

Ranking Minority Member, the Chairman shall include an amount budgeted to minority members for staff under their direction and supervision. Thereafter, the Chairman shall combine such proposals into a consolidated Committee budget, and shall take whatever action is necessary to have such budget duly authorized by the House.

(b) *Committee Staff.*—(1) The Chairman shall appoint and determine the remuneration of, and may remove, the professional and clerical employees of the Committee not assigned to the minority. The professional and clerical staff of the Committee not assigned to the minority shall be under the general supervision and direction of the Chairman, who shall establish and assign the duties and responsibilities of such staff members and delegate such authority as he or she determines appropriate. (See House Rule X, clause 9)

(2) The Ranking Minority member of the Committee shall appoint and determine the remuneration of, and may remove, the professional and clerical staff assigned to the minority within the budget approved for such purposes. The professional and clerical staff assigned to the minority shall be under the general supervision and direction of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee who may delegate such authority as he or she determines appropriate.

(3) From the funds made available for the appointment of Committee staff pursuant to any primary or additional expense resolution, the Chairman shall ensure that each subcommittee is adequately funded and staffed to discharge its responsibilities and that the minority party is fairly treated in the appointment of such staff (See House Rule X, clause 6(d)).

(c) *Committee Travel.*—(1) Consistent with the primary expense resolution and such additional expense resolution as may have been approved, the provisions of this rule shall govern official travel of Committee members and Committee staff regarding domestic and foreign travel (See House rule XI, clause 2(n) and House Rule X, clause 8 (reprinted in Appendix A)). Official travel for any member or any Committee staff member shall be paid only upon the prior authorization of the Chairman. Official travel may be authorized by the Chairman for any Committee Member and any Committee staff member in connection with the attendance of hearings conducted by the Committee and its subcommittees and meetings, conferences, facility inspections, and investigations which involve activities or subject matter relevant to the general jurisdiction of the Committee. Before such authorization is given there shall be submitted to the Chairman in writing the following:

- (i) The purpose of the official travel;
- (ii) The dates during which the official travel is to be made and the date or dates of the event for which the official travel is being made;
- (iii) The location of the event for which the official travel is to be made; and
- (iv) The names of members and Committee staff seeking authorization.

(2) In the case of official travel of members and staff of a subcommittee to hearings, meetings, conferences, facility inspections and investigations involving activities or subject matter under the jurisdiction of such subcommittee to be paid for out of funds allocated to the Committee, prior authorization must be obtained from the subcommittee Chairman and the full Committee Chairman. Such prior authorization shall be given by the Chairman only upon the representation by the applicable subcommittee Chairman in writing setting forth those items enumerated in clause (1).

(3) Within 60 days of the conclusion of any official travel authorized under this rule,

there shall be submitted to the Committee Chairman a written report covering the information gained as a result of the hearing, meeting, conference, facility inspection or investigation attended pursuant to such official travel.

(4) Local currencies owned by the United States shall be made available to the Committee and its employees engaged in carrying out their official duties outside the United States, its territories or possessions. No appropriated funds shall be expended for the purpose of defraying expenses of Members of the Committee or its employees in any country where local currencies are available for this purpose; and the following conditions shall apply with respect to their use of such currencies;

(i) No Member or employee of the Committee shall receive or expend local currencies for subsistence in any country at a rate in excess of the maximum per diem rate set forth in applicable Federal law; and

(ii) Each Member or employee of the Committee shall make an itemized report to the Chairman within 60 days following the completion of travel showing the dates each country was visited, the amount of per diem furnished, the cost of transportation furnished, and any funds expended for any other official purpose, and shall summarize in these categories the total foreign currencies and appropriated funds expended. All such individual reports shall be filed by the Chairman with the Committee on House Administration and shall be open to public inspection.

RULE XII.—AMENDMENT OF RULES

These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the Committee. A proposed change in these rules shall not be considered by the Committee as provided in clause 2 of House Rule XI, unless written notice of the proposed change has been provided to each Committee member two legislative days in advance of the date on which the matter is to be considered. Any such change in the rules of the Committee shall be published in the Congressional Record within 30 calendar days after its approval.

THE CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. My name is KEITH ELLISON, and we are here for the progressive message, the 1 hour when the Congressional Progressive Caucus will come to the American people and talk about what our agenda is.

Tonight it's important to specify, Mr. Speaker, that the Progressive Caucus is going to be on the floor for the next 60 minutes talking about America's economic picture, the landscape that we're facing, and what the progressive vision is for solving these problems.

I am joined tonight by some stellar members of the Progressive Caucus. We have with us tonight, Mr. Speaker, our outstanding, stupendous, colossal, fearless leader, none other than LYNN WOOLSEY, who just got through talking about the war. She has been a champion on many fronts. But I'm also joined by my classmate, a tireless

fighter for all people across America, none other than YVETTE CLARKE, who never bends, never bows, and always stays strong for the American people. I think it's important for us to know that we're also joined by none other than DONNA EDWARDS, who is going to grab a mike in just a moment. And the four of us and other members of the Progressive Caucus for about the next 58 minutes are going to be talking about the stimulus package, the economic picture facing the American people, and what the Progressive Caucus believes we need to do about it. Your progressive voice on progressive issues.

So with that, I invite my colleagues to jump on in. We're going to have a colloquy over the next few minutes where we come in and out and share the ball, if you will, to talk about the stimulus package. And let me just kick it off with our chairperson.

