

which the President still to this day is not doing his job under the law in helping direct the effort to keep the oil off our marsh, which our local leaders are battling to do every day.

Unfortunately, our local leaders tell us—and I have spoken to them. Anybody who speaks to them will tell you they are spending more of their time fighting the Federal Government than fighting the oil. But the biggest insult lately has been this moratorium because the moratorium, first of all, was actually opposed by the scientists and experts that the President put together after the explosion of that oil rig.

They were tasked by the President to come up with a 30-day report on safety improvements. They actually came back with that 30-day report, and they made some good safety recommendations that I support. But the other thing they said was they opposed the moratorium on drilling that the President came out with.

So when the President gets this report, he doesn't agree with it because for political reasons he wants to go and ban drilling, so he just discarded the science and trumped it with politics. Not only did they say in that report that they were opposed to the moratorium. I have spoken to a few of those scientists and experts and they said, they lay out a good case why the moratorium imposed by the President actually reduces safety in the gulf.

So here you have got a double whammy kicking people when they are down. The people of south Louisiana are down, and yet the President who is supposed to be helping us is coming up with policies that are hurting the people of south Louisiana. Then this moratorium, not only does it go against the safety recommendations of his own scientific experts, but it actually now is costing us thousands of jobs.

□ 1750

There was an unemployment debate going on in this House today. Well, one of the reasons we've got unemployment is because of the President's policies. He should rescind that moratorium. A Federal court twice now told him to rescind it, and he refuses to do so. He refuses to listen to his own scientific experts who say it actually reduces safety in the gulf because you lose your most experienced crews. You actually increase our dependence on foreign oil, and it's imported by tankers. And 70 percent of all the oil spills occur on tankers. So now the President has increased the likelihood for future spills in the gulf with his moratorium that's running more jobs out of our country. And I yield back.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. SCALISE, I appreciate that. And not only is it killing jobs, but it's going to make everybody's gasoline go up. It's going to make electricity prices go up.

I said here on the floor in a speech that the President's energy tax, cap and tax—or cap and trade, as they call it, some call it cap-and-tax, I call it

tax and trade because it's all about taxes—is going to hurt the most vulnerable people here in America. It's going to hurt the poor people. It's going to hurt the seniors who are on limited income more than anybody else. And it seems to me that this disastrous economic as well as environmental disaster that has happened in the gulf is being utilized by this President to try to force his energy policy, his tax and trade bill.

I've been criticized by the liberals around the country because I've said it's going to hurt the poorest people in this country, and it will. In fact, the President himself said, "It will necessarily make electricity prices skyrocket," make electricity prices skyrocket, necessarily, that's what the President said about the energy tax. It would necessarily make electricity prices skyrocket. Who's going to have the hardest time paying their electric bill? The poor folks in America, those people on limited income, the senior citizens, who can least afford to have their gasoline go up, to have their electricity go up. It's going to be disastrous. And it's going to kill jobs.

In fact, the President talks about all the green jobs that are going to be produced. Spain put in a similar type of tax, a similar kind of policy in Spain, and it did produce green jobs. But Mr. Speaker, for every green job produced I think it was 2.3 jobs were lost, a net loss of 2.3 jobs for every job that was created. For every green job that was created, every green job created they lost 2.3 jobs. And that's what our President wants to force on the American public.

I'm wondering whether he's closing down exploration in the gulf just to try to force through his energy tax. I don't know. But I've had people, as I've listened at my America Speaking Out town hall meetings I've had people across my district say that they wonder about that. I was doing an America Speaking Out town hall meeting in Athens, Georgia and a lady got up and she said she wanted to see all new energy exploration stopped, all new drilling for energy and gas to stop in this country. We had about 100 people there. I said, okay, let's find out what everybody else thinks. Now, mind you this is the most liberal county in my district, very Democratic. I didn't carry it as a Republican in any of my elections when there was a Democrat and Republican on the ballot. I did carry it in the special election when I was first elected, but not since. And I asked the public, we invited the general public, I said, how many of you in this audience want to see us stop any new exploration of oil and gas? Eight people held up their hands. Then I said, how many of you want to see us lift the moratorium and start back to exploring and tapping into our own resources here in America and continue drilling for oil and gas and continue developing our own natural resources our own energy sources? Everybody else. I think we

had a total of 98 folks, so 90 people held up their hands that they wanted to see it continue, eight people said they wanted to see it stopped.

