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FUDGE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BERKLEY. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the Special Order of business travel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

Ms. BERKLEY. A few weeks ago, Madam Speaker, I came to the floor of the House and gave a very spirited defense of my congressional district which encompasses my hometown of Las Vegas. I did that because my community was under horrific attack by Members of this body, and it did us tremendous financial damage.

I wanted to speak more than 5 minutes to talk about the importance of travel in this country, the importance to our economy, and why we should be encouraging people to travel, and why we should be encouraging businesses to continue to conduct their meetings in destination areas like Las Vegas, but there are so many others. And I would like to talk to you a little bit about my community. But before I do that, I think I would like to yield to my very good friend, RON KLEIN from the great State of Florida, who also depends on tourism as its lifeblood in its economy.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Nevada for calling us together tonight because I think, as we realize, all over the United States, tourism, the flow of people, the flow of goods that go with the people, the fact that people come from all over the world to our great, wonderful attractions, whether they be in Las Vegas, or whether they be in Florida, where I am from. I am from the southeast coast of Florida, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, all over Florida and I know that all over the United States there are some just unbelievable places to go. And the good news is there are actually some good buys right now.

But besides that, the more important part though is that tourism is a very, very important part of our economy. It is important on so many levels. Economically, let's just start with the jobs. I know that you feel so strongly about, Congresswoman BERKLEY, the jobs that are created in the hospitality industry, the construction jobs that go along with it, all the ancillary services and support and the food and the, all the entertainment and equipment and things like that. They are very much a part of our economy all over the United States.

Certainly it is not just where the people actually travel to. It is the fact

that the things that supply the equipment, the buildings, all the support services come from 50 States. Every State is impacted by a strong tourism trade. And it is just very exciting to be part and to live in a community where we have tourism as such an active part.

Being from South Florida, we not only draw people from all over the United States to Florida, but we get people from all over the world, as you do as well. And I know just from the Latin American community, the European community, Asian community, they come to our beaches, they come to our attractions, our wonderful hotels, the great quality of life, the diversity of our culture, the diversity of the people in Florida, incredible restaurants to choose from. But, you know, obviously, in struggling times we know it affects everybody. It affects the discretionary dollar.

But I think one thing we do want to encourage, and certainly with the economic stimulus package that has now been presented, we are now beginning to work through some of these difficult issues with the banks and the credit which have a lot to do with supporting our economy throughout the United States. This is going to take a little bit of time.

□ 1830

But I think everyone should have that confidence level to know that, as Americans, we are going to get through this. The goal is to contract what is going on right now.

The reality is, at the same time, people still need to get out; they still need to do business, and certainly, as we know, even as unemployment has moved up a little bit, we still have over 90 percent of Americans who are gainfully employed. There are wonderful opportunities to travel to our great places all over the United States, to spend a few dollars, to stay in a wonderful place, to have family time, business time, to eat a good meal, and it is just all very exciting because we do have this great infrastructure and this great entertainment system in place, but it is the lifeblood, in many ways, of our country's economy.

I just want to thank you for not only being a leader in understanding tourism, but also, in the recovery and reinvestment bill that we did, there is so much in there which is going to help support getting our economy moving again and in building that confidence to know that people should travel and should enjoy the tourism industry—our hotels, our properties and just get a great benefit out of it. So I would like to thank you for calling us together. I am glad to support this great initiative that you have put out there.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, I really appreciate your being here. I knew, as the Representative from south Florida, that your economy has probably been hit the same way that Las Vegas has. Could I ask you a question?

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Absolutely.

Ms. BERKLEY. What we have found is that we know leisure travel is down because of the recession and that it's a little bit more challenging for families to go on vacation now, and I can understand that, but where Las Vegas has been particularly hit is in the business travel. Since the first of the year, we have lost 341 conventions. The impact on Las Vegas has been devastating. I'm wondering if you're seeing an impact on business travel as well.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. If the gentleman would yield, I would be more than happy to respond. Thank you for yielding to me.

The answer is, yes, there has been an impact. We have a lot of hotels that do a lot of business travel. We have convention centers in Miami, in Fort Lauderdale and in West Palm Beach, of course, and in the rest of Florida, also in Orlando, which is a huge destination.

Ms. BERKLEY. Yes, they're the second best in the United States.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I don't know if it's the second best. It may be the best. Maybe we have the second largest number of hotel rooms, but again, great choices all the way around.

Yes, Florida has been hit hard. A lot of people travel to Florida and plan business conventions 1 year, 2 years or 3 years in advance. There have been some cancellations.

Ms. BERKLEY. What does that do to the job market in south Florida?

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. What it does, of course, anywhere is if, in fact, a hotel has a certain less number of room nights—of which we know “room nights” are the number of rooms times the number of nights for a particular convention—and if a convention has 100 rooms and there are 5 nights, which is 500 room nights, that's a big impact. It's not just the hotel. It's the food that goes with it. It's all of the hospitality.

Ms. BERKLEY. Taxicab drivers.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Absolutely.

Ms. BERKLEY. Dry cleaning.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. That's right, and there is some great shopping in local communities, of course, that goes with it.

Ms. BERKLEY. I love shopping.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. You know, it has had an impact. Again, I think that our businesses are doing what a lot of businesses are doing right now. They're clamping down. They're making sure that their systems are running as efficiently as possible, but they are great optimists, and the properties are just wonderful. We have a new one—I won't give a particular plug—but it's down in Miami. It's the Fontainebleau—

Ms. BERKLEY. Oh, yes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Which is a world famous hotel.

Ms. BERKLEY. And they're also building in Las Vegas.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. That's right. They are. They're the same owners. They just put \$1 billion into a property down there, but it's not just that hotel.

There are so many wonderful hotels. We have large hotels, boutique hotels. Again, people love to come to the beaches and relax.

Ms. BERKLEY. And you can get a good deal right now.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. And you can get a very good deal, so keep that in mind if you're looking to travel.

