

debate about our future role in Afghanistan. I firmly believe that there are respectful differences of opinion on this war, and that support for a war is not a litmus test for one's support for America. However, I'm grateful that this House has overwhelmingly rejected running from America's vital interests and the people of Afghanistan.

Our debate today presented a stark choice to Members, quite literally, to stay or to go in Afghanistan. It is one in which there is no middle ground, no hedging, no fudging. In the most unequivocal terms I can muster, I resolutely oppose our retreat from Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, more times than I can count in the past few years, we have been reminded that the war in Afghanistan was the good war, that it was the war of necessity over the war of choice. I stand here today to remind my colleagues of their many statements in that regard. We did not seek this war. Our enemy sought us out. We did not march into Afghanistan for profit or pleasure or plunder. We went to ensure that Afghani soil is never again used to wage war or terrorize civilians.

We did not ask for this war; but now that it's come, we cannot loosen the amount of responsibility that we have taken up. To be certain, our goals in Afghanistan are difficult. Continuing to forge a partnership with the Afghans will take military might, diplomatic finesse, and our hard-earned taxpayers to succeed.

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However, these are costs that we must bear and should bear. The President and our military leadership understand the seriousness of our task. Time and again in speeches and testimony and interviews they have repeated that Afghanistan is the epicenter of Islamic extremism, and that defeating al Qaeda in central Asia is essential to securing peace both in the region and here at home.

Our partners in bringing peace to Afghanistan are the Afghan people themselves. It is their homes that have been destroyed and their children who have perished in 30 years of war. Yet these beaten and downtrodden people have stood next to our soldiers to fight for their future and their country because we told them that we will help them bring order to the chaos of their homeland.

Many of my colleagues have discussed the costs of war, and they are right to consider what we have paid in blood and treasure to fight this fight. However, they have failed to weigh what giving up would cost us. Practically speaking, to retreat today means the Afghan central government will fail. When it fails, the Taliban will return to reclaim what was theirs and again plunge the country into the despotism of blind religious zealotry. The Taliban will welcome home radical Islamic jihadists back to their soil to again plan their acts of murder

and destruction. They will also expand their fight to the tribal areas of Pakistan, which has the potential to destabilize a nuclear power, and inflame the simmering tension between Pakistan and India, another nuclear power.

While it is relatively easy to estimate what we have spent so far and what we will spend in the coming years in Afghanistan, it is impossible to know the value of the calamities that have been prevented because we remain. There is no value that can be put on the growth of a civil society, no cost that can be put on stabilizing Pakistan, and no price that can be put on the recent rapprochement of Pakistan and India. Failure in these developments will hurt our national security, yet a retreat will make them more likely.

I believe, as we all do, that Americans want peace above all else. None of us desires our friends and families to be deployed overseas, battling among the rocks and caves of the foreign countryside. However, peace will not come until our enemies end their drive for our destruction. Until that day, talk of leaving Afghanistan means only that our enemies will bring the fight back to us.

There can be no peace in Afghanistan without a cessation of hostilities. Whether we leave today, tomorrow, or at the end of this year, this war does not end simply because we choose not to be engaged in it. The Taliban will return. With their return, they will expand their efforts to destabilize our ally Pakistan, and again provide sanctuary for radical Islamic jihadists who will continue to try to murder Americans in the name of their faith.

Mr. Speaker, I hope and pray fervently for a day when our Armed Forces do come home. However, until our enemies lay down their arms and give up their fight to destroy our civilization, our military must remain out there on the wall, doing their duty to uphold America's democracy and our safety.

That we have spent so much time today discussing abandoning our allies deeply saddens me. Halfway around the world I know that our Afghan partners were watching what was said and trying to divine our intent by holding this debate. It is my firm hope that they see today's vote for what it is, the unqualified, overwhelming voice of the House of Representatives announcing that we will not abandon our friends in their deepest hour of need.

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

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

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

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

HONORING CHARLIE WILSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and honor the accomplishments of Congressman Charlie Wilson who passed away on February 10, 2010.

Charlie Wilson was a remarkable Congressman, and in his time in the U.S. House of Representatives, he worked diligently for his constituents in East Texas. During his tenure in the House, he gained a seat on the House Appropriations Committee and through his position on the Subcommittee on Defense, he helped to fund the Afghan Mujahideen during the Soviet War in Afghanistan. Additionally, his support for progressive politics led him to be an advocate for the Equal Rights Amendment, a minimum wage bill, and Medicaid.

All of these actions have garnered Congressman Wilson a place in the history books, but it was his personality that earned him a place in the hearts of so many people across Texas. When everything was said and done, we all knew that his deepest concern was for the people of his district in East Texas, and as a fellow Texas Democrat, I am privileged to have served with him. His love for life will reverberate through the halls of Congress for years to come, and he will be truly missed by his fellow Texans, and especially me.

Mr. Speaker, Texas has lost a great leader and legislator with the passing of Congressman Wilson, and I ask my fellow colleagues to join me today in honoring his memory.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOCCIERI) is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry for the confusion this evening.

Tonight I am joined by several of my colleagues from around the country who want to talk to you about the economy and how we are working hard here in Congress to set the record straight, but also, more importantly, to put our people back to work.