Over and over again I've talked during this special hour about how the leadership—Ms. PELOSI and company—have gone against what the American people want. They want to see jobs created. We asked them, where are the jobs? They want to see their economy stimulated, not government. We asked them that.

Mr. SCALISE, I know that you've seen the disaster of the moratorium on the jobs in Louisiana, but it affects all the Gulf Coast States certainly, not only directly, but indirectly. In just the few minutes we have left, could you give us some examples of some of those non-directly affected people, the fishermen, the people on the platforms, et cetera, could you give us some examples of those people who have been affected by this moratorium?

Mr. SCALISE. Sure, I would be happy to share that with my colleague from Georgia.

Of course Speaker PELOSI earlier today, during the debate, she actually said that unemployment creates jobs. Now, the logic of that I don't think anybody can understand, but that's what her statement was.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Real quickly, the people I talk to don't want an unemployment check, they want a paycheck. And I yield back.

Mr. SCALISE. And that's exactly what the people in the gulf want. The people don't want an unemployment check, they want jobs. They've got good jobs, and they're being taken away by the President. And what they've said is keep this industry going, let's do it safely. And there are good outlines of how to do it safely. In fact, most of the companies out there in the gulf in even deeper waters than BP weren't cutting corners, weren't doing things the wrong way. They were doing everything safe, and they were shut down. BP is the only one out there drilling right now.

If you listened, we had tragic testimony from two of the widows who lost their husbands in that explosion in the committee I serve on. And both of them said it's tragic what happened. The rules should have been enforced that weren't enforced, the safety rules should have been followed. But they said don't shut down this industry, it's our way of life. We know it can be done safely. You need to insist that those rules are enforced, which they weren't. Don't shut down the industry.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, where are the jobs? We need to have different policies to create jobs than what we've been given by Ms. PELOSI and company.

I yield back.

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

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

60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Mr. Speaker, I will claim the time on behalf of the Progressive Caucus tonight to bring a progressive vision about our great country.

My friend poses the question, where are the jobs? That's a good question coming from the Republican Caucus because they're the ones who destroyed the jobs. The fact is, the Democratic Caucus has been rebuilding jobs, and I have proof.

Now, if you look at this graph, very simple graph, what it shows is—the red is under the Bush administration, under the Republican Caucus. And as you can see, December of 2007 we see a steady decline in the number of jobs with the Bush administration. The Bush administration, because of policies of not regulating Wall Street, because of allowing the industry just to run wild, because of tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, because of deficit spending—they paid for two wars—a giveaway to the pharmaceutical industry, and massive tax cuts—over \$700 billion in tax cuts which they never paid for—we saw a decline in American jobs. And then when the Obama administration comes in, we see ourselves digging out of this hole. It's slow, it's tough, it's very, very tough to come out and clean things up after the Republican Caucus has been in power. You know, the toughest job in the circus is cleaning up after the elephants. But the fact is that you see the Obama administration and the Democratic Caucus digging us out of this recession.

Private-sector jobs have increased for 6 straight months. Where are the jobs? Well, the Republicans should know where the jobs were; they're the ones who said we favor the rich over everyone else, we favor the privileged, the comfortable over everyone else. The working people have to go figure out what they're going to do because we're in it for the wealthy.

□ 1800

The fact is the Democratic Caucus is helping to pull our country out of this situation. Again, it was proven on the House floor today, Mr. Speaker, because today what we saw on the House floor were the Democrats who moved to pass the unemployment insurance extension. Our Republican colleagues, our friends in the party opposite, despite all of their highest pronouncements, said “no” to the American people who are in dire straits.

What kind of heart is that?

You know, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a little bit about our economy today, but I think more of what we're talking about today are values and who values what. We are talking about values—the value of how you rate one kind of person versus another.

