

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Weyers celebrates his retirement, I ask all of my colleagues to salute him and to remind him that retirement is simply reoccupation, and he will be just too busy to go back to work.

SURRENDERING OUR SUPERIORITY IN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, for as long as I can remember, America has reached for the stars. Nothing has gotten more kids to do their math and science homework than the dream of being an astronaut. All of America stood still, huddled at their black-and-white TV sets, when Neil Armstrong stepped out on the moon.

America put a man on the moon, setting the imaginations of our children on fire, feeding that good old American desire to be the best, to achieve, to dream of things not yet done. But the administration says they are canceling NASA's Project Constellation and America's return to the moon. America is surrendering our superiority in space technology to the Russians.

Unilateral space abandonment is nonsense. So next time our astronauts want to go into space, they will have to hitchhike with the Chinese or the Russians. And if we need to repair a defense satellite, I am sure our buddies, the Chinese, will be glad to give us a lift. Yeah, right. Our children, our future will suffer for this incompetent decision. This ought not to be.

But that's just the way it is.

HONORING ERICKA DeBENEDICTIS

(Mr. HEINRICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, I have often said that innovation is what America does best. Recently, I had the honor of meeting one of our great current and future innovators, Ericka DeBenedictis. Ms. DeBenedictis is an 18-year-old Albuquerque student who recently won the prestigious Intel Science Talent Search, which recognizes our best and brightest young scientists. This long-standing award has been characterized as the equivalent of winning a junior Nobel Prize.

Ms. DeBenedictis received the top prize because of her research in low energy orbit software, a program which would enable space vehicles to navigate the solar system using gravity's pull and minimal fuel.

On behalf of everyone in New Mexico's First Congressional District, I want to say how incredibly proud we are of Ms. DeBenedictis and the hard work that she put into her project. As I've said, innovation is what America does best. And it looks like innovation might be what Ms. DeBenedictis does best too.

TAX DAY

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, as Kentuckians file their taxes today, sending their hard-earned dollars to the Federal Treasury, Americans want to know exactly what they are getting in return. Like jobs maybe? Over the last 2 years, Congress has given America three things: a series of bailouts, a failed stimulus package, and a government takeover of health care, each costing around a trillion dollars or more. In return, there are over 225,000 Kentuckians and 15 million Americans out of work. Everyone agrees that the economy and job creation have been at the top of the list of what Americans are saying is the most important things to be done.

Rightfully, in my mind, we hear over and over again, "Where are the jobs?" Well, we are going to focus on climate change or we are going to focus on other things that Americans don't care about when in fact we need a sound energy policy, a sound manufacturing policy, and a sound trade policy. Instead of focusing on the economy and job creation, the agenda in Congress has left Americans with uncertainty.

When Americans feel their tax dollars aren't being used right, the Democrats in Congress say, "Just send more." Well, Americans expect our focus to be on policies that create jobs, building a future for our children. And business can't thrive on an economy falsely buoyed.

IN MEMORY OF REVEREND BENJAMIN HOOKS

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, a great cedar, a great lion, a leader, a golden-throated warrior and silver-tongued orator of the Gospel, and a great civil rights icon, Benjamin Hooks, fell in Memphis, Tennessee this morning.

The Reverend Benjamin L. Hooks was the head of the NAACP from 1977 to 1992. He was also the first African American on the Federal Communications Commission, appointed by President Nixon. He served 5 years, from 1972 to 1977. And the first African American trial court judge in Tennessee, appointed by Governor Frank Clement in 1965, and elected in 1966.

The Reverend Hooks led this country through some of its more difficult times in civil rights. He joined with Dr. King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1956 after he had been ordained as a minister in Memphis at Middle Baptist Church. He was an attorney, he was a businessman, he was a minister, he was a civil rights leader.

He was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Bush in 2007, and re-

cently was up here in Congress and talked to many Members of the Congress in the Rayburn Building just 2 months ago. He leaves his wife Frances and many, many millions who benefited from his leadership and his courage. His was a life well lived.

Thank you for coming our way, Benjamin Hooks.

"WE THE PEOPLE" EVENTS IN AIKEN

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, a grassroots group in Aiken, South Carolina, is holding meetings to educate the residents about the Constitution and the principles of our Founding Fathers. Coordinated by Debbie Nix, the group is called "We the People, Aiken." I am pleased to have attended one of their weekly Constitution classes recently at the H. Odell Weeks Activity Center.

During my recent visit to the group meeting, I highlighted my concerns about the government health care takeover and discussed how simply repealing it is not sufficient. We believe we must swap it with a more affordable solution that is centered around the patient and not the government. That is why I introduced H.R. 4944, the Sid-ing With America's Patients (SWAP) Act, to continue to cover preexisting conditions, but will repeal the tax hikes and the unaffordable mandates on individuals and small business owners.

I want to thank the members of "We the People, Aiken" for their warm welcome and for their efforts to promote America's founding principles.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11 in the Global War on Terrorism.

TAX CUTS BENEFIT OHIOANS

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as this country's economy was about to fall off the cliff, Congress acted. We strengthened and improved our economy by helping working families. On Tax Day, it is important to note that 99 percent of the working families in my State of Ohio have benefited from 25 different tax cuts through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Citizens for Tax Justice, working people in Ohio received on average \$1,046 from these breaks. That includes an average of \$496 from one of the fastest and most widely shared tax cuts in American history, the Making Work Pay tax cut. Social Security recipients received a one-time recovery payment of \$250. And more than 879,000 families in Ohio were protected from paying higher taxes under the alternative minimum tax.