But it is true. This economic downturn has made a lot more rooms available, and that does have a broad impact, which is why I am so supportive of these initiatives that we are taking right now to rebuild confidence in the economy.

The President's Reinvestment and Recovery Act is very much a part of recognizing, yes, we have to fix the banks and that, yes, we have to fix the mortgages. We are beginning to really move in some positive directions there. Yes, we had to do a stimulus plan, and the stimulus plan may not be perfect, but it is designed to be monitored very carefully so that, as we look every 30 days, we ask: Is it creating jobs? As for all of these outcome measurements that we're expecting, the key to all of this is that, if it's not working in creating jobs, it gets cancelled, and we move on to something else, but it's all about, in our local communities, doing things that will get the economy up and running, making people feel better about themselves so they can buy and sell businesses and houses.

Mr. FARR. If the gentleman will yield—

Ms. BERKLEY. We have been joined by Congressman SAM FARR from California, who happens to chair the tourism caucus in Congress. Welcome, and thanks for being part of this.

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much for inviting me. I enjoy being part of this tag team that is really trying to give a different message than has been given.

I think the press has really done a disservice in sort of criticizing business travel, because everybody knows we're in tough times, and so they feel like, well, people shouldn't be out recreating with a corporate budget. On the other hand, when you stop and cancel those conventions that have been in your city, in the backlash, we've lost 20 percent of the hotel market. Twenty percent of the hotel market has reported that, just in that 20 percent, cancellations have exceeded \$220 million for January and February. Now, when you have a domestic travel industry that employs 7.5 million people, when that industry falls off—

Ms. BERKLEY. Did you say 7.5 million people?

Mr. FARR. Just in the domestic travel. Just domestic travel.

Ms. BERKLEY. Interesting.

Mr. FARR. If you break it down to business travel that we're talking about tonight, it's 2.4 million American jobs. That's \$240 billion in spending and \$39 billion in tax revenue, which is the TOT—the Transit Occupancy Tax—and sales tax that those folks in their business travel spend at

places like we all represent. I don't represent a big convention area. I represent the very small Monterey peninsula, but our little county does \$2 billion in travel and tourism, second only to agriculture. It is very important.

Ms. BERKLEY. My husband and I went to a Reno physicians' association meeting in Monterey, and it was an absolutely delightful place to have a convention.

Mr. FARR. Those associations, the small ones like your husband is involved in, have been canceling. So what has also affected the big conventions in your communities that can handle some of the largest conventions in the world trickle down to the smaller communities that handle the smaller ones. This impact, this negative message that got out about domestic travel, is just contrary to what you have just talked about.

This stimulus package was about stimulating jobs, not about losing jobs. It was about keeping and creating more jobs. If there is any industry that can pick up a lot of labor quickly when things are going good, it's the travel and tourism. It's the restaurant workers. It's adding additional workers—dishwashers and people who wait on tables, to pick up the hotel services, to pick up the delivery services, the flowers, all of this. Somehow this is kind of looked at as, well, if you can have that kind of luxury, then you must not be sympathetic to the losses that are going on. We see those losses because those people are unemployed.

Ms. BERKLEY. Exactly. Well, I think, if I'm hearing you correctly, you're saying that business travel is very much a part of the economy of the United States of America, and without it, we are going to have thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people unemployed. Those are our fellow citizens.

Mr. FARR. Travel and tourism is the largest business in the world, and it is expanding faster than any other business. Every country is trying to do more of it. You see the advertising on our television sets about islands in the Caribbean, about going to Spain or about going to Australia and New Zealand, all of those travel promotion ads. We don't do that. The United States, unfortunately, isn't running any ads in other countries, saying, “Visit the United States.”

I and the other co-Chair, ROY BLUNT, of the Travel and Tourism Caucus have a bill. It is a bill to essentially provide grants to States and local communities to do that kind of destination marketing. We know that a lot of Canadians—

Ms. BERKLEY. Put me on.

Mr. FARR. What I just wanted to mention for both of you—because I am very, very sympathetic to the problems of Las Vegas. Las Vegas is the biggest convention city in the United States, and because of the bad press, all of these businesses have canceled. You've pointed out what is happening to the

unemployment. It has also had huge foreclosures in Las Vegas. It is a town that is probably, as a city, more affected by this economic downturn than any other city.

Ms. BERKLEY. And I'm sure Florida is right behind us.

Mr. FARR. I was home last weekend. It was interesting that people were telling me, if you want to travel now and go by air anywhere in the United States—say I want to go from the West Coast to the East Coast—they said book your travel through Las Vegas. The prices for air travel going through Las Vegas are the cheapest in the United States.

Ms. BERKLEY. Yes. Yes. We're practically giving away rooms in order to attract people to our community. I don't think the three of us, any of us, are suggesting that companies should be using taxpayers' dollars in order to fund business travel.

Mr. FARR. No, absolutely not.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. No. I would just support what you're saying.

First of all, I think your idea of branding of the United States as a place for travel and tourism is a wonderful idea. You see the Philippines. You see, you know, countries do this. In Florida, we have something called Visit Florida, which is a public-private partnership, set up a number of years ago, which brands Florida and promotes it in different places.

I support the idea of branding the United States as a place and then, obviously, letting local communities co-op together, putting leverage those dollars and doing it. I think you're all right.

One other point: We're talking about big. Let's also talk small. In your community, I'll bet there are lots of small businesses—bed and breakfasts and lots of other things—that are just wonderful places. These are people who are very dependent and who are also in cooperation with our large properties.

Mr. FARR. What is very interesting about this is that travel is really educational. I mean this city, I think, is a must for any child in school who is learning about American history. In making it interesting, it comes alive. I mean the city of Washington may be the best family tourism city in the world because most of the things here are free—going to the museums, visiting all the monuments—and you can't help but recognize the Capitol when you see it. You've seen it in books. You've seen the Washington Monument and the Lincoln monument. This city makes it exciting. So you think about how many different ways one gets educated by visiting someplace else, knowing more about themselves.