The Republican Caucus says they're for tax cuts. We heard my friend in the party opposite say a little while ago he is for tax cuts. I find the gentleman a

fine person and a pleasure to work with personally, but we couldn't disagree more when it comes to economic policy. He says he likes tax cuts—not when it comes to working people's tax cuts.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act gave tax cuts to 95 percent of Americans. Ninety-five percent of Americans got tax cuts under the Recovery Act. Guess how many Republicans voted for it? Zero percent.

They don't like tax cuts for working people, only for really, really rich people. The reason is that they believe the rich folks who get all of the tax cuts are going to use those tax cuts, you know, after they've bought enough yachts and enough houses and enough Tiffany watches and stuff like that. They might just use some of it to, maybe, invest in a factory or something. That's what they think is going to happen. It never happens that way, but that's what they think is going to happen. It's called “trickle down.” There is even a name for this kind of economics that the Republican Caucus is so very in love with.

They talk about John F. Kennedy. It's amazing to hear these guys talk about how much they love John F. Kennedy because of tax cuts. Look, the Democratic Caucus is not anti tax cuts. It is important for the American people to know we're not against tax cuts. If tax cuts to the middle class will help stimulate the economy, we will do it. We have done it. We couldn't get any support from them when we did do it, but the fact is this is another sort of distortion that our colleagues are just absolutely committed to telling the American people—that Democrats don't like tax cuts. Yeah, we're fine with tax cuts, but we want fair tax cuts. We want tax cuts that actually stimulate the economy.

Here is an economic lesson for you:

If you want to stimulate the economy, do you give a tax cut to the people who need the money and who will take it and then buy things with it? Then at the stores where they bought them, there will be business at those stores, and at those stores, the people who work there will see some revenue coming into the stores, and the owners of the stores will be able to, therefore, continue keeping people on the payroll.

On the other hand, do you give the money to people who don't need it, who are wealthy by all definition, who can just let that money sit there or buy luxury items that they really don't need? Maybe they'll just go out and buy up other companies—mergers and acquisitions—stuff like that.

The fact is, if you want to stimulate the economy, you give a tax cut to the middle class and to the working class, not to the very rich people. That's what the Democrats did. That's what the Republicans absolutely oppose. That's what they are against. The fact is it is wrong. It is incorrect. It is bad policy. You would think they would know better. The Republicans are just

not good at economics. They are good at other things, but economics they're not so good at.

During the time that the Republican Caucus was in control, you know, they cut taxes and gave us the biggest deficit this country has seen. Yet, when they came into office, they inherited one of the biggest surpluses we have seen. Yes, it's true. Bill Clinton left the Republican Caucus a surplus. They came in well above the water, and they handed things over well below.

The American people don't have short memories. We remember 2006. Do they think we forgot? Do they think we forgot who would not regulate predatory loans? The American people know that the House, the Senate, and the White House were controlled by the Republicans from 2000 to 2006 as the American people were being preyed upon by unscrupulous lenders who were pushing loans on them, deceiving them, tricking them into deceptive practices in lending, which really set the stage for the recession that we are in. As soon as they couldn't refinance their homes again, they couldn't afford those mortgages as they ballooned upward, we began to see the foreclosure crisis. That's what happened, but our friends who don't like regulation say, Give us the wheel back.

Interesting.

Now, as I said, I respect my colleagues. I think they are good people. The question is not who is a nice guy and who isn't. That is not the issue, but here is a fact for you. Here is a quote from Congressman PETE SESSIONS, a Republican from Texas.

This is a question from David Gregory, the journalist. David Gregory: I think what a lot of people want to know is, if Republicans do get back in power, what are they going to do?

You hear these guys in the party opposite, Oh, give us back the reins of power. Let us be in the majority. Let us rule this place. We know what to do.

They act like they have the answers.

Well, one of their caucus leaders says: We need to go back to the exact same agenda.

Really? Oh, my goodness. Do you mean to tell me we need to go back to some more wars that we don't pay for? Do you mean that we need to get back into another Iraq? They're actually looking for another Iraq right now. Another Iraq? \$10 billion a month that war cost us, and they offered us reasons to go, and none of them were true. So, literally, 4,500 young people later—Americans later—and \$1 trillion later, that is what their war in Iraq has given us—disaster. It was absolutely the worst foreign policy failure in American history.