If you remember when we took office, Mr. Speaker, we were suffering from one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression. In fact, many have called this the Great Recession. And ironically, of all commercials, there is a contemporary insurance commercial out on the airwaves today that says, "How will we remember the time and our experience? Will we remember this time as the great recession or the recession that made us great?" I think

tonight you are going to hear from my colleagues who say that we are going to be remembered for the recession that will once again make this country as great as it has been in the past by focusing on real things, real challenges, and offering up real solutions.

When we took office, Mr. Speaker, the economy was in freefall. We didn't know where we were going to land. Record job losses were across the airwaves, people were standing in lines waiting for unemployment checks, and we found out that it was the most significant job loss since the Great Depression.

Record job losses. We didn't know where the economy was going to fall. Two undeclared, unfunded wars. A banking system in chaos. Greed on Wall Street. It was a perfect prescription for a perfect storm, and one that has led us to where we now have enormous challenges in front of us. The job market was losing 750,000 jobs a month, and unemployment was climbing just as fast. The economy was contracting at a rate of over 6 percent, the worst in decades. Foreclosures were at record levels. Home prices had plummeted by 30 percent. The decline of home prices, stock values, pensions and other retirement plans had cost American households over \$10 trillion in wealth.

In fact, since the Great Recession had started, Mr. Speaker, since 2007, Americans' wealth had plummeted by \$17.5 trillion according to the Federal Reserve. Seventeen and a half trillion dollars of loss of wealth since the recession started in June of 2007. It didn't start to pick up until the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Now, we have heard a lot of hype about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We heard a lot about the fact that this was the largest investment of capital in our Nation's history. We have heard a lot about the fact that this was the largest tax reduction in our country's history. Faced with this economic meltdown that we were handed when we walked into the door here in the 111th Congress, it required swift action.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Members of Congress will be judged by two measures: by action or inaction. And the Congress took swift action to act as a backstop against further job loss, to create some jobs along the way. That is what the stimulus was about. And every economic expert you speak to today says that this brought us back from the brink of a great depression.

So I want to tell those detractors today that it wasn't until we enacted the stimulus bill, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, that Americans' wealth started to grow again. And in fact we see pensions are starting to climb, we see the fact that Americans' IRAs and 401(k)s are back on the path towards prosperity, and in fact we have recognized a \$5 trillion recovery since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the stimulus.

We are starting to create jobs, albeit not at the pace that I would like to see.

But we have to understand the ditch that we are trying to climb out of. And I want to say to you that while we see manufacturing increasing, while we see home sales increasing, we need to see more and more people get back to work. And that is what my colleagues are focusing on here today.

Around the world over the last century the typical financial crisis caused jobless rates to rise almost 5 years, according to the economist Carmen Reinhart. Over the timeline our rate would still be rising by early 2012. And as Ben Bernanke and Henry Paulson, who were both Republicans, said, that many others warned in 2008 if dramatic action was not taken to break back the recession, the United States could spiral into another Great Depression. These are experts. These are economists. These are people who have distinction and recognition all around the world. It is important that we recognize that we had to take swift action here.

In the fourth quarter of 2009, the economy grew by almost 6 percent. Six percent. Job losses for the fourth quarter in 2009 were one-seventh of what they were when we took office, Mr. Speaker. The nonpartisan Center for Budget and Policy Priorities said that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act kept more than 6 million Americans out of poverty and reduced the severity of poverty for more than 33 million more.

Can you imagine what it would be like if we didn't enact a robust policy to extend unemployment benefits, to extend coverage for health care so folks could keep their health care during this time of great need? Could you imagine if we didn't help our people what kind of condition we would find the people that we represent?

Well, it is disappointing because the challenges that confront us, Mr. Speaker, aren't Democrat or Republican challenges. They are not conservative or liberal challenges. They are not even moderate challenges. They are American challenges. And it is so frustrating to me that we have got to find the courage to stand up and confront these together. That is why I am so disappointed in my colleagues who didn't lend their support to help America recover in her greatest time of need.

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A few more facts before I ask some of my colleagues to be recognized here.

According to economists polled in a recent USA Today survey, unemployment would have hit 10.8 percent higher than December's 10 percent rate without the Recovery Act. The difference would have translated into another 1.2 million jobs lost. These problems were years in the making, and they are not going to be fixed overnight. In fact, I can argue it is a decade of failed economic policies that have led us here.

A lot of our colleagues on the other side like to talk about the national

debt. You know, when President Clinton left office, our country was facing a \$5.6 trillion surplus, a \$5.6 trillion surplus, and when President Bush left office, we were facing almost a \$13 trillion deficit. So it is very clear that after two tax cuts to the wealthiest among us, after two undeclared, unfunded wars and a prescription drug plan that left a huge doughnut hole for average working families and seniors, we have a deficit now that has put us on the brink. And that's why we had a quick reaction and that is why we passed the American Recovery Act.

Now I want to call on my colleague from California, because she is going to talk about how this has impacted one of the largest States in the country, and I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU).

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a member of the Democratic Congressional Jobs Working Group. Together, we are proposing solutions to our job crisis. In fact, one of those proposals is H.R. 4564, the Emergency Jobs Program and Assistance for Families Act. This bill extends an extremely successful employment program that we call Jobs NOW. It has created over 156,000 jobs over 29 States and is still developing more.

