

Congressional Budget Office, obviously, is nonpartisan in nature. And what he states is that unless there is a realistic assumption of what is going to occur, then there cannot be a realistic assumption of the total cost involved. He states, “Fantasy in, fantasy out.” And the first gimmick he sites is the fact that “the bill front-loads revenues and we back-load spending.” In other words, revenues increase over the next 10 years, but the spending does not increase until 4 years from now—10 years of revenue increases as opposed to 6 years of spending. This can only occur once, and moving forward into the second decade, of course that will not be possible. This is an excellent example of why over the first decade, the health care bill is not deficit-neutral. It, in fact, is in the red, something that should be of concern to all Americans.

This is an example of a larger problem in this country. The larger problem in this country is that we have a \$12 trillion debt, and that debt is rising rapidly. Last year, our annual deficit was \$1.42 trillion. This year it is expected to be \$1.6 trillion, the highest annual deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product since 1945, at the end of World War II. Over the course of the next 4 years, debt will increase dramatically, and I urge the Obama administration to begin to address this fundamental issue that really confronts us as a Nation and certainly confronts the next generation.

Moody's, the rating house, has indicated that it is not clear that we will be able to retain our AAA bond rating. And this, of course, would be tragic for the American people, tragic for our taxpayers, and indeed, tragic moving forward, making sure that America remains in its position of preeminence in the world. Moody's cites three different criteria as to whether it will reduce the AAA bond rating of this country. First, the amount of debt we are taking on, and of course that includes not only debt here at the Federal level but also debt at State and local levels as well. We are taking on enormous debt, as I have indicated. So that's not a good sign. Then of course whether or not Federal deficits will increase over the next decade and as a percentage of gross domestic product. This is the highest it has been since the end of World War II.

Moody's is also watching another factor to see whether we borrow less in the future and whether or not we raise taxes, which I oppose, or cut spending or both. Moody's is looking at that. Certainly we should engage in fiscal responsibility in a way moving forward to get our fiscal House in order.

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

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

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the President today. Mr. President, you are halfway there. With the President's signature on the health care bill today, the Federal Government has now taken outright ownership or control of 50 percent of the American economy. The President can rightly say that he has transformed America. Since the inception of bailout nation in September of 2008 with the passage of the \$700 billion TARP bailout, the Federal Government lollapalooza takeover began and was under way.

Madam Speaker, President Obama fully embraced the \$700 billion bailout plan during the first of his Presidential debates with Senator JOHN McCAIN. During December of 2008, President-Elect Obama insisted that outgoing President George Bush release billions of dollars to create the automobile task force for the purpose of preventing General Motors and Chrysler Motors from filing for bankruptcy. But like most government interventions, the billions spent on the auto companies did not prevent bankruptcy, but it did provide a gentler landing for the unions who worked so hard to elect President Obama.

Banks were bailed out, and the great Wall Street investment houses, including Goldman et al., turned themselves into banks to be eligible for government-subsidized TARP funds. Soon the Federal Government turned its dividend-paying shares into equity shares, and government became the outright owner—the shareholder of America's largest banks. Next came the unholly bailout of AIG, the largest insurance company in America. A sponge for taxpayer money, AIG held toxic derivatives, and they've yet to right their ship.

The Federal Reserve bought massive, copious reams of toxic commercial paper from private corporations, and the Federal Government's balance sheet forever changed, subsidized by the American taxpayer. Freddie and Fannie, the secondary mortgage purchasers, were the center of the universe for the financial meltdown. Foolishly they pursued a policy of purchasing substandard loans, then repackaging those loans into mortgage-backed securities. Freddie and Fannie greedily spread their economic cancer throughout the financial world, exposing America's taxpayers to potentially trillions of dollars of losses. Freddie and Fannie should have been shuttered. They should have been placed into receivership. But Uncle Sam, ever the chump, couldn't resist, and now Uncle Sam owns 50 percent of America's home mortgages.