More of the same? Oh, my goodness. We're going to have a pharmaceutical giveaway to the tune of \$400 billion. Again? That's their answer to health care. As they stand up here and talk about ObamaCare and as they beat on the health care bill, do you know that Americans are benefiting from the

health care bill already, and yet they want us to go back to the time before health care reform when 56 percent of all bankruptcy filings were from people who were suffering the load of medical debt? This is what they want the American people to go back to.

My friend from Texas says: We need to go back to the exact same agenda.

Oh, no. It's just better to keep the Republican Caucus over there, in the minority, complaining about everything that we do, without helping at all, but at least they can't do much harm if they're not in the majority.

David Gregory asked: I think what a lot of people want to know is, if the Republicans do get back into power, what are they going to do?

You heard it right from their caucus leadership: More of the same.

Why were the Republicans literally thrown out of office in 2006? Why were they tossed out? Why did the American people chase them out? Because of their absolute failure on every measure of governance.

Now, you shouldn't be surprised that the Republicans are bad at governing. They don't like government. They have nothing good to say about it. They think government is the problem, and of course, it's hard to be good at anything you don't believe in in principle. So they're not good at governing. They might be good at other things. I think, a few years in the past, they had a pretty good congressional baseball team, but when it comes to governing, they're just not very good at it. The proof is, whenever they're in power, we have failure in government.

If you wonder what they're doing, we need to go back to more of the same agenda. I am so grateful for my friend from Texas' candor because he has pretty much told us what we have to expect. See, the Republican Caucus, they try to argue that they should be running things. All they want to do is shine the light on the Democratic Caucus and on President Obama and ask, Did President Obama and the Democrats create heaven on Earth within 2 years? That's what they want the American people to ask. Did they create heaven on Earth in 2 years? If they didn't, then let us run it.

But you know what? That is not what's at stake. It is either the Democrats' working out the problems and the failures of their leadership or the Republicans, who created the failure in the first place.

Imagine somebody who is out in the middle of a loch, drowning. A lifeguard swims out there to grab him, holds onto him and pushes him in, and then has to push on his chest to get him back in shape.

Then the person who failed to save the other person, the other lifeguard who sat around and didn't do the right thing, says, You're pushing too hard.

I say, Wait a minute, man. I'm over here, trying to save a life that you almost lost, and you're over here, confused about how it's being done.

The fact of the matter is the Democratic Caucus is investing in Americans, in green energy, in human capital. It is investing in our infrastructure. It is investing in small business, and we are slowly seeing ourselves climb back to the America that we knew before the Bush era as we see jobs going in this upward direction—clear and unmistakable progress.

□ 1810

A similar graph that I would like to show you, that goes to show how Democrats, despite difficult circumstances, because the Republicans have done massive damage to the economy, are bringing things back is this one. This graph shows net change in private payroll employment between 2004 and 2010. And this is thousands of jobs, so just add a couple of zeros after you see these 200, 400, just add a couple of, three more zeros. You see things really plummet because of the Republicans, and now you see Democrats pulling the economy back in shape, and we're back up to where we should be going. So that's a little bit.

Now, here's another fact I think is important for the American people to know. The economy has been picking up. In fact, this graph shows that after-tax profits in billions, the property insurance after-tax profits in billions. Profitability has been going up, going up.

The fact is that American GDP has been increasing. American gross domestic product has been increasing. The economy is starting to pick up. Unemployment is still unacceptably high. More has got to be done. I want to talk about that in a minute. But the fact is that things are headed in the right direction.

So when you hear Republicans stand up and complain about what Democrats are doing, and all they're doing is complaining about what we're doing, you should look at the numbers. The numbers are going in the right direction. The jobs are being added. Gross domestic product has been increasing, and we see the economy going in the proper direction.

It's Republican support for special interests, Republican support to the most privileged and wealthy, the Republican support for all of these types of special interest things that has landed us in this problem; and it is Democratic resolve, along with the will of the American people, that is getting us back into the right spot.