In Palmdale, California, Jobs NOW helped Jody, a single mother of two, find a job at a local coffeehouse working as a barista. The regular paycheck puts food on the table and is helping her get through a rough patch. Her boss is impressed with her work and plans to permanently hire her and the other three subsidized employees they brought in. It is this kind of success story that makes Jobs NOW such a model for job creation. Without it, the coffeehouse would not have been able to grow its business or take on new employees. Jody would not have had a chance to learn new skills and support her family.

I first learned of this innovative program in Los Angeles County. One of the supervisors, Don Knabe, created 11,000 jobs over the last year, using stimulus funds to create subsidized jobs.

How does it work? Eligible participants are placed into subsidized jobs in all sectors of the economy, from nonprofits to government agencies to private businesses, and are matched with jobs that complement their employment goals. The employer must provide supervision equal to 20 percent of the wage cost and ensure that the job does not displace an existing employee or replace someone who was to be promoted. This means the county is paying for 80 percent or more of payroll costs in Recovery Act funds.

Some examples of these jobs include park rangers, receptionists, teacher assistants, dental assistant trainees, customer service clerks, and child care workers. Workers get paid \$10 per hour for up to 40 hours per week. Jobs NOW allows businesses to succeed and the employee to succeed.

I have spoken to countless people in my district about this program, and I keep hearing about how this program is a win/win. It works for both workers and businesses. Workers benefit beyond the paycheck by getting hands-on experience in a setting where they earn wages, develop new skills, and enhance existing skills. Businesses benefit by getting the help they need to grow or expand while temporarily reducing payroll costs. Companies may ultimately decide to hire these subsidized workers permanently as the economy improves. The jobs generated by this program can help businesses expand in these difficult times by reducing their economic risk and need for expensive loans.

California is leading the Nation in creating these subsidized jobs. For instance, V-Cube, a high-tech firm in Torrance, California, hired two subsidized employees with very little experience. Very quickly, these two employees showed they were motivated and quick to learn. Now one of the employees runs Web seminars and the other is a project coordinator. It is only through Jobs NOW that V-Cube and other businesses feel secure in taking on new workers in this economic environment.

You can see that across California, in this map here, many, many jobs were created. In Fresno, 1,000 jobs were created. In San Francisco, over 1,500 jobs were created. In Los Angeles, an astonishing 11,000 jobs were created by the country's Jobs NOW program in less than a year. The State predicts that 25,000 jobs will be created through the Jobs NOW program by the end of present funding.

However, we must act quickly or the job placements will stop when the program expires on September 30. Because subsidized employment programs often run for at least 6 months, many localities are planning to discontinue their jobs program between March and June of this year in anticipation of the emergency funds expiration date. Almost 60,000 jobs will disappear if the fund expires.

In California, L.A. County will stop placing participants in new jobs in June. San Bernardino County has to stop creating new jobs in April. Sacramento County will stop putting people in 6-month-long jobs in March. It will pay people for shorter periods until June 2010, and then stop the program altogether.

But the full amount of funding has yet to be claimed by the States. The Recovery Act authorized \$5 billion for Jobs NOW employment subsidization programs, but actually less than \$1.5 billion has been accessed by the States. And the program is still in the process of expanding. That's why I am proposing, along with the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), a bill that will allow more States to help residents get back on their feet and into a job.

In fact, all across the country there have been programs such as this. We

can see that all across the country in the dark green spots there have been successful programs.

In Tennessee, the State focused on rural Perry County, which was hard hit by a plant closure. The unemployment rate had risen to 27 percent. Tennessee brought local workforce development and human service agencies and the business community together and developed a subsidized employment program for over 500 individuals.

In Mississippi, the State has developed the Steps Program, which uses Jobs NOW money to create private sector jobs that transition into permanent employment. The State begins by funding all of the wages of a new employee and steadily reduces its commitment until the business can support the employee on its own.

As you can see, 29 States across the country have implemented programs that created subsidized jobs, and even more want to jump on the bandwagon. That's why people on each side of the aisle are in strong support of this proposal. President Obama is a strong supporter. Besides its funding in the Recovery Act, he has proposed a \$2.5 billion increase and a year-long extension for this upcoming year's budget.

But it is not just the President who thinks this is a good idea; there is deep bipartisan support. The American Enterprise Institute's Kevin Hassett recently wrote in *Business Week* that this program should be renewed and said, "Given the state of the labor market, it is hard to imagine how any sensible person could oppose such a move."

Jobs NOW allows States to be in the driver's seat for this program, and that is why the National Governors Association also supports this, urging Congress to pass an extension because of the outsized benefits to the States.

The human cost of the recession has been high. It is easy to think of unemployment in terms of numbers and statistics, but numbers cannot describe the anxiety and fear a person feels when they are unemployed. Numbers can't show the hope and pride a person feels when they find a job.

I was moved by the words of Ms. Taylor in Los Angeles about the Jobs NOW program and its effect on her life. Ms. Taylor is a mother of two children, one with autism. She has been living on her aunt's couch because she couldn't find work. Because of a job through Jobs NOW, she was able to get back on her feet and into her own apartment. She told California Social Services, "You guys gave me a chance when the whole world seemed like they were saying 'No, not this time.' Without this program, I could not have paid my rent, and my babies and I would be on the streets."

She is not the only one. There are millions of economically disadvantaged people on the front lines of this economy. They are struggling every day. The Jobs NOW emergency fund gives them a chance to find work and start

moving towards a future. It helps businesses expand in these tough times.