Congresswoman WOOLSEY, how do you look at the stimulus package we passed today?

Ms. WOOLSEY. First of all, I would like to say to you, Congressman ELLISON, that, as the cochair of the Progressive Caucus with RAUL GRIJALVA, it's just an honor to be here tonight to talk about the economic recovery bill that we've passed in the House today. I really thought that's what we were talking about. I'd be glad to talk about everything that you want us to be working on with our Progressive Caucus, but I think that what we have done today shows that the Democrats are very much together, that we know where we're going. And this recovery package that was passed was very much in step with a letter that I sent, as the Chair of the Progressive Caucus, to President-elect Obama and to our leadership laying out what the Progressive Caucus wanted in this recovery bill. And 90 percent of what we asked for is in the recovery. We didn't get as much as we wanted on everything because we were looking at about \$1 trillion and we weren't thinking of having the tax cuts in there. But we are very proud that most of what we looked for is in this bill.

Mr. ELLISON. So did the Progressive Caucus ask for things like extension of unemployment benefits, increasing food stamps, and infrastructure projects, things that are really going to have a big punch when it comes to stimulating the economy? Were those some of the things in the Progressive Caucus letter?

Ms. WOOLSEY. If the gentleman would yield, those were the top three asks on our list.

Mr. ELLISON. Reclaiming my time, I would like to direct the gentlewoman's attention to this graph, which an economist named Mark Zandi estimated the multiplier effect for various policy proposals.

Essentially, the higher the number is, the more punch; the lower the number is, the weaker the punch. And the things that the Progressive Caucus

asked for had, for example, at the bottom here it says increase infrastructure spending, 1.59. Now, that's pretty high. And also temporary increase in food stamps, 1.73. That's very high. Extend unemployment compensation benefits, 1.64. That's very high.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to toss it over to YVETTE CLARKE, and just ask, in your view, Congresswoman CLARKE, are the things that the Progressive Caucus asked for in this stimulus package, they're not only good and decent and demonstrate compassion, but they're also good economic sense. Was that your view?

Ms. CLARKE. You're absolutely right.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my distinguished colleague Congressman KEITH ELLISON for managing the time requested by the Progressive Caucus on the floor to speak about the economic recovery package.

You just pointed out, it's there in black and white, Zandi's estimates for the multiplier effect, the top three items that were requested by this caucus were in this recovery package.

When we talk about economic stimulus, we're talking about things that people need from our economy in order to stimulate it. People must meet the needs of their homes and families' ability to feed themselves. Hence the use of food stamps is something that is constantly churning in communities across this Nation.

Infrastructure repair, I remember the most demonstrative thing that I could see since I've been a Member of Congress was that bridge fall in Minnesota, a neglected infrastructure that, thank God, we didn't see much more harm done to the population of Minnesota. But life was lost, Commerce was disrupted. Infrastructure, the multiplier effect. Just think about all of those trucks that have got to move the goods and services across our Nation. Truck drivers are being employed. Let's talk about the folks who are going to do the bricks and mortar of it all. They're going to be able to meet their mortgage payments, do some savings, make sure that their kids can go get a great education, be responsible for their families and their communities. That's what it's all about.

So I want to commend our leadership in the Progressive Caucus, Ms. WOOLSEY and Mr. GRIJALVA, for having the vision to reach out to the administration, to make sure that they're aware that there are some easy matter-of-fact things we could do within this package that will make the difference almost instantaneously in communities across this Nation. And those three items that were discussed are the items that make the difference each and every day in every community in which we live.

Mr. ELLISON. Let's get our colleague DONNA EDWARDS from right next door in Maryland into this conversation.

Congresswoman EDWARDS, you've been an advocate for working people

all of your life and have been fighting for justice. How do you see this stimulus package? Do you think that it was more or less what the Nation needed? Are you happy with some of the key elements of it, or do you think it really needed to bone up on some parts?

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, today wasn't just a good day for the House of Representatives. It was a great day for the American people.

I know sometimes people may not know what a stimulus is, but we know what a job is. And this bill that we passed today created jobs. Three to four million jobs across this country will be created, and they're created because people will be put to work. They're being put to work not just for the jobs that have to be done today, rebuilding all of our infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our sewers, our water mains that are all falling apart, laying in broadband for the future, but also investing in some of those jobs that really are the future, science and technology jobs, investing in research so that we can get from here to there. So the American people may not quite understand that word "stimulus," but we all understand the word "jobs." And at the rate we have been losing jobs in this country, I think on Monday, just this past Monday, we lost 55,000 jobs in this country in 1 day. And so we needed to create jobs. And I think what we've done here is exactly that.

I know that in my neighborhood just in front of my house I had a water main break a couple of weeks ago. Well, our water mains across this country, that water infrastructure is falling apart. So we need those water mains repaired. We had people going without water, without potable water, right outside the District of Columbia in Maryland in my district because of a water main break. So it's not acceptable that we continue in this vein in this country, and what we have done is we have created jobs for today and jobs for the future.

Mr. ELLISON. A very important observation.

I think it's important to point out that H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, does spend about 75 percent of the money within the first 18 months. Much of it is on infrastructure. It will create 3 to 4 million jobs. It does give about 95 percent of American workers a tax cut. Not the people who already get one but the folks who often don't get a tax cut.