Eager for more, the Obama administration consumed the student loan in-

dustry, and they completed that transaction today with a signature of a pen. A breathtaking 33 percent of the private economy was either outright purchased or controlled by the Federal Government in a span of 10 months' time. But the brass ring of government-controlled health care still taunted this administration. Eighteen percent of the private economy, the finest health care the world has ever known, was the long-sought-after prize of the political left.

Today they realized their dream. At the 11th hour this morning, President Obama, with the signing of his name, completed the Federal Government takeover of health care. Madam Speaker, 33 percent plus 18 percent equals 51 percent of the private economy today controlled or owned by the Federal Government. It is fitting on this momentous day that we pause for a moment of silence and lament the passage of half of America's economic freedom. In a stunning 18 months' time, for the first time in America's history, the Federal Government now owns or controls over 50 percent of the private economy. Madam Speaker, I say congratulations, Mr. President. You are halfway there.

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THE THIRD FRONT

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I bring you news from the third front. We have the front that America is engaged in war in Iraq, we have the front in Afghanistan, and I bring you news from the silent third front in that nobody talks about it, and that is the southern border of the United States with Mexico.

The inconvenient truth is there is a border war brewing on our southern border, and America needs to be aware of what is taking place and not ignore the obvious. The Texas border sheriffs and the sheriffs' coalition from Brownsville all the way to San Diego talk about the problems that are increasing on the border, and it is violence. It is the organized crime cartels, the drug cartels that are bringing violence to the border area on both sides of the border, on the Mexican side and on the American side, and it is only going to get worse.

I want to talk about a specific incident that is taking place between two drug cartels, the Zetas and the Gulf drug cartel. They are operating in Mexico in several places, but one of those places is Guerrero, Mexico, right on the border between the United States and Texas—or, rather, between Mexico and Texas. It is near a place called Falcon Lake.

Falcon Lake is a man-made dam, and the lake is as a result of that dam. On the southern side of Falcon Lake is

Guerrero, Mexico. Six thousand people live there. On the northern side in the United States is Falcon Heights, and Zapata County and Starr County are located there.

Yesterday in Guerrero, Mexico, eight buildings were burned to the ground by the drug cartels, the reason being the owner of those eight buildings was a Zeta, and he switched sides to the Gulf drug cartel and, in retaliation, the Zetas burned down eight of his buildings that he owns or controls. The problem in Guerrero, Mexico is so bad that law enforcement in that Mexican town have told people, Do not leave your homes today, because they expect violence to erupt today, tomorrow, or this weekend between the two cartels fighting over, as we say in the United States, turf, but what they say in Mexico is “la plaza,” fighting over control of that area.

Good folks on both sides of the border live in fear because of the violence, because of the crime, because of the drug cartels. And while we talk about health care, we need to talk about the health of Americans who live on the U.S. side of the Mexican-American border and the health of people who live on the southern side as well.

The Texas sheriffs are very worried about what is taking place because the drug cartels have more money. They outgun Americans, they out finance us, and of course they have better equipment than the U.S. sheriffs do.

The Secretary of State today is down in Mexico City talking about how we can spend more money under the Merida Initiative, the billion dollars we gave Mexico to secure the border on that side. We ought to be talking about, as the sheriffs in Texas say, spending money on our side of the border to protect and reinforce the border on our side because, sooner or later, violence will erupt into the United States.

In Guerrero, Mexico, they are expecting a violent fight between these two drug cartels any moment, any day, fighting over this turf. You see, the Zetas are running out of money and they need more money, and so the way that the Zetas are going to finance their operation is to kidnap people; the plan apparently being, from what I understand, to kidnap teenagers who have wealthy parents and hold them for ransom until that money is paid. Hopefully, that does not occur, but we will see.

This is just one area along the vast border between Mexico and the United States where violence continues to erupt and where we need to be in control of our own borders. The Texas Governor has asked for troops on the border, and he has been denied that. It is the first duty of government to protect the dignity of the United States and secure the border and not just talk about the fact that the border needs to be secure.

