

Willing to take responsibility. Mr. President, Wall Street has responsibility for the greed they bred, for ripping off American taxpayers and taking exorbitant profits, destroying anything and anyone in its path, and then taking more bonuses and continuing to live their high life.

Wall Street will never willingly and openly accept its responsibility for their role in our financial system's downfall. It's our responsibility to hold them accountable.

It is too late to ask Wall Street to play nice and make reforms. They had their chance, and they blew it. You can be sure they are going to pay millions to lobbyists and PACs to protect their bonuses, loopholes, their safety nets, and the current structure of banking in this country.

It's time to face down Wall Street and stand up for Main Street. The time spent waiting for Wall Street's willingness to change is over. The results of the taxpayer bailout are clear: More profits for Wall Street, plus massive bonuses, while foreclosures skyrocket across this country.

Wall Street had its chance to open credit lines to business, as well as to direct funds they got from the taxpayers to help millions of families facing foreclosure work out those loans, but instead they took the money for themselves and racked up huge profits in the last quarter.

Wall Street had its chance to be responsible as stewards of the tax dollars they got. They failed. They didn't even try. Wall Street banks cannot even tell us where the TARP dollars, that is, the taxpayer dollars, went.

The arms of their businesses which service loans are moving at a snail's pace to help people find ways to work out their mortgages. Why? Because they can make more money when loans are delinquent. The pace of loaning to businesses and people is almost stuck. What are fast and furious are the payouts of bonuses and profits.

Wall Street executives like Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs are waltzing around the changes they should make around compensation and bonuses, but talk is cheap because it costs them nothing. It's a good press release. Name me one Wall Street money-center bank that has restructured its compensation structures. Wall Street is fighting to have custom credit default swaps and other derivative instruments remain unregulated in the coming reforms.

This moment in history marks the time for each Member of Congress and public servants at the FDIC, the SEC, the Federal Reserve, the Treasury, and associated regulators to act and create the kind of reform that creates a credit system which stands strong for generations and contains moral hazard.

Will America allow itself once again to be bought out by Wall Street? Or will we stand together thoughtfully, deliberately to empower regulators and to reform this system with a new bank-

ing system that respects communities, encourages savings, assures sound credit? Will we break up the megabank trusts or continue to allow the concentration of financial power in the few greedy hands that are holding it today? Will we move forward with a stronger, more creative, more prudent, more sound community-oriented financial system again?

It's time to work on a bipartisan basis to do this. We can't race. We have to debate real financial reform here, not cosmetic bills that are brought up on this floor. We must share the rationale behind reform and make it real. And we must shift the balance of credit power from Wall Street back to Main Street and the American people.

The challenge is crystal clear. The question is: Do we have the will to do it here—to create a financial regulatory system again for the betterment of all people in our Nation, to strengthen community lending and sound and prudent credit practices at the local level and, in turn, the world's financial system? The jury is out.

THE URGENCY OF PREVENTING IRAN FROM ACQUIRING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last week we commemorated a sad anniversary of the September 11th attacks on our Nation. On that fateful day 8 years ago, we realized that protecting our homeland and defeating our enemies would require innovative approaches and an unconventional view of the threats that we face. However, when looking at the Iranian nuclear threat, it would appear that some have forgotten the lessons of 9/11.

Many believe that because Iran has not yet mastered all of the elements needed for an operational nuclear weapon, we have the luxury of time. Mr. Speaker, that is not so. Iran has already produced 1,400 kilograms of low-enriched uranium, which can easily be used for a "dirty nuke."

As former President Clinton noted in the year 2005, if you have basically a cookie's worth of fissile material and you put it into a traditional bomb, you can amplify the destruction power by hundreds-fold or more.

So the nuclear threat from Iran already exists in a radiological form. Yet, the U.S. and the U.N. Security Council have actually lowered the requirements imposed on the Iranian regime with respect to its nuclear activities. The initial U.S. position with respect to Iran's nuclear program was to demand its complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement. Then it went down to a mere temporary suspension of uranium enrichment. And now, reportedly, only a commitment from the Iranian regime that they will not use growing supplies of enriched uranium to make nuclear weapons.