I strongly urge the House leadership and my colleagues not to forget the thousands of people who need this help. We must pass H.R. 4564 for Jobs NOW.

Mr. BOCCIERI. I thank the gentle lady from California who made some very compelling arguments about why California needs to have this investment.

While we are joined by several of my colleagues tonight, let me just say a little bit about what we are doing to create jobs in Ohio.

In Ohio's 16th Congressional District, we have had some good news recently. Rolls Royce, an international company, has announced that they are going to move their fuel cell research from Singapore to Stark County, Ohio. They are going to expand their fuel cell research and development activities, investing \$3 million in equipment, creating up to 60 jobs and retaining 32, while offering apprenticeship and training programs with the local college.

Barbasol Shaving Cream invested \$7.2 million to buy land and a new plant in Ashland, Ohio; a 78,000-square-foot plant to start, 30 new employees, and grow up to about 75.

Scotts Miracle-Gro is opening a manufacturing plant in Orrville, where they are expected to create nearly a hundred jobs in the next several months.

Shearer's Foods, they make potato chips, and they are mighty good, I might add. They broke ground earlier this summer to build a new production facility in Massillon's Northeast Commercial Park. They will hire as many as a hundred employees in the first phase of development. These are the type of success stories that have been helped, if not augmented, by the efforts of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio for his leadership in bringing us together to make sure that we can discuss the importance of creating jobs. As we discuss jobs, I think it is important that we put our job efforts in perspective, because a little over a year ago when this administration came into office, we were losing jobs at the rate of over 700,000 per month, every month; 700,000 jobs a month. And we reacted to it by passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and we have slowly made progress, losing fewer and fewer jobs every month. But that is obviously not sufficient. We have to do better than that. But we have to put this in perspective. We were losing all of those jobs, and we found ourselves not only in the ditch with the economy, but also in the ditch with the Federal budget. We had a huge deficit which limited our ability to respond to this challenge.

We are also shooting at a moving target. Just this week, the Virginia Legislature, my home State of Virginia, will pass a budget that will cut approximately \$4 billion out of the budget. Virginia is about 2 percent of the population, \$4 billion. California is cutting \$20 billion out of their budget, a little over 10 percent of the population. If you extrapolate that nationally, that is about \$200 billion that the States will be cutting out of their budgets this year on top of about \$300 billion to \$350 billion that they cut last year. So that is \$500 billion that would have been cut out of budgets in the last 2 years. So the first \$500 billion of job creation that we do will do nothing but just hire the people who have been laid off on the State level.

So as much we are doing on the Federal level, it is obvious that we are shooting at a moving target. States are laying off people as fast as they can, and our job is to make sure that we try to create jobs.

Part of the Federal investment will help States retain some of their critical employees, particularly the public safety first responders and teachers. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act made significant reinvestments in funding States and helping with their health care and other critical needs so that they would not have to lay off as many as they were doing.

□ 2045

But obviously some of the major investments I think that are doing the most good are those that were made in infrastructure and transportation. We still have a 10 percent unemployment rate, so obviously a lot has to be done. And it's those investments in infrastructure and transportation that can be the most effective in creating jobs.

When responding to a recession, we use the shorthand of three Ts: We want the response to be timely, targeted, and temporary. Timely because sooner or later the recession is going to be over even if we don't do anything, so we want to make sure we take timely action. Targeted—you want to put the money where it's most needed, people that are out of work and people that will actually spend the money to help stimulate the economy. So it has to be targeted. And it is temporary. When we recover from the recession, we don't want to be stuck with ongoing programs and expenses that we will have to continue to fund.

Transportation and infrastructure projects fulfill the three Ts for a successful stimulus plan; they are timely, targeted and temporary. They're timely. We are aiming at programs that are shovel ready, ready to go, no environmental needed, nothing else needed, no architectural anything, ready to go. We are targeted at industries that are most in need. The construction industry in many States has unemployment rates of 25 percent or more. And it's temporary. When you fund a project, when the project is completed, you

stop spending the money. When you finish building the school, you don't have to spend any more money. It's not like you would set up a program where you would have to continue paying salaries on and on and on.

The Recovery Act, for example, put money into transit systems. Throughout the Nation, transit systems are cutting back on employment. St. Louis, for example, eliminated 25 percent of its workforce and cut services by 17 percent. Chicago laid off 1,000 workers. And so investments in the transit systems are areas where we can make timely and targeted investments.

Across the Nation these are necessary projects. Across the Nation, 78 metropolitan areas have identified over \$240 billion in needed transit investments that need to be done. These jobs not only put people back to work, they complete needed projects. Now, these investments are also very effective in creating jobs. For every \$1 billion the Federal Government puts in infrastructure the economic activity is about \$6 billion and about 35,000 jobs are created.

Now, we need these projects, and we found that a lot of them are ready to go now. The Public Transportation Association identified \$15 billion worth of projects that are ready to go. As soon as we fund them they are ready to go. Highway associations across the country identified 7,000 ready-to-go highway projects and bridge projects, almost \$50 billion ready to go. As soon as we come up with the money, they can go. And so not only are these projects needed, they can be timely and they can put people to work. We have found that when we fund a construction project, when it's ready to go, the contractors can hire the employees within a couple of weeks, and they're on the job right then. So we have timely projects that are ready to go. We have put money into it. Two-thirds of the projects that have been funded, the construction has already started.