Should we go back? Absolutely not.

Now, my friend in the party opposite, before he gave up the microphone, he said something that really must be challenged. You might have heard him say, oh, you know what, if the tax cuts expire, if the Bush tax cuts expire, then what's going to happen is that the farmers are going to have to sell their farms in order to pay the taxes. You heard him say that. He said, Mr. BROWN, fine man, but we just disagree bitterly on the issues.

He said that if the Bush tax cuts are not extended, or if they're allowed to expire, then farmers will have to sell their farms to pay payroll taxes.

Now, you know, this is the whole debate about the estate tax. And it's very important to remember that the Republicans argued this thing before, and they were challenged. The reporters, smart reporters said, okay, you guys are talking about saving the family farm, because it's always about poor people and the family farm. That's always why they say they do what they do, but it never really is.

But the fact is that they were challenged. Find one family farm that has been taken away for taxes. They couldn't find one because it just isn't so.

These Bush tax cuts, the ones that help the middle class, the Democratic Caucus, we believe, need to be saved. The ones that only benefit the well-to-do and the rich folks who've benefited so much by being in this great country, we think they ought to be allowed to expire and go back to rates that were quite similar to what they were during the Clinton days. It makes sense to me, and I think it's what we should do.

Now, I just want to talk a little bit about unemployment insurance extension. It's an important issue. Today the House passed the Senate amendments to H.R. 4213, the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act, and this emergency legislation will extend unemployment insurance benefits to millions of American families, 2.5 million, in fact. This is an important piece of legislation, and now it's on its way to the President's office.

Now, I reemphasize that it's emergency legislation. Because it's emergency legislation, it's not set off, we don't have to find a pay-for in the budget. We basically find the money, even if we have to borrow it to make sure that Americans have the money they need to make ends meet.

This is money, this is money that will go to groceries. It will go to buying eggs, it will go to buying bread, it will go to buying oatmeal. It will go to buying cereal. It will buy toilet paper, basic household items. That's what people do with their unemployment insurance money. That's what they do with it. That's what folks do.

And it's amazing to me that my Republican colleagues would say that, no, it should be set off, because the fact is they didn't want to set off all of that money, they didn't want to set off all that money they gave away during the Bush tax cuts, over \$700 billion, plus another \$400 billion for the big prescription drug giveaway to Pharma, plus two wars that they didn't want to pay for.

But now, when people are in an emergency situation, people are having to live with family, people are facing foreclosure, people are facing bankruptcy, people are in real trouble when they're out of work and their unemployment runs out, now our friends say, no, we

can't open up the wallet. We've got to worry about the deficit. You know, we can't help you.

This is an amazing thing. It's an emergency for people out there, and so we should act accordingly.

Republicans have blocked this bill for more than 7 weeks. They have literally stood in the way. In fact, this bill could have been done earlier this week, but the Senate Republican delay tactics stopped it, up until we're able to pass it today.

Republicans have blocked this bill for 7 weeks, causing an estimated 2.5 million Americans—actually, it's more than that. Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS has it to the person, and she's got a Web site that tabulates it to the individual person. Families.

And the fact is that it's more than 2.5 million families to lose their lifeline that they have earned through their work during their economic work years.

It's important to bear in mind that unemployment insurance is insurance. It's not a giveaway. It's not a hand out.

And it is galling and appalling and downright insensitive and insulting for anyone to imply that people who receive unemployment insurance are lazy. Yet, you have heard people in the party opposite say that folks just don't want to work and they're just sitting up and not really trying to find a job. That is really ridiculous.

There are five people applying for every one job. There's not enough jobs. We're trying to create more. The unemployment rate is unacceptably high. Democrats are committed to chopping that rate way down.

But the fact is that until we're able to do that, we need real support, and folks need to get in there and get some unemployment benefits so they can make it.

□ 1820

The bill, which is virtually identical to the one the House passed, the Restoration of Emergency Unemployment Act, would extend emergency unemployment compensation and extend benefits for programs through November 30, 2010. So it's a short reprieve. I mean it's unfortunate, but folks will benefit from the short period of time of the help.