If I may, I don't want to spend time on gloom and doom, but I would ask my colleagues to spend maybe 10, 20 minutes or so talking about what got us here. I don't know if you want to go back there, but I think it's important to say it is the absence of a progressive vision that got us to this point. We're talking about years of deregulation and tax cuts for the wealthy. We're talking about an economic philosophy that said that poor people have too much money and rich people don't have

enough money; so what we're going to do is take from them and give to the ones upstairs. We're talking about tax cuts in the middle of a war, and we're talking about a war that never, ever, ever, ever should have been started. We're talking about an economic philosophy that really was not in favor of the average working family. And we know that when the average working family is doing well, then everybody does well, and when they're not doing well, then we get what we got. The fact is it is an economic philosophy that has been driving us.

What's needed is a progressive vision for our country, an economy that is inclusive, an economy that helps lift all boats because we do believe a rising tide lifts boats but you've got to raise that tide. It's not the ocean liner but the dinghies that need to be rising up.

So with that I invite you all, if you would, just to talk a little bit about what you believe got us here and what the situation is we're confronting. I think it's important for the American people to know that we are not just spending \$825 billion on a whim. We're in serious financial trouble. We're talking about the loss of 2 million jobs and change last year.

This is an unemployment chart in 2007 and 2008. The blue is 2007 numbers. The red is 2008 numbers. Now, if you can see, every red bar is longer than every blue bar. Can you see that? That means we had a dramatic jump in unemployment in nearly every State. Minnesota's right here, California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa. Every State has had a dramatic leap forward in unemployment, a very serious issue, and I think that it's important to point out that we are here to do something about it.

□ 1900

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. If the gentleman would yield?

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman EDWARDS.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. You know, you raise a really interesting point, because with the job loss at just at 2.6 million jobs just in 2008, what we have seen here is 8 years of a history of providing tax cuts for the very top and nothing for everybody below; and that's really played out in the worst way in this economy. And, you know, what's really shocking is that even today, even in the face of this economy, there were still those who are arguing that we should give more tax cuts to the wealthiest, even in this environment.

So the American people actually came out on top today because we created jobs, we provided tax cuts for working people. We made sure, for example, there are people in my district who are asking for food stamps and energy assistance who have never asked the government for anything ever before, but they have to in this economy. And so we have made sure that we take care of those folks, too, even extending

health care coverage. When you lose a job, you lose your health care coverage and you really do worry about your families. So we have been able to create jobs in every sector where we have lost jobs, and we have made sure that we keep that bottom line for family that is really in need.

Mr. ELLISON. Very important point.

Ms. WOOLSEY. If the Congressman would yield?

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman WOOLSEY.

Ms. WOOLSEY. One of the things we have to be particularly proud of in this stimulus package today, first of all, for every \$1 billion we are spending on infrastructure, we are creating 40,000 jobs; so we did a very good job with that today. But we are also investing in programs that create jobs that also are needed and necessary in our country.

We talked about the crumbling bridges and the infrastructure of the sewer pipes and all of that, but when we talk about the energy program, we have been supporting, as progressives, we have been supporting at least an Apollo-size energy program that not only provides jobs but will help us with our security so that we are not dependent on foreign fuels. Actually, green technology is jobs for the future. I mean, it's the industry of the future that the United States has to capture, and we are investing in our global warming, undoing the problems we have caused. And all of that costs money, but it makes jobs, and it makes jobs that leave behind projects that we need desperately in this country.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, so in other words, we are not just giving \$825 billion out, we are getting real value for these kinds of things, as Chairwoman WOOLSEY has said.

I just want to say that I am very proud, Chairpersons, of our Progressive Caucus have been communicating with our leadership and the administration on the things that the American people who are progressive really want.

Congresswoman CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE. You know, as we are all just too keenly aware, the current economic environment that we are in the midst of was a gift left to us by the Bush administration. And I really want Americans to focus on the fact that we have had 8 years of neglect, destruction, of total malfeasance when it comes to the economy of this Nation.

And we have just begun today, less than an hour ago, just minutes ago, to, you know, sort of begin to address in a very substantive way the impact of a mismanaged economy and, by extension, a mismanaged nation. We are excited about what is taking place, the level of enthusiasm that our Progressive Caucus had for this particular piece of legislation, H.R. 1, the Democratic Caucus has had, that the American people have had. And we are supporting our newly elected President, our newly installed, sworn-in President and his vision for taking us out of what

is a very dramatic downturn in our economy, and it's going to take some time.

We are at the advent of that, and, I mean, I think for each of us who is here tonight, there are many more things that we know will have to be done. We are at a good place, at a good starting point, for our communities and the turnaround of these economies, the investments we are making. Because these are truly investments, these are not just giveaways; we inherited a World War II infrastructure, if you will. If it weren't for those folks who, you know, sacrificed during the World War II generation, you know, the subway systems we enjoy today, the mass transit, the technology, all of that was invested during that period of time, and use of the benefit of mobility and economy and took us to this point. We kind of coasted off of that generation's innovations.

It's our generation's time to step up. Barack Obama has led the way by being on the Hill, working in a bipartisan manner and making it unequivocally clear to the American people that it's our time now. And H.R. 1 speaks to its being our time now.