I was a Peace Corps volunteer, and I was living in another culture and was experiencing all that newness in food, in dance, in music, in language that made me realize the strengths of my culture in America but also some of the weaknesses—the family values

issues where people really stick together in families. I find that travel and tourism is an eye opener, and I represent Carmel where I live, which is a small, little town of 4,000 people. Everybody has heard of Carmel. It's just a charming, little town.

The mayor of Carmel, not Clint Eastwood but one of the other mayors, was telling me that, and asked me the question: What do you think is the number 1 question asked for things that people want from the city government? I always say: Well, where is Clint Eastwood's restaurant? He said: No, that wasn't the question. That wasn't it. The number 1 ask from the government of Carmel was for a copy of their zoning ordinance. That just shows that the tourists come and shop, not with just their pocketbooks, but they shop with their eyes and their minds. They looked at why they wanted a zoning ordinance, and so many Japanese asked for it that we had to have it translated into Japanese. The people said: If this city can look so cute, why can't our city incorporate some of these ideas?

So that's what, I think, of travel and tourism. Obviously, businesses use these opportunities to take their associations—the dental association or the plumbers' association—and go have a conference.

Ms. BERKLEY. Las Vegas can accommodate everyone from the Baptists—because there are Baptist conventions in Las Vegas. I know that sounds unusual, but there are—to medical conventions, to dental conventions, as you said. We also are the site of some of the biggest conventions in the world—CES, the homebuilders, the shopping center convention every May. I mean these are huge conventions. Why do they come to Las Vegas? Why do they come to south Florida? Because we can accommodate this. We have got the best hotels. We have got the best transportation. We have got the best restaurants, the best shopping and the best facilities for conventions, large and small.

For the American business community to be turning their backs on us, not only is it bad for our business; it is bad for theirs because, contrary to what a lot of people think, a lot of business gets done in those meetings.

I know that the Congressman has got beautiful beaches, but that is an amenity that people take advantage of after they've done their business. Las Vegas has world-class entertainment and some other amenities as well. People don't concentrate on that. They're there to do business, and we make it possible for them in these business meetings to conduct serious business, and I am sure it's the same with your district as well.

Mr. FARR. Well, I think that we're all in the media. We have to get elected in the media, and we have to go out and take risks. It seems to me that what we need to do is realize, as a country, that we should not be con-

demning businesses that are doing things to help people have jobs.

□ 1845

The service industry is not always the best paying industry, and these are great jobs for students, great jobs for people coming up with limited skills at the entry level. The wonderful thing about it is that there is no sort of degree requirements so you don't have to have a college degree or Ph.D. to manage a big resort. If you have skills and you are able to deal with people and some business management skills, you can achieve that.

I think that what we're doing by watching people condemn business travel right now is we're just shooting ourselves in the foot.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. If I can add to that, I think let's talk the positives. We've been talking about a little bit of the risk side. But I think what we're all saying is the same thing. And that is the business side that gets done at conventions or travel to any one of our communities or any one of the 50 States, the notion of either playing golf in Florida or going to any one of the entertainment venues that any of us have or the ecotourism or the beautiful sceneries that attracts us, this is where business gets done. This is where families spend vacations.

And this is a time and place where people need to recognize, even though times are a little tough, business is going on, the economy is still going on, people are living their lives. You make maybe a different choice than maybe you did before, but there are great opportunities. But like everything else, supply and demand. Right now, you might even get a better buy than if you had planned a year ahead of time. And that's okay. That's just part of the deal, but that still makes the flow. That still makes the hotel full, it still makes the restaurants full, the suppliers and all of those things go.

I think it is a very exciting opportunity. And again, I just see this as an opportunity as we talk about these things back home what we're doing here in Washington on fixing the credit on the reinvestment act and the recovery act, this is all about putting all of the pieces in place so that everything will turn. And it will turn. It's just a matter of whether it is this amount of time or this amount of time. But we're going to get through this. And if it's a matter of going forward and planning the next trip, the next business meeting or whatever, that needs to go forward because every business needs to be in the best possible place when things start clicking again on all eight cylinders.

Mr. FARR. In January and February, the travel and tourism, the business travel was so far down that we lost \$1 billion. Now, \$1 billion is a lot of jobs of people that were laid off. And I think, unfortunately, we didn't have anything in this stimulus package precisely for travel and tourism. But if

you want to jump start a lot of jobs in America, this is the industry that has the most jobs when you think of all of the venues that you talk about.

Ms. BERKLEY. I would love to make two points, and it dovetails beautifully with what both of you are saying. I know you just mentioned that legislation that you're either introducing or thinking of introducing that would put some dollars into advertising the United States of America abroad so people will come and travel in the United States, which I think is a wonderful idea. And you're right, we're light years behind other countries in promoting our own.

But there are smaller ones that I was wondering what you thought of.

I tried to get in the stimulus package—and wasn't able to do so—but a \$500 tax credit for business travel. If you're a business traveler and you want to bring your spouse, I think we should be—I think there should be a tax credit that will encourage men or women to take their spouses. It doubles the number of people that are coming to any one of our communities, and it also will help stimulate the economy and also keep families together. So I think that's wonderful.

The other thing—and we call it the three Martini lunch—but the reality is it is so much more important and significant than that. I would love to see a 100 percent deductibility of meals tax. I am sure the same is happening in your towns as mine, the restaurant business is kaput. People aren't coming to the towns so obviously restaurant business is down. Wouldn't it be a good idea for a business to help stimulate business? Most small businesses don't have boardrooms. What they have is the back booth of the local deli. And if they could get a 100 percent deduction on their meals, I would think that would not only help them to do their business, but it would also help the restaurant business as well.

Mr. FARR. We have a bill that's annually introduced by NEIL ABERCROMBIE, the Representative from Hawaii, and it is obviously in Hawaii's best interest to have a lot of tourists. That's what supports their infrastructure. And he's introduced the business travel deduction for spousal travel and also increasing the meal deduction. We have just been unable to get it out of the Ways and Means Committee. Maybe now as part of the stimulus we could encourage things like that.