People have a right, who live on the border, to live free from criminal car-

tels coming in and committing violence against Americans, and our government better uphold the first duty of government, to protect American citizens. This is today's news from the third front on the Texas-Mexico border. And that's just the way it is.

FREEDOM FOR THE CUBAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, we have had a number of interesting debates in the last year, last few weeks in particular. One of the things that we should never forget is how precious freedom is and how frail freedom is. Just 90 miles away from our shores at this very moment, at this very instant, there are people who have been enslaved for over half a century under the boot of the same oppressive regime, the dictatorship of the Castro brothers. Half a century of brutality.

Just last week marked the seventh anniversary of the beginning of what was known as the Black Spring in Cuba. The Cuban Black Spring in 2003 was where 75 human rights activists, independent journalists, librarians, economists and other peaceful, pro-democracy activists and leaders were jailed for expressing their desire for democracy and democratic change in Cuba. All of them were sentenced to up to 25 years in prison in the worst possible conditions, in the worst possible prisons. Now, that is just some of the thousands of heroes who are standing up for freedom in the enslaved island of Cuba.

The majority of this Congress for many, many years has always stood with the Cuban people, has stood in solidarity with the Cuban people and their struggle for that freedom which is inevitable but has cost so dearly for so long. I have a lot to talk about on this issue, Madam Speaker, but before I proceed, I, frankly, am deeply honored to be able to yield time to an individual who has been a leader in this Congress for issues of freedom, a leader in this Congress who has always been speaking out for the oppressed wherever they may be, but who is so well known by the dissidents, by the opposition leaders, by the pro-democracy leaders in Cuba because his name rings as freedom for the Cuban people who have been enslaved. So I yield to the gentleman from Indiana, because it is a privilege to be able to share tonight with a person who everyone in Cuba—and there are those Cubans who live in freedom, whether it is in the United States or other parts of the world—recognizes this gentleman, DAN BURTON from Indiana, as a fighter for freedom.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Wow, I really appreciate you saying that, because

when I think of people who are really fighting for freedom in Congress regarding Cuba, I think immediately of LINCOLN and MARIO DIAZ-BALART. You two have been real stalwarts and are very eloquent. We are certainly going to miss LINCOLN when he retires after this year, but I know that he will continue to fight for freedom and democracy in Cuba. And ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN has been a real fighter, too. I appreciate all three of you and what you have been able to do. You worked so hard to help us get the Helms-Burton bill passed several years ago which dealt with the Cuban issue.

The thing that bothers me the most is, as you said, Castro has been in power down there for over 50 years. When he first came into power when the revolution took place, I remember there were a lot of people in America who thought he was going to be the savior of Cuba because Batista, who was the dictator down there, was supposed to be so bad; but they didn't realize while Batista might have been a problem, Castro was an absolute disaster. He came in and started killing a whole bunch of people and started imposing his communist philosophy and putting people in prison for huge periods of time.

There is a book that I read, “Against All Hope” by Armando Valladares. I know you both know him. When I read that book, I was on a plane. And he was in jail for, I think, 25 years only because he took issue with the communist approach to government in Cuba. I was on the plane, and when I got to a part of it I started to cry and the guy next to me thought something was wrong with me, and I assured him there wasn't and I told him about the book, and he said, I am going to have to read that myself. But I would say to anybody in their offices tonight that might be watching, I hope that you get a chance to read “Against All Hope” by Armando Valladares because it will tell you how bad it really is. I think last week or the week before, we had a person who had a hunger strike. I can't remember his name right now.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Yes, Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who died in prison as a political prisoner on a hunger strike.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. He went on a hunger strike and he ended up dying because he was protesting the terrible treatment and the people who are incarcerated for nothing other than opposing communism, and he died in his fight for freedom. That is just unbelievable. Castro continues to keep people incarcerated for huge periods of time without any real charge against them except they don't agree with communism.

So, tonight, I am adding my support to LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART and MARIO DIAZ-BALART in their Special Order because Cuba should be free. It is only 90 miles from our border. Most of the people down there yearn to have their freedom and the democracy we have