And I am just really proud to be here at this moment to have the Progressive Caucus in lockstep recognizing that we are not going to get everything we want, but if you don't put it out there, you are not going to get anything of what you want. So you put out there everything that you think is needed to make your community strong, solvent again, to help small businesses, which are really the major employers in many of our communities.

And it's all in here, the benefits and tax cuts and tax deductions for small business are phenomenal. They will be the ones that, when the contracts are broken down, we need those nails and those hammers, they will be the ones who can provide those, who can supply those. When their workers need to move goods from one place to another, the small businesses and our employers in our local communities will benefit from the work that we just did moments ago.

So I want to thank you for that, Progressive Caucus members.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, well, let me thank you again, Congresswoman CLARKE. You are right on the mark with everything that you have said.

I just want to let everybody know we are the Progressive Caucus, we are here for 1 hour. It is our plan to be here week in, week out to come project a progressive vision, whether it's on economics, whether it's on war and peace, whether it's on civil rights.

We talked about civil rights last week, we are talking about the economy this week. But this is the Progressive Caucus, and we are here tonight with our chairperson, LYNN WOOLSEY, with my colleague, Representative CLARKE and my colleague, Representative DONNA EDWARDS from Maryland.

Congresswoman EDWARDS, I am sure that some thoughts were occurring to

you as Congresswoman CLARKE was stretching forth on her ideas.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Well, you know, today was a great day. When I think about what we have done on education, we provided \$300 million for Job Corps centers. These are training, you know, young people who may have fallen through the cracks, but they need the skills to participate in this economy and in the 21st century economy.

We have provided the resources for our Job Corps centers to train up those people, not just in my home State of Maryland, but in every single State. I think that there are something like 125 Job Corps centers around the country, \$300 million, train them for a green economy. Get those workers out into the workforce. They are weatherizing our homes, they are maintaining and building solar panels and wind turbines and learning how to lay broadband and do the construction jobs that we need throughout the economy.

So I think it's a really great day for young people who want to go to college and whose parents may have lost a job, or not quite had the job that they had before this economy went into the tank. Those young people will be able to qualify for Pell Grants because we increased the opportunity for that. And so we will have our young people going into college, getting those 2- and 4-year degrees so that they can come out to be really full participants in our economy.

So I am excited about what we have done, and I agree with my colleague from New York, YVETTE CLARKE, because we couldn't do everything in this bill, but we sure got a good start for January, 2009, for this new President and this new Congress.

When I think about what it means to be a progressive and part of the Progressive Caucus, it means that we are making progress for the American people, and that's what we have started with this bill.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, if I may turn to our chairwoman here, you know, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, we are the Progressive Caucus. A stimulus package was passed through the House today.

Does the Progressive Caucus still have a vital and essential purpose, given that we have a President that we happen to like nowadays? What is our role in the Congress? What do we do? Now that we have a Democratic President and a majority, what should the Progressive Caucus take on as its mandate? What's our role?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, our role, KEITH, is to support our new President in every way we can, particularly when he is doing what we think ought to be done, and certainly we are going to have a much easier time of it with Barack Obama, President Obama, than the last 8 years.

But when it isn't going the way it ought to go from our perspective and with our progressive promise of things, the equality of all people, and the

things we hold near and dear, then it is our job to pull him in our direction.

We have to be very clear that if the moderates—and there is nothing wrong with being a moderate person, I just don't happen to be one—when the moderates become the left edge of our politics, then imagine what happens with the right wing.

Mr. ELLISON. Then the center becomes the right.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Then the center becomes the right, and then it just goes off the chart.

It is our job to remind our President that, indeed, the progressives actually represent the core of the Democratic Party, and we are very proud of it.

When people ask, Oh, we love him, I mean, he just has the heart of this country. And when they talk to me about it, I always say, I don't envy our new President. He has a lot to do. He is going to be going forward while he's trying to dig out from this hole that this past administration left.

And you know what, it didn't have to have happened. It could have been avoided. For one thing, the lax regulations on Wall Street led us right to where we are today.

Another thing is this war of choice—amazing, I haven't said anything about it so far tonight, but it will cost us at least \$1 trillion when we should be investing here at home in the people of the United States of America.

Mr. ELLISON. That's right, that's right.

Well, thank you, Madam Chairman, for pointing out what the role of the Progressive Caucus is. I invite my colleagues to weigh in on that subject as well, as we talk about the stimulus package and our economy tonight.

I think it's important that the American people know that they have a progressive voice, projecting a progressive vision. We will never lay down our role as a coequal branch of government.

You know, we happen to like this President, and we will probably agree with him on a number of things, but it's not our job to agree with him. It's our job to represent the American people, to project an inclusive vision in which every American feels they can be successful where their rights are protected and where they can make a living for their family.

So, with that, I would just like to throw it back to my colleagues.

Ms. CLARKE. You know, I would like to ask about this progressive agenda. You know, we also have to be forward thinking; we can't just settle with this opening salvo in what will be a protracted struggle to realign our economy in this Nation, and our voices are going to be imperative because so many have been left out of the economy that was driven by deregulation, that was driven by greed, that was driven by policies that excluded such a significant part of our human resource in this Nation.

You know, patience is really going to be a virtue for a lot of us, and it's in

short supply, unfortunately, because people are experiencing real pain in this current economy. But patience is going to be what's required as we recraft, reshape, recalibrate the economy in which we operate, and we now know that our economy is not just an American economy, but is an essential component of a global economy.