Ms. BERKLEY. Heaven knows I have tried. I am a member of the Ways and Means Committee, but I am going to keep pushing this because I can't think of anything more stimulative to the tourism business and the restaurant business. And I know NEIL has been remarkable and, of course, NEIL ABERCROMBIE represents Hawaii. It has also been very hard hit, and he's down here every day fighting for the interests of his community, and, of course, Hawaii depends on tourists and business travelers.

Mr. FARR. What I like what both of you really understand—and I think this is the difficulty that the industry has—is that it is the biggest industry there is in the world, and yet it is not looked at as an industry because it is made up of parts. What are the parts? We can name them all night. But you just think about it. It is the rental car business, they have their own association; it is the hotel business, they have their own association; it is the airline business, they have their own association; it is the amusement parks, they have their own association; the restaurants, they have their own association; it is the Federal Government because we have national parks which are destination areas and tourism is essential for us to sustain those parks on the fees collected at the gates and the rates paid for the services.

So we're all in it, but what is more important it is really about America.

What I love about travel and tourism is that it is the spirit of our country. And as I say, I think that we travel within America to look and see what regions look like. We don't just go to see—we don't go to California to see what Californians look like or Florida to see what Floridians look like. It's really not just the people—people are the character. But it is also—and the arts, obviously, the creative arts. But it is these physical attractions: the beaches of Florida, the incredible expansion of ideas.

I think that one of the greatest shows that I've ever seen in my life—I have been raving about it. I saw it last summer. I was driving through Las Vegas on the way to our Denver convention. I stopped in Las Vegas and had never been there. And I went to Cirque du Soleil. That is a show that I think is—it is the epitome of creation, of musical talent and acrobatic talent; and it is something that every child would just love to see. I was just so disappointed—I went late at night—that I didn't have my grandchildren with me.

Ms. BERKLEY. Every time I go—I've seen all of the Cirque du Soleils a number of times. Whenever we get company in town, we take them to the Cirque du Soleil. Although we have got so many—we have Cher, we have Bette Midler. You name it, we have got it in Vegas. But every time I go, I see something new. There is so much on that stage going on. Going once simply isn't enough.

So I should invite you as my guest to come with your grandchildren. And I would be glad to host you.

Mr. FARR. If I had enough money, I would rent the whole theater and invite the whole world because I think it is something that everybody should see. It is a tribute to mankind's creativity.

See, I think that's what this is all about. You're not going to get a Cirque du Soleil in every city. You're going to have to travel somewhere. We always say in California that a tourist is anybody who is more than 60 miles away

from home. So it makes most commuters in California tourists for a moment, because they are actually spending their money in another city when they go out for lunch, and they might go shopping there on their way home.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Every time I see Congresswoman BERKLEY, there is not enough infectious energy there of her passion for what she does. You are probably the greatest representative that Las Vegas has ever had because of your beliefs in the industry.

Ms. BERKLEY. I am wearing roulette earrings right now. So I take this very seriously.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. The issue with tourism, though, as you just said, it's ecotourism. It is environmental. It is the culture. It is the arts.

I see on the other side of the Chamber is the congressman from Ohio. I'm from Ohio originally. They have the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio.

But everywhere you go in the United States, there is the opportunity for tourism. And the most important recognition of this is it is about who we are as Americans, it's about the rest of the world getting a piece of our culture. We export a lot of great things in our entertainment industry. But bringing people to the United States, getting a feeling for what we're all about, our democracy, our values that express themselves in the way we maintain our national parks, the way we—the Everglades, which is one of the great creations. The Grand Canyon. These are all things that when people leave the country—

Mr. FARR. The Big Sur coast.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I think we could all go on for a while.

Ms. BERKLEY. Congressmen, I would go so far as to say it is patriotic to be traveling.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I would agree. It is patriotic for Americans to see America. And it is also a wonderful way of showing what America is like to people around the world because when they go home and they can share their experiences of what they have seen and what they have felt and what Americans are like and what this particular destination, this ocean, this Grand Canyon, Lake Erie, any combination of things that are part of who we are as a country, I think it adds so much to us as America. It promotes our interests worldwide as well.

Ms. BERKLEY. I believe that the Congressman from Ohio, who is here for another Special Order, has moved to join us in conversation.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I absolutely am moved by the conversation. And one of the things that puzzles me as we go through this financial mess is that people have decided to target trips and conventions and destinations and tourism, and that's exactly the wrong message.

I don't know how it is in your part of the world. In Cleveland, where we have the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and we

have great hotels. There are people who have to work in the hotels, there are people who cook the food, people who serve the food. And when you choke down and just make fun of people that go and have conventions or go traveling, you really are cutting off your nose to spite your face because you are drying up those jobs and you really are having a huge impact on the local economy. And I don't know any local economy that doesn't have as a component a healthy dose of dollars from tourism.

And so as people sort of say this is bad, that's bad, don't do this, one thing that they shouldn't target is, in fact, people need to travel, people need to have meetings, and people need to rent rooms and eat meals.

I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Ms. BERKLEY. We've been joined by one of our newest and finest Congressmen from the State of Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) who also represents a tourist-based economy in his district.

Mr. GRAYSON. I rise today to bring attention to the fact that there is increasing evidence to support the idea that taking vacations is necessary for your health.

Ms. BERKLEY. Your health?

Mr. GRAYSON. Your health. In times of economic uncertainty, it may seem hard to justify taking a vacation, but more than ever it is important to do so for your health.

The United States is a Nation of hard workers, but research shows that about a third of us in this country don't take all of the vacation days that we're entitled to. But according to Take Back Your Time, which is a nonprofit organization that studies issues related to overwork, there are 137 different countries that mandate paid vacation time, and the reason, typically, is health. The United States is not one of them.

With the number of Americans who said they would take a vacation is at a 30-year low, we need to take a look at the benefits of making that vacation that people have dreamed of a reality.