This, as a U.S. government official was quoted as saying just last week, "Iran is now either very near or in possession already of sufficient low-enriched uranium to produce one nuclear weapon" and is closer "to a dangerous and destabilizing possible breakout capacity." And this means a breakout capacity for producing not a dirty nuke but a conventional nuclear weapon.

Iran is pouring enormous resources into its nuclear program. Its missiles can already strike U.S. forces, can strike Israel and our allies in the Middle East and Europe, and it is only a matter of time until it has the capability to hit us here at home.

Inexcusably, one administration after another has not fully implemented the range of sanctions that are called for in current U.S. law, nor have we leveraged our resources to secure cooperation from our allies, particularly those on the U.N. Security Council. And this year we have filed another bill for another range of sanctions on Iran, and we have yet to get that bill out of committee, in spite of over 300 sponsors for that bill.

Next week at the United Nations in New York, for the first time a President of the United States will chair a meeting of the U.N. Security Council. The Council will be holding a special summit on the general issue of nuclear nonproliferation, but will ignore the actions of specific countries such as Iran.

The U.S. will also not use its presidency on the Security Council this month to pursue further sanctions targeting the Iranian regime. In fact, rather than using our platform at the U.N. to urge immediate action against the regime, the U.S. has again succumbed to Iranian manipulation.

Joined by France, Germany, Britain, Russia, and China, we will meet with the regime in Brussels on October 1 to resolve the disputes over Tehran's nuclear program.

Let's get this straight. As the threat posed by the Iranian regime increases, as the Iranian regime inches closer to weaponizing its nuclear program, the response from the so-called international community is to schedule more talks—legitimizing the regime by engaging them directly.

By its own statements, the regime is committed to the destruction of Israel and the U.S. as well. Ahmadinejad has repeatedly denied the existence of the Holocaust, called for Israel be wiped off the map, spoken of achieving "a world without America and Zionism."

□ 1945

Iran is also the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, assisted the attacks on our soldiers and continues to this day in Iraq and Afghanistan, and poses a growing threat to the Persian Gulf, a major source of the world's oil. This threat is becoming global, as Tehran expands its presence and influence throughout the Middle East and South and Central Asia and right here

in Latin America as well as Africa. But right here in our own hemisphere, one need look no further than the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community center in Argentina, Buenos Aires, to demonstrate Iran's willingness and ability to attack targets half a world away.

In July, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called for even stricter sanctions on Iran to try to change the behavior of the regime. I couldn't agree more, but we need them now. Let's act now.

TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS ABOUT THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to honor the United States Constitution. Earlier today, the House unanimously passed my bill, House Resolution 686, the Teach the Constitution Week resolution. Congressman RON PAUL and I combined our efforts on this important legislation because society is losing its knowledge of our Nation's most fundamental principles. The Constitution lays out the tenets of our Republic, and House Resolution 686 specifically proposes that seniors in high school across the Nation be taught about the Constitution at the start of their senior year in high school for 1 week.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is the highest law of the land. If we're not teaching our children about a document so fundamental to our Nation's past, present and future, then what are we teaching them? Too many Americans have no real understanding of the principles of this historic document. More teenagers can name the judges of American Idol and more teenagers can name the Three Stooges than can name the three branches of our government. This is a true disservice to our Nation and its citizens, and this is the reason why we should promote a better understanding of the Constitution on the part of our Nation's youth.

The resolution also encourages seniors to petition the government on an issue of personal importance to them to demonstrate their understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United States. They can write letters, organize a trip to Washington, D.C., to see Congress in action, or call their Representatives to voice their opinions about bills and laws in which they have an interest.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to say that earlier this afternoon, the House of Representatives passed House Resolution 686, just 3 days before we celebrate Constitution Day, which marks the 222nd anniversary of the original signing of the U.S. Constitution by members of the Constitutional Convention on September 17, 1787.