□ 1915

And as we make America stronger, there are going to be global implications in what we do and what happens with regards to the whole realignment of our market system.

I want to make sure that there's always going to be a voice coming from our caucus that talks about human resource development. Human resource development. More productive Americans are in their skill and talent and ability, the stronger our Nation will be.

So I would like to see us in the future, in the very near future, really look at how Community Development Block Grants can be utilized for rural and urban and suburban development. I know that it has been very successful in programs like the empowerment and enterprise zones of rural and urban communities. I think there may be a time within very short order where something similar will have to be engaged in order to make sure that we capture all of the human resource productivity that we can.

Our productivity quotient has to really rise as a result of us stimulating our economy. And as we stimulate our economy and our companies begin to buzz again, as it begins to grow, we need to make sure that all of our talent, skill, and ability is applied, all shoulders to the wheel to, as you say, making the rising tide lift all ships.

I yield back.

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman EDWARDS, I'm sure you have some thoughts on this. As Congresswoman CLARKE talked about building the resource development, the workforce development, the skill of our people, I'm really happy that the Green Jobs Act, which we authorized the last session of Congress at \$125 million, has now been put through and appropriated at \$500 million, which is a significant increase, and we have about \$4 billion in job training and workforce development.

That goes to the point you were making a moment ago, Congresswoman CLARKE. We are investing in our people, and it is something we have to continue to do.

Congresswoman EDWARDS, any thoughts on this?

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. You know, this is really a terrific start, but it really is just a start. We are in the process now of creating and saving 3 million to 4 million jobs, but it's the beginning. And I think that we have a President, President Barack Obama, who understands that this is a start. Of course, we have to create jobs, stabilize our economy, get our credit and lend-

ing system functioning again so it works for our small businesses, so that it works for our students who are trying to get student loans, so that it really works for homeowners in this economy.

But we have a lot of work to do. We have additional work to do. And our job in the Progressive Caucus, and I think the President would agree with this, is to challenge him to be the best President that he can be. I know that we can do that as a Progressive Caucus by focusing on the needs of working people, of focusing on bringing more people into low- and moderate-income housing, into reinvesting in our disinvested communities, and to making sure that people have health care that is quality, affordable, and accessible to all of us. These are things that we can do.

We have to be smart and deliberate about it and we have to be very strategic about it, but I think that we have a President who's on the same page, and our job is to lay out an agenda that all of us can come around.

I know that we can do that as a Progressive Caucus. I feel it and I hear it and I see it. You see threads of it in this recovery and reinvestment package that we passed today. You can see threads of a progressive agenda throughout this package that we need to build on over this next Congress.

And so when I look, for example, at our push to expand low-income heating assistance, expand LIHEAP, what that does for us is also says we are going to invest in weatherization of some of our older homes. Many of these homes are occupied by our low-income families, occupied by our senior citizens, and we will do that, but we also create jobs in the process.

So there are a number of elements of this reinvestment and recovery package that will get us to where we need to be in this current economy but will put us on a foot forward moving forward with this new President.

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman EDWARDS, I want to thank you for pointing out that this stimulus package has been heavily influenced by the work of the Progressive Caucus. But for our efforts, it wouldn't be the great document that it is. Though it may not be all that we want it to be, it's much better than it would have been without our input.

It's important for people to know that the role of the Progressive Caucus is to put forth a progressive agenda to help our leadership stake out a progressive policy, and if we are not pushing, if we are not agitating, if we are not arguing for that case, then the case simply won't be made.

So it's critical that the Progressive Caucus come before the American people and talk about what we are doing, talk about what we are up to, but also we do some of the work that is our job as Members of Congress to do, which is to push that agenda right in here.

Congresswoman CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE. When the American people called for change, Congressman ELLISON, they were really calling for progress. We were stuck in a rut. The morale of your average, everyday citizen was being diminished with each and every hour that the Iraq war was raging, that the Dow Jones was dropping, that they were receiving letters about foreclosure at their doorsteps, as they were receiving pink slips from their former employers. I mean it was an all-time low.

The one area where people saw sort of like a glimmer of hope was in the change in administration, a new leadership that spoke to progress, that spoke to the need to turn the page and get things going again.

Today, our act on H.R. 1 was turning that page. It's the advent of something new, something progressive. As my colleague, DONNA EDWARDS has said, it's sewing that thread together of innovation, of progress, of understanding the needs and the desires of the average, everyday American.

These are not the wealthy people who can afford the lobbyists. These are not the wealthy people who can jet off to another location and put their sorrows behind them. These are the folks who wake up every morning and wonder, Will I have enough dollars left in my pocket to make sure that my children eat this weekend?

So what we did today was we brought dignity back to those who were struggling and who have been left out of the equation of our common humanity for quite some time.

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman CLARKE, are you talking about those people who work so hard and struggle so much to make this country really go, that this Congress needs to respond to them when they need a hand? Are you talking about those people?

Ms. CLARKE. Those are the people I'm talking about.

Mr. ELLISON. Those people who are trying to wonder whether they need to put some cardboard in their shoes to go another couple of weeks or whether they can get some shoes, whether they can get lunch money for the children. Those are the folks you have got in mind?

Ms. CLARKE. Those are the seniors who were just about to retire when the market went down and their 401(k)s went down the drain, who now have to choose between a mortgage payment and purchasing their medication.