It is abundantly clear that individuals who take vacations are at a significantly lower risk for illness and disease. Likewise, those who do not take vacations are at a heightened risk of illness and disease. Even individuals without health problems can benefit from taking a vacation because it helps them to sleep better and it helps them to relax.

Ms. BERKLEY. When people come to Las Vegas, we don't want them sleeping.

Mr. GRAYSON. So it is sleeping afterward to make up for that.

A 2006 study was conducted to measure the benefits of taking vacations, and after a few days of vacation, the study found each participant was averaging more sleep and better quality sleep every night. There was also an 80 percent improvement in reaction times. And these benefits continued after they returned home. There is evidence that individuals who take vaca-

tions perform better at their jobs and they have higher job satisfaction.

The research has made such an impression that there is legislation being proposed here that would require a paid vacation time in the United States. It is currently called the Minimum Leave Protection Family Bonding and Personal Well-Being Act, and it would mandate 3 weeks of vacation every year.

I think that Americans need to relax. They need to consider this evidence about what is good for their health and their well-being, and they need to take time off. And as the Congressman from Orlando, I recommend they take a few days off at Disney World.

Ms. BERKLEY. I have also been in your fair city, and when my kids were little, younger, we had wonderful family vacations in Orlando. It was quite a treat for us. So you do have a beautiful community and people should be flocking there.

□ 1900

So we're discovering today that not only is this good for the economy, not only is tourism and business travel almost patriotic, but now it's also good for your health.

So I thank you very much for adding that component to our discussion.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you, too. I was in Las Vegas last year. I had a great time.

Ms. BERKLEY. Good. I hope you left a little money on the table.

Mr. FARR. I think it's important to realize that when we wanted to in Congress—we're essentially the one spouse, the father or the mother is serving in Congress, and taking away from the normal—we're not living with our family during the week. We're here in Washington. We go home on weekends.

But in order to get us to bond together with your new freshman class and all the rest of us, we took a retreat. Essentially, that was business travel. We went to Williamsburg. We did that as Democrats, and the Republicans the following week did the same thing.

And so why did we do that? We didn't think of ourselves going on a vacation or going on a boondoggle. It was really about how to do our professional lives better and incorporate our families so that we can incorporate them in our business. And I think that that's real important.

And what's happened in this economic crisis is the press has made that kind of experience for businesses and even for government, that you shouldn't be doing that; you should feel very guilty.

Ms. BERKLEY. Congressman, I think we've had—

Mr. FARR. I feel guilty about the people that are getting unemployed because nobody's going out to a restaurant or to—

Ms. BERKLEY. I feel exactly the way you do, but I think it's more than just the media. I think that Members of

Congress and the administration have also contributed to this feeling that maybe there's something wrong about traveling.

But I think we've turned the corner, and it's becoming very obvious to me, especially in President Obama's latest comments about the importance of traveling and how much he appreciates the travel industry and how important business travel is. Members of Congress also appreciated it as well, and I'm really glad that you brought that up.

Mr. FARR. I think this last statement about how it's good for our mental health is absolutely true.

Ms. BERKLEY. We could use some good mental health in Congress, that's for sure.

Mr. FARR. And for the Nation. I think we need to be proud of who we are, and you know, going to a ball game is a tourist experience.

Ms. BERKLEY. It's a wonderful experience.

Mr. FARR. And if you went to that ball game out of town, you really would be a tourist. If you go in your hometown, it's something you do because it's a local activity, but it really is an experience. You being in that ballpark, you spent money to get there. You're spending money on food. You're spending money on programs, on the paraphernalia. That's all part of the tourist experience.

Ms. BERKLEY. It's as American as apple pie. Ball games, sharing them with your kids, with your spouse, I mean, what could be better? And if you could bring your whole business team with you, too, that's a wonderful way to bond and be more effective as a team.

There was something you said earlier, but I wanted to share something very personal. You know, even though we're friends, and you know, we know each other here in Congress, sometimes we don't know about each other's personal background. But something that you said touched a chord with me because it seemed like you were talking about my own family.

My parents were driving across country. Everything we owned was in a U-Haul hooked up to the back bumper of our car. And my father was a waiter when I was growing up. We lived in upstate New York. We drove across country because my dad had a letter of introduction to get a job in a restaurant in southern California.

We stopped in Las Vegas for the night, and obviously we never left. And on a waiter's salary, my dad was a waiter at the old Sands Hotel which was very famous for the Rat Pack and just a very exciting time in Las Vegas' history. But on a waiter's salary, he was able to put a roof over our head, food on the table, clothes on our back, and two daughters through college and law school. That's not so bad on a waiter's salary. As a matter of fact, he's 84 years old now, still working, and very proud of his accomplishments.

That's what the tourism industry and that's what business travel means to

me. It uplifts families. It gives people jobs. They don't have to be lavish jobs. We're not talking about people that make millions of dollars. We're talking about people, middle-income families, that make enough money because they are part of the tourism industry, because they are part of the business travel industry, that they can support their families.

And then, I'm a first generation college-goer. No one in my family ever went to college until I did, and it changes lives. And making sure you've got that job, that good job security, you have a healthy economy, that's what we're talking about. And business travel is so much a part of this country and so much a part of our economy.

Mr. FARR. That's a very moving story, and just God bless your dad. What a wonderful person he must be.

My daughter said something to me that really touched me just a couple of weeks ago. She said, Dad, I'm so thankful that I have a job. And she used to be a waitress. And she said, I just know so many people that have been laid off, even some of her friends who have been waitresses, college graduates who are coming home but in between finding a job are doing—she said, you know what you and Mom could do, she said next time you go out, tip a little bit higher.

Ms. BERKLEY. You know, I worked my way—

Mr. FARR. This is my daughter saying this, give more to the people. I mean, when you think about that service and that tipping and that concept of giving, I think it's so fundamental to our American culture that, as we said, travel and tourism isn't a luxury. It's a part of the American culture, the dream, to enjoy oneself.