We have more work to do. We still have a 10 percent unemployment rate because the States are still laying people off, so we still have to keep creating jobs. I am happy to report that today the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, has introduced a bill with significant new investments in infrastructure and transportation. These will make sure that we will have these workers on the job in very short order.

The Miller jobs bill will create jobs quickly and efficiently. As States continue to lay people off, we need to make sure that we are creating as many jobs as we possibly can on the Federal level. We should give the Miller jobs bill quick consideration so that jobs can be created when they are needed, and that's right now.

So I thank you. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio for bringing us together, for talking about jobs and encouraging us to continue doing what

we need to do to create jobs and end the unemployment problems that we're having today.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Well, I thank the senior gentleman from Virginia.

I just want to be clear about your chart. It looks as if we stabilized the job losses in this country and started to grow them again after the Recovery Act was passed.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. The Recovery Act was passed right down here, and since then we have been making progress. But losing fewer jobs is not good enough. We need to continue this chart. In short order, we will be creating hundreds of thousands of jobs, putting people back to work. Those who have lost their jobs need to be rehired. We need to create about 100,000 jobs a month just to keep up with the population growth. So this chart is just the beginning. By the middle of this year we hope to be well into the plus, creating jobs, hiring people, and bringing people back from the unemployment lines.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Well, these are exciting numbers. We have got to get people back to work. And I concur with the gentleman from Virginia.

Let me revisit for just a moment exactly what the Recovery Act and the stimulus bill included.

Thirty-seven percent of the package was tax cuts. \$288 billion was given to small businesses so that they could help grow and invest in our new economy. In my opinion, that is going to be our investment in energy. \$288 billion was invested back so small businesses could start growing again and investing back.

Largest tax cut in America's history, largest tax cut for working middle class families. In fact, 95 percent of middle class families in our country got some tax relief through their employer. \$144 billion, or 18 percent of the Recovery Act, was allocated to State and local fiscal relief. More than 90 percent of the State aid is going to help folks who are finding themselves on Medicaid rolls. Fighting to make sure that we didn't have double-digit increases in tuition across State universities and so that our local school districts could keep teachers hired and we could keep custodians in the building. This is very important, Mr. Speaker, that we understand that we help bring our economy back from the brink of a great recession.

As that contemporary commercial says today, How will we remember this time? How will we remember it? Will we remember it as the great recession or the recession that made us great? I think with these key investments into our people, into our workforce, and into our country, we are definitely making our country stronger.

I want to take a moment to recognize a distinguished gentleman that I have a lot of respect for. Not only do we share a common heritage, but we share a common belief that we should invest in our people, in our country, and in

our way of life. Congressman PASCRELL from New Jersey is a man who I have a lot of respect for, and I would like to yield him some time so that he can talk about exactly what we're doing to help put America back to work. Congressman PASCRELL, my friend, you have the floor.

Mr. PASCRELL. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the data, it is clear that since the start of the Obama administration and the passage of the Recovery Act—which you've heard depicted by the three former speakers—we are stemming the number of job losses per month; there is no doubt about that. But we need to do everything we can to actually start gaining jobs instead of just losing fewer. It would seem like the charts, it would seem by the facts that in the next several months we will see, finally, for the first time in several years a plus in terms of the creation of jobs.

The U.S. jobs deficit has reached millions. Our unemployment rate is 9.7 percent. That is an intolerable rate. The problem we are facing is how to address the shortfall in employment opportunities and articulate a new strategy that targets and engages our small businesses and American workers. Mr. Speaker, we simply need jobs.

Which brings me to what I think is the most obvious answer. It was obvious many years ago, it's obvious now: Our infrastructure. Our infrastructure is in disrepair. And it's not just our roads, and it's not just our bridges that are falling down. Earlier this year, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the Nation's wastewater systems and water systems the lowest grade of any infrastructure category, a D-minus. I want to have our viewers in the House see this. This is a rotted water main pipe, much like the pipes in many of our districts and many of our communities. I like to call these the out-of-sight, out-of-mind pipes; you don't see them until you have a problem with your water main. But as we have learned over the last couple of years, just because our infrastructure needs are not visible doesn't mean that they are not deteriorating.

A quick look at the recent news headlines across the country illustrates the state of our water infrastructure, and I can only list a few because time does not permit: "Franklin Water Main Break Closes Roads and Schools"; "Boil your water," says Franklin, New Jersey"; "Lancaster Water Main Breaks"; "Sinkhole Swallows Car in California"; "Water Main Break in Manhattan Causes Evacuations in Traffic, Subway Disruptions in New York City"; "Water Main Break Cuts Off Water Service to the Medical Center in West Virginia."

Here we have an illustration of the water main break on River Road in Bethesda, Maryland, watching people airlifted out of their cars. We're not making this stuff up; this is real. In metropolitan D.C. on Christmas Eve, 2008, it

was quite a spectacle. One headline actually read, "Water main break forces dramatic rescue of nine." The road literally exploded.

We cannot turn a blind eye to two realities: America needs jobs, and our infrastructure cannot put people to work fast enough. As a former mayor of Paterson, New Jersey, I understand the significance of local water and wastewater systems. A strong water infrastructure is essential to the community's public health and economic vitality.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the General Accounting Office estimate that community water systems will require \$500 billion above their expected rate of investment in order to meet safe drinking water standards and sanitation needs just over the next 20 years.