Mr. ELLISON. Right.

Ms. CLARKE. Those people.

Mr. ELLISON. So, the Progressive Caucus, that is who we are for. Because we know that the war makers and the big dogs, they have people who look out for them around here. They're paid to do so, as they wear their monogrammed shirts and fly their jets here. Sometimes they fly three different jets from the same industry here.

But, Congresswoman EDWARDS, how do you feel about the people we are here to fight for?

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. You know, we are fighting for those people every day. I'm am talking about working people. I'm taking about people who get up in the morning and they get on the public transportation, they get on the trains every morning, they ride the buses to work, and then they come home and take their children to the basketball game and soccer practice and sitting down and doing the homework, and they are struggling.

And these are working people who are struggling in this economy. And then some people who had a job yesterday but don't have a job today. These are the people that we are fighting for, that the Progressive Caucus is fighting for.

If the gentleman would continue to yield, I want to point out to you that I know that in my home State of Maryland—my State is just like a lot of States—where the budget of the State is being cut. In our case, it's being cut by about \$2 billion this year because our State has to balance its budget.

And so what we were able to do in this reinvestment and recovery package is to provide some help for the State so they don't have to cut vital services for people who work every single day. And I think that that is really important for the American people to know because we are out there fighting for them. And when it's all said and done, there will be those who will complain about this provision or that provision or other, but the reality is we have created jobs here. And we are going to protect and preserve those jobs and we are going to create better jobs for the future.

It was because of a progressive voice in that fight, working with this President and this Congress and our leadership, making sure that we passed something that really will make a difference, not just in the lives of the people in my home State of Maryland, but some of those other States where the unemployment is skyrocketing to double-digit unemployment.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentelady yields back, I'd just like to point out that on this chart that Mark Zandi noted—a conservative economist, quite frankly—in his study he showed that the revenue transfers to State governments have a pretty high multiplier effect of 11.36, which is pretty high.

If you notice nonrefundable rebates, they're pretty low. Some of these things extend—the alternative minimum tax, that is very low. Less than one. Make income tax cuts expiring in 2010 permanent. That's extremely low. And reduce corporate tax rates. That's pretty low too.

So if you really want to get the economy moving, if you want to help small business, help the average person, and help those States that you just mentioned a moment ago, Congresswoman, revenue transfers to State governments.

If I may just point out, you mentioned your State, and I am glad you

did, because it's important for people across all the States to know that we are in this thing together; Maryland, New York, Minnesota. We are in this thing together.

In my State of Minnesota the impact of this recovery bill will be State fiscal relief in a significant amount, which is actually over \$1 billion, which is quite a lot of money. Title I education, \$117 million; special education—always fighting for every penny—\$216 million. Very happy to point out Workforce Employment Services, \$19 million. That is a lot of money. That makes a big difference.

Weatherization. We like to get up to zero in Minnesota. If it got to be zero, it would be a heat wave in Minnesota. Weatherization is important for us. \$210 million. A very important program.

Of course, as you pointed out, when you lose your job and you lose your health care, so our Medicaid funding of \$737 million is a significant amount of money. All told, Minnesota is going to be able to benefit \$3.3 billion from the stimulus package. We have a State budget deficit of about \$5 billion. It won't cover everything, but it's going to help an awful lot, and there will be vital services that will not be cut because the Federal Government, with the influence of the Progressive Caucus, responded to the needs of the people in a real way.

Let me yield to the Congresswoman from New York.

Ms. CLARKE. I'm just thinking about what a pressure valve this piece of legislation is for so many States. We can probably count the number of States that are currently not in deficit and not cutting services on both hands. This Nation is really rocked by the devastation of an economic downturn, like your State, like the State of Maryland, the State of New York.

We were here just before our significant break before we came in for the new session to deal with the automobile industry. Prior to that, we did the TARP. The TARP for New York City and New York State was like saving and industry that was a free-fall in terms of being an economic engine not only for our city, not only for our State, but for our Nation.

So I can really relate to what so many of my colleagues from across this Nation, whether they are from the Midwest, the far West, the Atlantic region, the Southwest, have been experiencing when manufacturing has been leaving all these years, when so many other industries have faltered and we were not there responsibly addressing those unemployment issues.

This ripple effect has hit home for every single American. If you have not personally been touched by what is happening in this economy, you are not breathing on this earth right now. You either know someone who's been impacted or you are yourself have been impacted, whether it's your home

being foreclosed on or it's that company that has left town and has not been replaced in any form or fashion.

All of these issues are at the premium right now in everyone's minds, everyone's hearts, and everyone's pockets.

□ 1930

And so H.R. 1 to the rescue. We are here, and we have opened the door with the advent of something new, something progressive, and we are supporting it 110 percent.

Mr. ELLISON. We have about 15 more minutes left in our hour, so start thinking about what we want to leave the folks with tonight. But I just want to point out that one of the progressive values that we share is that we have an inclusive vision; so that we don't engage in regionalism, we think about what all Americans need. And so we are concerned. When I see an unemployment number in New York at 7 percent, that sends chills through my spine because in Minnesota we have got 6.9 percent, which is pretty much the same. And we look at Michigan really hurting.

So we know that we need those workforce development dollars there to help get people trained. And the year before that they were at 7.4. So they have been hurting for a long time. And Rhode Island people are really taking a hit, and in North Carolina as well.