Ms. BERKLEY. We are joined by the other Congresswoman from Las Vegas.

Mr. FARR. We've got the dynamic duo here. This is incredible.

Ms. BERKLEY. Congresswoman DINA TITUS has joined us.

Mr. FARR. Well, welcome. You're a new freshwoman, fresh Congresswoman to this, and it's exciting to see you so interested in travel and tourism, obviously representing Las Vegas, and I'll let you talk.

But I also have to say that from what I've heard, the best deal in America is to take your family to Las Vegas right now. And as you said, they're almost giving away hotel rooms, and air travel, if you go by air, is just dirt cheap. And the experience that one can have, it's probably in some cases cheaper than staying at home.

Ms. BERKLEY. It's the best bang for your buck, there's no doubt about it. And as we keep saying, not only can you have some fun, you can actually get some business done. So we want to encourage all of those conventions that had second thoughts, that decided to cancel their trips to Vegas, their conventions, their conferences, think again. Come back. You can have a wonderful conference and enjoy yourselves as well and save your company some money by doing it.

Mr. FARR. Smaller businesses, you can come to Monterey peninsula, Monterey—

Ms. BERKLEY. The aquarium—

Mr. FARR. We have got a lot of great places to visit.

Ms. BERKLEY. As you know, my in-laws live in your district. So we go up and we visit them often. It's a wonderful place to be.

Mr. FARR. Welcome to this discussion.

Ms. TITUS. Well, thank you so much for letting me join you and thank you, Congresswoman BERKLEY, for organizing this and giving me an opportunity. I know you've been talking about some of the issues already, and nobody is a stronger advocate for tourism and activities in Las Vegas than my colleague SHELLEY BERKLEY.

So I just want to add the fact that, yes, Las Vegas is a wonderful bargain and a wonderful place to come. You know, it just kind of added insult to injury when people canceled the convention, paid a cancellation fee, and then went to another city and paid a higher rate. That makes no sense whatsoever.

In Las Vegas, we have fabulous convention facilities. Nobody can feed a room of 5,000 eight courses and serve the line on time like you can in Las Vegas. So we do want you to come back.

And I was touched by the story of your daughter because that is so true. We shouldn't be thinking of this just in terms of statistics, and the statistics are staggering, but we need to think of it in terms of people.

Many of the people who live in District 3 work in the tourism industry. It's not just along the famous Las Vegas Strip, but we have the Red Rock Casino. We've got the Green Valley Ranch. We've got the new Inn that's opened, a lot of areas outside of the strip that are in District 3. So those are jobs.

Las Vegas, Nevada, has the highest unemployment rate it's had in 25 years. You know, we used to think we were recession-proof, and if you had two nickels to rub together you'd come out there to try to change your luck. That's not been the case recently. As people lose disposable income, they're not coming. Those tourism dollars aren't there, and people are losing jobs. If you lose a job or you lose hours on your job, or those tips aren't there, if you have one member of the family who is a tip earner then that leads to another problem which is the housing foreclosure.

So when you're talking about where to have your convention and what the pluses are to having it in Las Vegas, remember, those are very real people who are making those beds, serving that food, dealing those cards, dancing in that chorus line. Those are real folks that live in the district, go to school there, obey the laws, and just try to do the right thing.

So I'm very glad to be here tonight to add my voice to the notion that

we've got to do more business travel and to put Las Vegas back on the list of preferred destinations.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, you know, you and I have lived in Las Vegas for an awfully long time and have been very active in the community. I know that Las Vegas has this reputation and the people think of it as a gaming community, and indeed, we do have the best gaming on the planet. The most fabulous hotels, restaurants, you name it, we've got it, great entertainment, but there's much more to our community than that.

And I was just heartsick when Las Vegas was attacked so savagely over the last few weeks here in Congress and frightening businesses. They didn't want to come to us for fear there would be some kind of taint.

Now, you and I know you raise families in Las Vegas. There's Saturday soccer. We have per capita the most churches and synagogues and mosques of any other city in the United States. It's a wonderful place to raise a family, but we can't raise our families unless people come and spend their tourist and their business dollars in our town.

Ms. TITUS. Well, you're so right, and if you look at our population, you know, we're very American. The rest of the country is becoming more like us. We have the fastest growing senior population, fastest growing Hispanic and Asian population, fastest growing school age population. We really are a southwestern city, and so to try to paint us with just those kinds of, oh, descriptions or adjectives or hyperbole is just not fair. We are a good community, a place to live, and we are a family and go to work, go to church, go to school. So I want people to see the other side of Las Vegas, the real people side of it.

You know, I hope to do something along those lines to change the conversation a little in my role on the Homeland Security Committee. You know, there's no place that has more high-tech security personnel and equipment than Las Vegas. Everybody's heard of the "eye in the sky" and everywhere could learn something from us in how those giant hotels deal with emergency situations and what we would do in the case of an emergency on New Year's Eve when we have all those people on the Las Vegas Strip watching fireworks.

So I'm trying to get some more cooperation between government and the private sector to come and look back of the house to see what all those things are that we have to offer just to change the conversation, so you can see another side of Las Vegas.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, I think that's a great idea, and you know, we are a southwest town with a bit of a kick, and we love our kick. I mean, it's just a wonderful community. You didn't grow up there. I grew up there. A great town, great facilities, great convention town, get a lot of business done, almost patriotic to do this.

When we heard from Congressman GRAYSON, he was talking about your health depends on coming to Las Vegas and Monterey and South Florida.

□ 1915

There are so many communities in this country that have really been hard hit because businesses aren't holding conferences. You can go to Miami, Atlanta, Atlantic City, New York, Hawaii, Las Vegas, Monterey. You name it.

We've got to get people traveling again and we've got to get our business community to come back and start conducting their business as they've become accustomed to. And, again, the caveat is we are not suggesting that these companies use taxpayer dollars in order to do their travel. But that is just a little itty bitty speck on business travel.

Mr. FARR. You can use your tax refund to do travel, if you get one.