As Congress struggles with historic deficits, I strongly believe that we must leverage private capital investment and look at options for public-private partnerships. That is what we are talking about this evening.

In order to encourage this possibility, I introduced the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Investment Act, H.R. 537, which will generate significant investment through the use of tax-exempt bonds for water infrastructure, and that is water and wastewater projects.

Congress already exempts airports, intercity rail, and solid waste disposal sites from those bond caps. My bill would remove water infrastructure projects from the cap as well.

By exempting water projects from the bond cap, we can get people working on the very projects to my right in 90 to 120 days. This isn't hot air; this is real relief. This is real jobs. Standard & Poor's estimates that \$180 billion in new money infrastructure is available for investment. This capital cannot be deployed until a private activity bond cap exemption is crested.

□ 2100

This legislation aims to repair our crumbling water infrastructure while leveraging private capital to create jobs. Every dollar invested in public water and sewer infrastructure will add \$8.97 to the national economy. This is a win-win situation. Economists estimate a \$1 billion investment in water infrastructure will create 28,500 local jobs. You cannot in any manner, shape or form produce any other job plan that is going to do what this can do, because these are our needs. These need to be done because things are only going to get worse.

That pipe, which I showed you before, is not going to cleanse itself. It has led that pipe and many other pipes like it to this particular situation of people being airlifted, to rescue workers having to go to a particular community and, of course, to vehicles that have been raised in the air because of the explosion of our water mains.

This would be 28,500 jobs in 1 year. This is bipartisan legislation. Both

sides of the aisle have signed onto this. It could put Americans in every State to work within 120 days of its enactment. It is time to focus on creating jobs and on building a strong infrastructure for future generations. Let's stop talking about what needs to get done, and let's actually get this done.

There are huge economic benefits that come with water and wastewater infrastructure projects. In fact, a recent study found that every \$1 billion invested in water and wastewater infrastructure creates 27,000 new jobs with average annual earnings of more than \$50,000. Each \$1 billion invested generates approximately \$82.4 million in State and local tax revenue at a time when States and localities need it most.

This chart shows how construction dollars ripple through local communities. Right here, an estimated 20,000 to 26,669 jobs can result from a national investment of \$1 billion in water and wastewater infrastructure—everything from construction, to real estate, to retail, to legal services, to the management of companies and enterprises, to private households, and to maintenance and repair. This chart shows how these construction dollars ripple through our entire communities.

Let's face it: as of this unemployment situation that we are in today, 40 percent of those jobs will never return, and 40 percent of those jobs that have been lost—get this—are by people who have been out of work for more than 6 to 8 months. They will not return to those jobs. We need to invest with the private community in order to do things that must be done that communities cannot afford. We have found that every \$1 billion invested in these projects creates jobs in 325 other industries, and they are listed.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take action to support this legislation and to push its passage for measures that will empower American workers and that will provide them with opportunities.

Eligible and essential public health and environmental projects approved for 2010 are waiting for funding. They are waiting for private and public investment, which we can leverage with a very small amount of money. The resulting jobs are important. In California, 285,000 jobs can be created and, in Illinois, 133,950 jobs. In New Jersey, \$1.8 billion will mean 51,300 jobs on projects that are needed. In every State we go over, this is the case.

There are 60 different organizations which support this legislation—from engineers to waterworks associations, to equipment manufacturers—Caterpillar, Coca Cola, Design-Build Institute of America. There are 60 different organizations which support this bipartisan legislation that will create jobs and not hot air. We have had a lot of hot air in Washington. I think this legislation is what we need.

My good friend, Mr. BOCCIERI, I thank you for bringing us together tonight.

America needs jobs. This is our priority. I have presented an idea which, I hope, will be accepted. I hope that America can get back to work again. Our people need jobs—jobs that will be needed and that are needed so that we don't have to make work. Remember school? Make work. Keep the kids busy. These are things we need. We understand this, but we don't look at it because these waterworks, whether they are sewers, whether they are water or whether they are watersheds, are all mostly under the ground. It's not a romantic or a sexy thing to talk about, but I have presented to the House a way to put people to work. These jobs need to be done, and the private and public sectors must be brought together.

With that, I yield back. I thank you for allowing me to share in this important evening.

Mr. BOCCIERI. The gentleman from New Jersey has some very good ideas, which we have got to look at very seriously, about putting our country back to work and about long-term investments.

You know, I have often said that we have got to be the producers of wealth, not just the movers of wealth, and that we have got to build things here.

In 1950, over half the jobs in our country were in manufacturing. Today, one out of 10 of our jobs is in manufacturing. We are actually building. Some of that has been because of the fact that we have gained in productivity and because we have gained in efficiency. Yet we have still outsourced too many of our jobs. In States like New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Illinois, we have seen some of those manufacturing jobs go overseas.

Our great trade imbalance that we have, the trade deficit that we have every year, is very troubling to me. We have a trade imbalance with China—\$280 billion every year. We have a trade imbalance with oil-producing countries because they send \$330 billion of oil over to the United States. Those two account for some of the largest imbalances our country has ever known in terms of our trade policy.