One of our values as the Progressive Caucus is that we stand for the American people as a whole. And Congresswoman EDWARDS, again, here we are moving forward on this stimulus package, and we are going to continue over the course of the year to project a progressive vision and a progressive economy.

I guess one of my questions to you is, how critical is it that we continue to keep up the struggle to project a progressive vision for our Congress and for our Nation?

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think that our job is to make certain that we project a vision that is about the future and that we ensure and say to the American people—and I know that I am going to say this to the people in my home State of Maryland, in the Fourth Congressional District of Maryland—that every day I want to listen to them so that we are articulating here in this body, in this Congress, in this House of Representatives, what is important for them.

When they get up in the morning, I want them to know that we are thinking about them. I want them to know that we want them to have a job, that we want their children to have an opportunity, that in retirement we want to make sure that they are safe and well taken care of, and that our senior citizens have the benefit of all those golden years that they have worked up to. And I know that we can do that. And we have to say to the rest of the world that we are leaders and not just followers.

And when I think about a progressive vision for this country, I think that we didn't realize until the bubble burst out of our housing market how much of a deep impact that had on the rest of the world economy.

And so we are in a global economy, but part of that carries a responsibility. It carries a responsibility for oversight, it carries a responsibility for accountability, and we have to make sure that we are investing our money in our families, in our working families, and in our communities. And I think if we have that kind of progressive vision, that we are going to be able to not just convince the President of the United States, but we are going to bring him along and the rest of our colleagues in that same direction.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you for yielding back.

Let me say tonight that it is important for us to realize that this stimulus package really is emergency surgery. It is a crisis, and we are addressing a crisis. But when we talk about a progressive vision, we are not just talking about dealing with this crisis; we are talking about setting forth a new way of doing business, saying that the market will not be allowed to run amuck, that the market does not answer our questions, that the market has market failure, and that there is a critical and indispensable role of government. Government is not the problem, but when government doesn't monitor people at the SEC and at other agencies, then we see problems arising. It is a vision of saying that the government has a responsibility to make sure that our economy is fair, that our economy is inclusive, that everybody matters, that everybody counts, and people are just not going to be left out.

It is a vision that says America should be at peace with the rest of the world, that we should pursue peace, we should promote peace, we should engage in dialogue and diplomacy and negotiation, and that war is the enemy of the poor. Not only is war dangerous to people on the business end of a missile, but it is the enemy of the poor in our country because it saps what poor people need.

And we also understand our progressive vision is that our country, a caring nation, a loving nation, should be concerned about the health of its people. And because of that, we need to have universal health care. And one of the best things we could do for the auto industry is to have universal health care, and they would have a lot of problems taken off of their shoulders.

So it is important to talk about that as we move into the final minutes of our special hour as we talk about a progressive vision that we are today dealing with a crisis, but that crisis is not the end of the story; that we are going to be moving into the future, and that we are going to be laying down a progressive vision for quite a long while.

Let me yield to Congresswoman CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE. I thank you very much.

I just want to close by thanking you, Congressman ELLISON, for organizing this special order with members of the Progressive Caucus this evening.

I think we have pretty much driven home that we are at the advent in the passing of H.R. 1 of the remaking of America, as our President, Barack Obama, likes to state it; that the things that we need to do have just been putting in place fundamentals, sort of the railing on which our economy will roll out from in the next 18 months to the next 4 years.

There is a lot of work to be done, a lot of human resource development to take place, a lot of training, and a lot of stimulating of our economy. And I want to take my hat off to all of my colleagues who voted in favor today of supporting the Reinvestment Act that we passed today, the economic stimulus and Reinvestment Act. And I look forward to getting back to my district and working with the folks in the community to be able to make sure that they access and hold accountable this Congress for making sure that this measure works for them.

We all have to be engaged in this for it to work. If anyone is sitting back thinking that someone is going to come and hand something to them, I think that they missed the whole point of why we voted for change. The change is that we are going to stay engaged, that we are going to ask for accountability in government, that we are going to demand it, and that we are going to see it come to fruition in the same way that we saw a new President become elected and installed.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you, Congresswoman CLARKE. And I just want to say thank you for yielding back. You do a wonderful job. And I want you to know that it is an honor to be serving with you. I admire the work you do, and just stand in awe of the way you just go about fighting for the people.

And the last word and the closing is going to be carried forth by our colleague, DONNA EDWARDS. But before I yield back to her, I just want to say I was proud to vote for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This bill creates 3 million to 4 million jobs, gives 95 percent of Americans an immediate tax cut; 75 percent will be spent in the first 18 months. And this bill is designed to get America working again. I am proud to vote for it, and honored to be able to be here with the Progressive Caucus.

With that, I yield to my distinguished colleague from Maryland, the gentlelady from Maryland.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I thank the gentleman, and thank you for organizing this discussion. I too am very proud to have supported the American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act, H.R. 1.

This is about creating jobs in this tough economy and moving us forward.

And I know that, like many of my colleagues, I will be proud to go back home to Maryland and say to the folks in my State, we are bringing \$782 million in transportation and infrastructure funding to our State. I will be proud to say we are bringing \$1 billion back to Maryland to help offset that horrible \$2 billion deficit that we are facing. And to 89,000 students, you are going to be able to get your average award of \$3,000 for Pell Grant assistance. Those are the kinds of things: elderly nutrition programs, real job creations, investment in science and technology.