Ms. BERKLEY. Absolutely. Ninety-five percent of the American people will be getting a tax cut.

Mr. FARR. I want to build on your comment about homeland security because as co-Chair of the Travel and Tourism Caucus, we've been looking at Las Vegas, too. One, you have the largest hotel capacity in the United States. I believe that the goal is to have 100,000 rooms.

Ms. BERKLEY. No, we're at 140,000 now.

Mr. FARR. Well, you think about that. That means, theoretically, 140,000 people could check in and check out in the same day. And so your airport is one of the most sophisticated airports in the United States. And you're starting to—which I think is a marvelous concept—look at wouldn't it be a lot faster to move people if, when they check in their baggage to go to Las Vegas, that that baggage then is in their room when they check in. When they leave their room, they leave the baggage there and it's at the like baggage pickup when they go home. The idea is that, one, for security purposes. You do this perimeter screening and you don't have to do it in the airport.

Secondly, they find what slows people down is sort of schlepping the bags. You've got to go pick them up and then you've got to lift them and you've got to get into a vehicle. That just slows things down. If people didn't have to carry all that luggage, they could move a lot of people a lot faster.

So there's a lot of lessons to learn here on just how—and, frankly, we've also taken from the hotel industry the way TSA—the agents who are at the gates—could learn much more hospitality treatment of not being rude to passengers. Just have a little bit more of a professional flare while they also do their security business.

So there's a lot we're learning from your city that has applications throughout this United States. I hope that we can model it. I wish that the United States would talk more and the

President would talk more—whomever the President is—but President Obama would really talk about the fulfillment of the American Dream and the realization of the greatness of our country by encouraging people to really see more of it and experience it. His city of Chicago is a big tourist draw and convention draw. He understands that.

Every community has a soul. Every community has something that can build upon that is really great. I think we are still in the developmental stages of trying to pull out the essence of that soul—what the natives in that community do, the historic aspects of the community. People settled there and built a town, and there's something in that that will attract people to come and see it.

There's so much opportunity to expand in travel and tourism—we just have to take it away from something of being a luxury item. It's not that anymore.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, I think DINA knows that President Obama has announced that he's coming to Las Vegas in the spring. I believe that he's going to be using that opportunity to say exactly what you're saying, Congressman, that it's part of the American Dream, this travel, and encourage people not only to do leisure travel, which Las Vegas is famous for, but business travel as well. And we're famous for that as well.

Ms. TITUS. I think travel is so educational. I certainly agree with what you're saying about how it enriches a person's life.

When I was growing up, my father would put my sister and me in the car—the station wagon—and we would drive across country, hitting all the National Parks. So that is something that I don't guess we do too much anymore.

If you want to look for the heart and soul of a small community, take that trip. Because there are places around the country that have the biggest rubber band ball or the biggest stack of pancakes or the biggest ear of corn, country fairs and home cooking and boiled peanuts. That's the way you really learn about this country and learn who your neighbors and fellow countrymen are.

Education is a great result of that kind of travel. That also builds tolerance and understanding when you can see and know people who aren't necessarily just like yourself. That comes from travel.

Mr. FARR. What I've also noticed is that people are very interested in what we call “watchable wildlife.” The history is you go to zoos to see animals. But they really want to see them in the out-of-doors in their natural state.

Ms. BERKLEY. We have some wildlife in Las Vegas, you know.

Mr. FARR. The national parks and the national forest. But I was in Big Sur last weekend and I was talking to one of the hotels there. They were telling me that people—and they charge a

lot for their rooms. But people call up and say, If I book a room in this hotel in Big Sur, can I see a condor? Because there are very few condors and we're monitoring them and we have a radio device on them, we know where they are. So the answer is “yes” because we know where they are. We can guarantee that you will see a condor. Other people will want to know about seeing sea otters.

So, living on the coast, what you realize is that natural flora and fauna—redwood trees that are native—that people want to come and see the out-of-doors. What I find is that you can't make people an environmentalist, so to speak, in appreciation for a living environment until you have been there and then also had it explained to you. Once you do, you get it.

So this whole issue of why do we need to fight global warming and what is it doing to our natural systems, you can understand that once you get that experience in the national parks or get that experience being out-of-doors.

So it's really all our culture. It's sort of the creativity of what you have done in Las Vegas, plus areas that just have the natural environment preserved in its natural state. Both add to this mosaic of travel and tourism.

Ms. BERKLEY. I think that is so eloquently put. I also want to remind people, especially the business traveler, that it's a good break from your business meeting if you come to Las Vegas. We have Red Rock Canyon, which is spectacular; we have the Grand Canyon, that is even more spectacular; and, of course, the Hoover Dam.

So you can do your business, you can do your gambling, you can eat the finest food, and then you can go outside of the city and enjoy the natural wonders of this beautiful, beautiful country of ours.

Ms. TITUS. I would mention along these same lines that Las Vegas plays a big part in other things that you don't think about. Right now there's a big emphasis on renewable energy. Certainly, we are the sunniest State in the country in Nevada. Everybody goes to Las Vegas for the wonderful weather. They're calling me every day to tell me how warm it is there compared to how cool it is here.

But the architecture that relates to that renewable energy is very interesting. A very famous book was written about the architecture of Las Vegas a number of years ago. They can go back and write another one now because there was a time not too long ago that of the top 10 LEED-certified green buildings in the country. Seven of those projects were along the Las Vegas Strip.

So it's quite interesting to look at it just from an architectural environmental standpoint, as well as just from the beauty of the decor. So that is something also we have to offer.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, I think we have spoken for about an hour. We have had a very spirited discussion and I think a

very enlightening and educated one. I hope that the people that are watching come to appreciate the value of travel on vacation, family travel, just a getaway for the two of you, or, more significantly, for the discussion tonight, business travel, which is so important to the economies of every State in the Union.

I don't know whether you knew this—I'm sure you do as chairman of the Tourism Caucus—but in 30 States tourism is the first, second, or third most important industry. For a city like ours and a State like ours, obviously it's number one. But for 30 other States we're talking first, second, or third. That is huge.