We know that 95 percent of the marketplace is outside the United States, and Ohio is leading the Nation. Some of our local municipalities have begun to start exporting some of their goods overseas, creating their own trade relationships. We need more help here from the American Government, from the Federal Government, so that States like Ohio, Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania can help make those needed investments into our local communities.

We have to be the producers of wealth. We have to build things again in this country. It's not only a matter of our economic security. It's a matter of our national security. That's why it is so key and strategic that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act invests in our people, in our country

and in our future, and that we also lay the groundwork for future prosperity by investing in energy.

Energy is a key component of our Nation's economy, but it is very troubling when we import 66 percent of our oil from overseas and 40 percent from the Middle East. We see that the largest user of energy in our country is our Nation's military. The Department of Defense is the largest user of energy in our country. So it is very key, not only to our economic interests but to our national security interests, that we move away from our dependence on foreign oil, that we invest and create jobs here that cannot be outsourced, and that we make sure that we put our people back to work. That's why it is so important that we make these needed investments.

According to Andrew Stettner, I have to say—he is a deputy director of the National Employment Law Center—14.9 million jobless Americans have been out of work for an average of 30 weeks, which is the highest level since the government began keeping those records in the 1950s. It is the highest record.

We have some on the other side who are suggesting that we shouldn't have extended unemployment benefits. I've even heard some who have had the audacity to say that we shouldn't be giving them government/taxpayer money because they don't want to work. Are you kidding me? We have millions of people out of work in this country who are now just being called back to work. In fact, some of my friends on the other side voted against an extension of unemployment benefits which would have helped 11,600 Ohioans who have found themselves struggling just to put bread on their tables for their families.

To me, we have got to invest in our people. If we can spend \$1 trillion on war, we can spend money to invest in our people, in our country, and we can put Americans back to work.

I want to yield some time before we close today, Mr. Speaker, to a good friend of mine from Virginia, a gentleman who has the passion and vigor to take on the challenges of our great country, TOM PERRIELLO.

Congressman PERRIELLO, enlighten us for a few moments, sir.

Mr. PERRIELLO. Grazie to my paisan from Ohio. I appreciate that, and I appreciate your remarks on where we are with this economy, both with where we have come and with where we have to go.

I think both the present statistics in the history books will make clear that we have prevented a depression, which is no small feat; but I am not satisfied until we see robust economic growth that reemploys America. We should be willing to look back and say, Here is an opportunity, when we were going off a cliff into a depression, where we said, No, we will not allow that, not on our watch. We will make sure that that depression is prevented. Yet I'm not satisfied until we see the kind of job cre-

ation we need to see back on Main Street. We need to shift our focus from that speculation on Wall Street to that job creation on Main Street. These ideas are not Republican ideas or Democrat ideas. These are ideas about putting people back to work.

You know, in Ohio and I know in Virginia that we are right on the cusp of the summer construction season. We have an opportunity to start building again. Americans are ready to do it. Small businesses are ready to do it. Unfortunately, we are not going to see the housing starts pick up which many would like to see, but we know we can still build things. We can build our infrastructure, and we can retrofit our existing building stock. We have had a tool belt recession, and it is time to see growth in the tool belt sector.

These may not be the sexiest jobs to talk about in Washington or on Wall Street, but the fact is we must rebuild America's competitive advantage, and we must rebuild it one community at a time, one commonwealth at a time, one country, together, rebuilding our competitive advantage and putting people back to work. We have a chance to do that.

Now, most of the gentlemen on the other side of this building, down in the Senate, may be through this recession. The media elites may be through this recession, but working class America and middle class America are not through it. We have prevented the worst from happening, but we will not be satisfied until we see the kind of robust economic growth that will bring us back together. We will rebuild that competitive advantage, and we will need to do it in time for the summer construction season.

I appreciate all that you have done to keep that focus on jobs, jobs, jobs in Ohio, in Virginia, and around this country. We must be deadly focused on jobs, and we must do it with the urgency that does not miss the construction season ahead.

Mr. BOCCIERI. I agree with the gentleman from Virginia. We have seen almost a flip from a 6 percent job loss, when we began the 111th Congress in January of 2009, to nearly a 6 percent job growth in our gross domestic product. Yet we know that this is not about the GDP. This is about the j-o-b-s. We have got to put people back to work. That's why we are focusing on doing that.

There are some things that we have done for our small businesses, to help struggling small businesses stay open:

There is the net operating loss carry-back. We have also extended tax credits for renewable energy production because, as my colleague and I know, the cheapest energy is the energy we never use. Small businesses can save a lot by writing that off. They can save by weathering their businesses and by weathering their homes. That's what is going to save money in the long term.

We are also going to give bonus appreciation, which extends to businesses

that are buying equipment, such as computers. It speeds up the appreciation through 2009. That is helping our small businesses write off those losses so that they can get folks back to work.

Mr. PERRIELLO. This is an opportunity. What we have made is the down payment on America's future. We know that jobs of the future are going to come in the energy sector and that they are going to come in research and development. We need the strong universities, and we need the strong infrastructure.

A year ago, we made a down payment, which is starting to pay off now in the kind of rebound that we are starting to see; but we cannot be satisfied, and we cannot take that foot off the gas. This is the time. Americans are ready to build.