I mean, our district houses some of the labs that are on the forefront of development in this country for science and technology and research, and we are going to be bringing dollars home to create jobs and make those investments for the future. And so like my colleagues around the States, we are going to go home to our folks and we are going to say we are bringing jobs back home.

And then we will come back into this Congress, and we will work for working people. We will fight for working people. We will do that every single day. And as members of the Progressive Caucus, our job will be every day to come here and fight for the American people.

And so it is an exciting time, but it is just a first step. And our job will be to work with this President to make sure that we take this first step into the next step for the American people.

And we've created jobs, don't forget that. We have created jobs today for the American people, 3 million to 4 million jobs created or saved today for the American people.

And I thank my colleague, and I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLISON. So let me just close it out and say that it has been a pleasure coming to you with this special order with a progressive message with my colleagues, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, Congresswoman CLARKE, Congresswoman EDWARDS. And this has been the progressive message here. Thank you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

AMERICA'S FINANCIAL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your patience in working with us here and allowing us to have this time to talk about something which is a very important and serious topic which has captured the attention, I believe, of most Americans: the work of the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., today on the floor of the House. We have in a way created history here in a unique way.

We have heard for the last 6 or 7 years, depending if you are talking

about the war in Afghanistan or the war in Iraq, about the tremendous costs of these two wars, particularly the war in Iraq. Year after year we hear from all different sources, all different political stripes, that these were very, very expensive wars. And yet, if you were to add up the total cost of the war in Iraq over the past 6 years and add that to the cost of the war in Afghanistan for the last 7 years, adding those two numbers together, in one fell swoop this afternoon we spent more money than that, in excess of \$800 billion.

I want to repeat that, because this is a fact that I think people are starting to add it up and say this is what is going on, but I don't know if that has sunk into people's minds:

Today, on this floor, we voted on a bill which will spend more money than the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq added up.

Now, how did we get to this strange position where we are so concerned about our economy, so concerned about deficits, so concerned about the government overspending? We have heard that from both political parties for some period of time. How do we get to the point where, in one fell swoop, we just passed \$800-plus billion?

Well, in order to try to put that in perspective, what I am planning to do tonight, and I am going to be joined with a number of my colleagues of very great reputation from all over the country; what I am going to be doing tonight is talking about how this developed, what is the nature of the problem, how did it occur; and then, how do we scope how big the problem really is, and what are the natures of the different ways that people might want to solve the problem?

The bill that we passed today was theoretically to solve a problem, and so let's go back just a little bit and say, how did we get into this particular mess that we are in?

Well, it goes back quite a ways to the Jimmy Carter years when we created various programs to try to help people to be able to get loans on houses, people that lived in areas where certain particular geographic areas were hard to get loans. And so the Carter administration put together the Community Reinvestment Act, and it was originally saying that when we are doing these different home loans, that we need to have some mechanism so that we can create some way for people that live in some more difficult areas to get loans in, for them to try to be able to get loans. I would suppose you would call it the economically disadvantaged areas. Well, that was under the Carter years.

Now, when we move forward in time, under President Clinton what was done was it changed this Community Reinvestment Act and it said that and it increased the percentages of the loans that had to be made from a banker's point of view to people who were not as good risks. In fact, it demanded that

there were loans made to people who were just flat a bad risk and very likely would not be able to pay the loan.

□ 1945

At the same time in the 1970s, we created Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and these were two quasi-governmental agencies, and the purpose of them was also to provide loans for people in the sort of middle-income type bracket of housing so they could get loans at a reasonable rate. So Freddie and Fannie were born. They were really not quite government and they were not quite private. They were in the in-between zone, and they started more and more to make real estate loans, to the point that a few years ago when Freddie and Fannie got into trouble, more than half of the home loans in America had been made through Freddie and Fannie. So they had grown over the years to tremendously large quasi-governmental organizations.

What happened under the Clinton administration was Clinton forced Freddie and Fannie to take a whole lot of loans, loans that were not going to be very good loans, and he said you have to take them along with the other loans that you are taking. So the government, as a matter of policy, forced Fannie and Freddie to make loans to people who were going to have a hard time for some of them to pay back.

This starts to go along at the same time with Greenspan reducing the interest rates, so there was a whole lot of money available for people to put into houses. And probably many realize now when we talk about 2001, 2002, everybody's home values were going up like a skyrocket. Everybody was happy as their house was getting more and more valuable. Just in the 2000s alone, they doubled. And many people took secondary loans on their homes.

So this easy money in combination with the fact that you have now got all of these different speculators jumping into this housing market, and what happened was because of the fact that Freddie and Fannie were playing very, very loose with their rules and regulations, were taking loans. And they wouldn't ask anybody how much money they made. And they wouldn't ask whether they were able to pay or whether they were going to make a downpayment. They said, you want a loan, fine, we will give it to you, because the assumption was that you and I and the American taxpayer would back these Freddie and Fannie loans. But more and more loans were being made to all kinds of people, including speculators, where there was no way they would be able to pay those loans back.

So as the housing bubble burst. All of a sudden these loans started coming due and people were defaulting on their loans, and there were cries of crisis on Wall Street.

An additional fact that was going on here, you have the rating agencies, one of them is known as Standard & Poor's