We want to invite everybody back. Do those business meetings. Stop canceling. Stop being foolish. Enjoy and do your business in Las Vegas, in Monterey, in Florida, Atlantic City, New York, Miami. We need you.

Mr. FARR. Be healthy. Explore more.

Ms. BERKLEY. That's perfect. And thank you all for sharing this hour with me. I've learned things from everybody that has participated. I appreciate everything that you have said. Thank you so much.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleague from Nevada, Ms. BERKLEY, and to thank her for holding this special order tonight. I agree that corporations who accept taxpayer funded bailouts should curb lavish expenses that do little to improve their profitability. However, legitimate business functions held at casino-hotels in Atlantic City, Las Vegas, and elsewhere should not be the subject of criticism by the media and government officials.

In my district, Atlantic City casinos are our region's single largest employer. Unfortunately, like most businesses, they are suffering in the current economic climate. Gaming revenue is down to its lowest point in more than a decade, thousands of employees have been laid off and construction projects have ground to a halt.

Corporate gatherings, conventions and other functions bring thousands of business travelers to Atlantic City, filling our retail outlets, restaurants and hotel rooms. The continuance of these legitimate business functions is critical if our region is going to pull out of this recession, put people back to work and expand our economy.

That is why I am outraged by the administration's latest salvo against our casino-hotels and the thousands of workers they employ. Forcing non profits and local governments who receive stimulus funds to abstain from holding legitimate events at casino-hotels is appalling. In my district, several nonprofits and government agencies hold important community outreach events at gaming properties in Atlantic City because these convenient venues are often the only ones able to accommodate large numbers of people. For instance, our local Workforce Investment Board regularly holds job fairs and workforce development seminars at casino-hotels in Atlantic City. Under the administration's new rules, these services would likely have to be curtailed at a time when they are critically needed and the economic recovery of our region's largest employer would be further delayed.

I call on the administration to back down from this flawed, unjust, and unwarranted policy and instead partner with us to get our travel based economy in Southern New Jersey, Las Vegas and other destinations back on track. I also urge the media to immediately cease their hyperbolic attacks on legitimate corporate travel in this country. I thank the gentle lady from Nevada who Co-Chairs the Congressional Gaming Caucus with me for her leadership and I look forward to working with her and all of our colleagues to get our economy moving again.

AIG BONUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank you for the recognition, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minority leader for granting us this hour. I'm going to be joined by at least two other Members, Mr. TIBERI and Mr. AUSTRIA, also of Ohio.

We're going to talk a little bit about what occurred last week and the week before. I know the Speaker will remember that the Capitol was sort of roiled, and our constituents continue to be upset, as well they should, over the news that somehow, after getting billions of dollars of taxpayer funds, the insurance company, AIG, awarded \$170 million in bonuses.

A lot of people came to the floor last week and said they were shocked. As I said last week, I'm really shocked at the shock. Because I can't figure out how some people in this Chamber and at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue can be shocked when they approved the language that authorized the bonuses.

Just a little bit of history here, Mr. Speaker. When the economic recovery plan or the stimulus bill was making its way through the United States Congress, there was an amendment offered by two Senators, a Democratic Senator from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, and a Republican Senator from Maine, Senator SNOWE. That would have put a limitation on bonuses like in the AIG case and in other cases that basically said that if you're receiving billions of dollars in taxpayer funds to bail you out, perhaps you shouldn't be giving millions dollars away in bonuses at this moment in time. If you're not taking the taxpayer money, you run your business the way you see fit.

Well, that amendment by Senators SNOWE and WYDEN was adopted by a voice vote in the Senate and was included in the Senate version of the stimulus bill. So I read about it in the newspaper and I thought: Okay, the bill is in pretty good shape.

When the bill went into the conference committee—and, Mr. Speaker, I know you know this, but for those who may not be conversant with how things work here, we pass a bill over here, the Senate passes a bill over there, then each House appoints a few

Members and they meet in a room and they sort out the differences between the two bills and then we eventually get a conference report.

Now, in years past—this is my 15th year in the Congress—that conference committee always included Republicans and Democrats. We, being Republicans, were in the majority party for 12 years. The Democrats would come into the room, the Republicans would come into the room, the Representatives would come into the room, the Senators would come into the room, and we'd hash out the differences and then at the end of the process everybody who's on the conference committee would sign the report, and that's what you have.

Sadly, even though people have discussed this being the most transparent administration, the most transparent Congress in the history of the country, no Republicans were invited into the conference room. Clearly, what we have seen—sadly, what we have seen—is that this Congress is about as transparent as this envelope. We are not being included. You know what? We don't have to be included. We are in the minority, and clearly the majority party can write legislation as they see fit. But what they can't do is what happened last week.

So in this conference room all of a sudden somehow the Snowe-Wyden language is removed that would have stopped these bonuses from happening. And the words behind me—they're only about 50 words on the chart behind me—were inserted.

This language specifically authorized the payment of millions of dollars of bonuses to people at AIG and anywhere else. So anybody who voted—when it came to us back in the House for a vote, this language was included in the bill.

So the reason I said I was shocked at people's shock is that anybody that voted for the stimulus bill voted to give and authorize and protect the bonuses at AIG and any other company that has taken billion of dollars through the bailout program.

We don't know—and I know the Speaker will remember last week we were on the floor for about an hour trying to figure out how it did it happen. We started with I talked about the fact that there's a face book. There are 435 Members of Congress, 100 Senators. We began crossing them out. We got down to about 520 during the course of that hour. I indicated we would come back and report to the Speaker the progress of this search. I'm pleased to report to you that we have made significant progress. My friends and I are going to talk about that this evening.

First of all, we can remove all 178 Republicans because there were no Republican Representatives in the room. We can also remove all 41 Republican Senators because they were not in the room. And I mentioned that we also have this Senate race that is unresolved in Minnesota so we can cross off