Again, this should not be a partisan idea. We all have construction companies in our districts. We all have roads and bridges and water and sewer systems in our districts. We all have small businesses that help supply that construction sector. We must see that this can be a chance to come together and to understand the urgency of this moment.

We have made that down payment. Now it is time to start seeing that growth. We are going to do that, not by saying "no" to everything but by saying "yes" to America's future, by saying "yes" to America's competitive advantage. There are many in the top echelon of this country who have stopped believing that America can manufacture, that it can grow things, that it can be strong again.

□ 2115

Those include elites on the left and elites on the right. Well, they are wrong. America's working and middle class is still strong. If we invest in them, they will outcompete every country on Earth.

We can outcompete the rest of the world, but only if we invest in education and workforce development, if we get a 21st century infrastructure, and we understand that two out of three new jobs in this country come from small businesses. Instead of bailing out the biggest businesses, it is time to reward and support the small businesses. They are the engine of innovation and growth. They are the civic leaders in our community.

That is what our agenda needs to be about. It is what we started on. It is what we must push forward, regardless of party line, and get America growing again.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Well, Mr. Speaker, he is exactly right. The gentleman from Virginia is exactly right that we have got to invest in our people, in our country, in our way of life. As that contemporary commercial says on the airwaves, is this going to be remembered as the great recession or the recession that makes us great?

I believe that we can do this if we work together, if we invest in our peo-

ple. Again, if we can spend \$1 trillion on war, we can certainly spend money to make sure that we invest in our people and do the things that are going to set us on the track towards prosperity.

We are starting to begin to see the glimmers of light. We are starting to see the glimmers of hope that people once again are going to be on to a path of prosperity.

I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia, because he believes that our greatest days are still yet to come. We will be stronger, we will be more robust, and we will be smarter on how we handle these future downturns. This is the time that we cannot let go away from us. We have got to invest in our people, in our country, and that is why I am so proud of the gentleman from Virginia, who stands with me saying that we will again be the producers of wealth, not just the movers of wealth.

THE QUESTION OF HEALTH CARE

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, it is a pleasure to join you here once again as we get a chance to take a look at Special Orders, and also I am joined by some of my distinguished colleagues. We are going to be looking once again at a subject that has really absorbed the attention of Americans now for almost 9 months, the question of health care. It is still before us.

Today was a little bit of a unique day for me because the President came to my district in the St. Louis area, and he wanted to deliver speeches and tell everybody that they should vote for the health care bill.

He and I have a difference of opinion on the bill. I think his opinion is that if people just know more about this bill, they will like it. My opinion is the more we have looked at it, the more that people have taken a look at it publicly, the uglier they think it gets and the more they hate it. Fortunately, the poll data seems to be on my side, and the more you look at the bill, the more it seems it has problems with it.

We have, today, joining us some distinguished colleagues from all over the country. We have two doctors and an attorney, and just, I think, a businessman and an engineer. It almost sounds like the start of some sort of a joke. But this isn't a joke, unfortunately. This is a very serious subject, indeed.

So I am going to recognize Dr. BROUN from Georgia, a gentleman who has spent a lifetime practicing medicine and then got elected to Congress, and now he is trying to straighten things out. I am going to have him, followed by Dr. FLEMING as well.

So, Dr. BROUN, thank you for joining us tonight. Let's talk a little bit about this health care bill.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Well, thank you, Mr. AKIN. You have been a stalwart friend in this fight to try to stop the government overtaking of the health care system. I, as a medical doctor, have been fighting for my patients for their economic well-being for years. I just wanted to come tonight and bring up a few things.

The Wall Street Journal yesterday, there was an editorial written, coauthored by Scott Rasmussen, the famous pollster. The title of it is "Why Obama Can't Move the Health Care Numbers." One of the lines in here right at the end is basically giving the bottom line. It says most voters believe the current plan will harm the economy—they are right about that—cost more than projected—absolutely—raise the cost of care—without any shadow of a doubt—and would lead to higher middle class taxes—and that is just undoubtedly a fact.

The American people get it. And one thing that the American people do get is that it is going to cost millions of Americans their jobs if this is put into place.

I thank you for bringing this forward tonight so we can talk about jobs and health care. I look forward to this discussion as we go along.

Mr. AKIN. I really appreciate your bringing that up. I am just thinking, picture yourself instead of being a doctor as being a salesman, and you are given an assignment that you are supposed to go out and sell something.

Say you are the President and your job is to go out and make this case. We have three huge entitlements that are destroying the solvency of our country. One of them is Medicare, one of them is Medicaid, both methodical things, and the government is running these things and they are destroying the economy because they are out of control, they are spending so much money. So your assignment is to go out and sell people that we ought to have the government take over the rest of the medical part. That is a little counterintuitive. You could be a good salesman, and it is hard to make that case. We have it messed up in this and this area, so give us the whole thing. It takes a little bit of courage to even try to do that.

Dr. FLEMING, please.

Mr. FLEMING. I want to thank the gentleman again, faithful virtually every week to have this leadership hour and talk about such weighty issues as health care.

But to follow up on your very point, and that is today, the big question is why all these increases in private insurance rates. Well, there are several reasons, but the main reason is that private insurance premiums help subsidize Medicare and Medicaid. Why? Medicare and Medicaid underpays the providers, the gap is getting larger, and so providers have to make it up in order to survive in business on the private insurance which has to escalate in relation to that.