More must be done as we put America back to work, but I am proud to have supported the Recovery Act and am pleased to see the tax cuts helping so many Americans.

GOVERNMENT GONE WILD

(Mr. BONNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, spring break just ended, but if you thought Washington tax-and-spenders were taking a vacation from their money-grabbing ways, you were badly mistaken. Every day it seems another headline is proclaiming the administration's latest plans to dramatically increase your taxes in order to pay for its trillion-dollar spending binge.

Now, there are some close to the President who are throwing out the possibility that after the election they are going to throw out a value added tax not in place of our current tax system, but in addition to it. Mr. Speaker, this isn't the latest video of spring breakers going wild, this is a real life example of government gone wild.

The President, backed by the largest Democrat majorities in Congress since the 1970s, has doubled the Federal deficit in just 1 year, and has forced down our throat a government takeover of health care that, mark my words, the American people don't want and we cannot afford. Ironically, hardworking taxpayers will have until midnight tonight to file their tax returns. They have worked 4 long months just to pay their Federal tax bill. And soon they will be working even longer to feed this addiction. This has got to end.

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HONORING OUR VIETNAM VETERANS

(Mr. KLEIN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the veterans of the Vietnam War in my congressional district in south Florida and around our country. These heroic soldiers answered the call of duty, and we're all grateful for their service and their sacrifice.

Many of our Vietnam veterans didn't get the welcome home they deserve, and that is why this Saturday, one of our great local veterans, Commander David Knapp, is organizing a welcome home event in Ft. Lauderdale. It may be belated, but I say, better late than never.

Every day I go to work fighting to make sure that every man and woman who has worn the uniform of our country has access to the full range of benefits they have earned. That means world-class health care, access to a college education and more.

I look forward this weekend to honoring the service of our local Vietnam veterans and every day as we work together to stand with those who served our country.

TAX DAY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, tax day. Today is a grim day for many Americans. It was only last week that the average American taxpayer had worked enough days to pay their annual bill, and the current Congress is looking to add even more days to that burden.

In the present Congress alone, taxes have been increased by \$670 billion, and at least 14 new taxes will hit middle-income Americans. At the end of the year, the death tax will snap back up to its 2001 level, gobbling up family farms and small businesses. Marginal tax rates will snap back up to previous levels reducing America's take-home pay. And now we hear that the administration may consider a new value added tax to pay for the entitlements and increased government spending.

The simple fact is that more money in the pocket of the government is less in the bank accounts of our family businesses.

Today is a grim tax day. But I worry that 2011 will look much worse for the American taxpayer.

TAX RELIEF

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, as today is tax day, it is important that American people are aware of the savings and tax cuts brought to them over the past year. In conjunction with President Obama, we have ensured that tax breaks no longer focus on the wealthy, but rather on the hardworking Americans.

With the enactment of the Recovery Act, we are able to provide tax breaks for many aspects of American life, from investing in small business, to investing in energy efficiency, to sending your child to college, to buying a new car. These tax reductions are helping families and businesses across America get back on their feet while spurring business investment and job creation.

All totaled, Congress has enacted over \$800 billion in tax cuts, including 25 within the Recovery Act. Perhaps one of the most critical provisions of the past year was the Making Work Pay tax credit, which is dedicated to providing 95 percent of all American workers with a tax break, including 254,000 residents in my district alone through the reduction in tax withholdings by their employer.

As Americans return their tax forms today, a majority will find that a portion of their burden has been lifted

through the swift action of this Chamber.

IT'S TIME TO CUT TAXES AND SPENDING

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, as millions of Americans, and the people in my State of Louisiana, file their income taxes today, they are reminded how they labor under a tax scheme that discourages hard work, investment and savings.

Federal, State and local taxes claim almost 27 percent of the average American's income. This means the average taxpayer worked until April 9 this year just to make enough money to pay their taxes. Meanwhile, our budget deficit this year is a record \$1.5 trillion, three times the highest Bush deficit.

This tax increase equates to more than \$2,100 for every person in the United States and explodes the President's pledge not to raise taxes on Americans earning less than \$200,000.

And now we hear that the administration is considering a value added tax which taxes goods and services at every point in the process.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taxes and our budget, let me suggest that Americans are not undertaxed; Washington is overspending. It is time for Congress to cut taxes across the board and stop the wasteful spending programs.

TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

(Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, today, as Americans put the finishing touches on their tax returns, they'll see that Congress and this President have enacted tax cuts that benefit middle class and working class families. Despite the echo chamber of right wing misinformation, some of it we've heard here today, Mr. Speaker, we can finally set the record straight. For 8 long years, the Republicans put the interests of the wealthy few above the interests of middle class families, and they gave massive tax cuts for only a few Americans, sent the national debt soaring, and they had no way to pay for it.

In this last year we've cut \$800 billion in taxes focused on helping middle class families and small businesses. Americans are getting jobs, they're buying homes or a car, and they're sending their children to college.

As Bruce Bartlett, adviser under Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush recently noted, "Federal taxes are very considerably lower by every measure since Obama became President."