I want to thank the 222 Representatives who signed on as cosponsors of this bipartisan bill. I hope that it will

help to reinforce the great importance of the U.S. Constitution to our Nation.

THE 19TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS' VIEWS ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, like many Members in the House, I spent a good part of August visiting with people in the 19th Congressional District that sent me here. I had several coffees all across my district. One of the things that they spoke loud and clear of is that they are very concerned about the direction of their country. And as I listened to the President's speech and I listened to some of his advisers, they think these people are not Main Street America, that they are somehow disillusioned. Well, they are disillusioned. They are disillusioned with our government. They see their government bailing out banks. They see their government bailing out car companies. They see their government taking over every aspect of their lives and now wants to take over our health care. I want to read you some of the comments from the people of the 19th Congressional District.

Janie from Lubbock, Texas: "I am self-employed and pay my taxes. I firmly believe we currently have way too much government in our business and daily lives."

Jennifer from Wolfforth, Texas: "Keep the government out of our health care. Remind them of our broken systems, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. We don't need another one."

Bobby from Lubbock: "I do not want the government to run my health care. America does not need any more debt."

Rick from Lubbock asked this question: "Why can't government cut back on its spending like the rest of us have to?"

Nelma from Lubbock: "My husband and I were born into very poor families. We were able to realize the American Dream. I want this opportunity for the upcoming generations."

Michael from Lubbock: "Reform is definitely necessary, but not the kind that has been proposed."

James from Lubbock: "Read, understand and apply the Constitution." A novel idea, James.

Mandy from Lubbock: "We want to keep our great insurance that we pay premiums for. We don't want to have our tax dollars fund another fiasco and become another Canada."

Holly from Wolfforth: "Stop the spending. When I was deeply in debt, I stopped buying, worked hard and paid for things slowly but surely. I am out of debt now. I did not ask anyone to print money for me or pay for me."

John from Lubbock: "Promise us that you will sign yourself, your family on the same plan that you force us into."

Grace from Lubbock: "I hope you have listened to the many people here in Lubbock who do not have health insurance and who cannot afford it."

James from Lubbock: "The U.S. Congress and the executive branch of the Federal Government, in particular, should limit their reach to what is allowed by our Founding Fathers' documents."

Robert from Lubbock: "We must stop this crazy deficit spending and borrowing."

Marilyn from Lubbock: "I hope that you will find a way to use the programs already available to cover all Americans."

Rosalie from Lubbock: "Government is spending too much money. Back off."

Larry from Lubbock: "In the bill there is language limiting the growth of physician-owned hospitals. These hospitals are able to supply health care services more efficiently than other community-based larger hospitals. I am against this bill."

Sandra from Lubbock: "We need to slow things down and people need to read all of the bill before doing any voting."

Kayla from Lubbock, who attended with her grandmother: "I am 9 years old, and I am wondering why the heck you're spending my future. Thank you for listening."

Ron from Lubbock: "When my kids were in college, my friends called me the ATM. I don't know the President. I don't want to be his ATM."

George from Lubbock: "As Big Government continues to expand, there is a commensurate loss of individual freedom, accompanied by excessive spending and an amassing of a ridiculous deficit."

Michelle from Lubbock: "I am a RN in a local emergency room. I am personally against the health care bill. How do we fix overcrowding of ERs? ER nurses are working twice as hard and seeing twice as many patients compared to the past."

Jack from Lubbock, "Say 'no' to the government health care and protect our borders."

Joel from Lubbock: "Please say 'no' to all excessive spending. Some of it does not fit with our Constitution."

Susan from Lubbock: "I have been an RN for 34 years. I am tired of seeing patients turned away due to lack of insurance. This takes such a toll on families and health care providers."

Mary from Lubbock: "Please do all that you can to keep health care in our hands, not the government."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, these are not people that are off on some tangent. These are people that are concerned about their country. They are concerned that the government is taking over every aspect of their lives. They're concerned that we are mortgaging the future of their children and their grandchildren. They're concerned that their personal liberties and freedoms are at risk.