Now, unemployment benefits have periods of time, some longer, some shorter. But there are a lot of people who will benefit because benefits will be retroactively restored to people who started losing their benefits at the end of May. They will be retroactively restored. Important to point out as the Republicans are saying, yes, we gave all of our friends buckets and buckets of money, but we've got nothing for you, Sam and Jane and your two kids, we can't help you. You lost your job. Good luck. Can't do any deficit spending, you know.

But the fact is that these folks, some of them have been worried what are they going to do because they have

been without these benefits since May. Now they are going to be retroactively restored. Very important. Very, very pleased to be able to report that.

Republicans continue to fight for hundreds of billions of dollars in deficit-busting tax cuts. The Bush tax cuts were never paid for, and yet they want to oppose us extending unemployment insurance benefits to hard-working Americans.

The fact is that unemployment insurance benefits really are something that help to stimulate the economy. It's not the best way to do it; having a job is. That's obvious. But every dollar in unemployment benefits creates at least \$1.61 in economic activity. So every \$1 in unemployment benefits, \$1.61 goes into our economy. That's a lot of money. It's obvious why. Let's just say somebody has no money. They are going to a food shelter. They are not getting anything at all. They are surviving on the charity of others, or the best they can. But if they have unemployment insurance benefits, which they earned because they worked, then they have money to go to the store and they buy something. And at the store, that then helps stimulate the economy because you are spending a real source of revenue with somebody, which helps them maintain and add to their employment rolls.

This is a very important fact. We should know about it. And this is something that chief economist Mark Zandi, who is a pretty conservative guy himself, had to say before the House Budget Committee back on September 1. "The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has found extending unemployment benefits to be one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to stimulate the economy, creating, they said, up to \$1.90 in economic activity for every dollar." So Mark Zandi says \$1.61, the Congressional Budget Office says \$1.90. The fact is these things are hard to know with exact specificity, but the reality is that both agree, there is a consensus among economic experts that unemployment insurance benefits benefit the economy as a whole.

Unemployment benefits were responsible for creating 1.1 million jobs since the recession started, and adding 1.7 percent to the gross domestic product of our country. Unemployment insurance benefits has a stimulative effect on the economy. There's no doubt about it. So the Republican Caucus trying to stop it really is dangerous to the economy. Not only to the individual family, not just to Jane and Sam and their two kids, who are unemployed and need those benefits, but also to all of us as a whole.

And let me just explain one reason why. Our economy is one where corporate profits, as I just pointed out before, have been up in the first quarter of 2010, up about 43 percent. There's a lot of firms that are sitting on cash. They have money. But they haven't really added to their payrolls. Why?

Because they're nervous. The consumer demand is still weak. Consumer demand is not robust and strong. They're not really seeing the volume in sales that they've seen in the past because consumer demand is weak.

Now, if our Republicans had their way what they would do is take unemployment benefits from people, which would then do what to demand? Lower it. Which would then make the firms think what? Oh, my God, I really got to sit on this cash because I just don't know what's going to happen next. So unemployment benefits have the effect of priming the pump, of getting the economy stimulated and moving. And not having them not only creates a crisis for an individual family, but even worse than that, it creates a crisis for the economy because firms who have cash and are looking to add people but who are cautious and nervous are thinking, hey, you know, sales volume has gone down, I better not spend this money to add on more workers. It's very important to understand that psychology and economics are tightly tied together.

Most employers, by the way, particularly small employers, are very, very reluctant to want to lay people off. I mean it's always said for any employer with a heart—and most of them have them. They are people. They don't want to lay anybody off. But when they do, it's tough. And it's nothing you want to go back to. So you want to be real confident that you can sustain those extra workers before you add on more people. This has to do with consumer confidence, which has to do with things like unemployment insurance. And therefore, my point is that you need—not only is it a crisis for the individual family when you don't extend those benefits, it is a crisis for our economy because it undermines confidence and consumer demand, which our economy needs.

So, I think it's important that the American people know this and they know that when the Republicans, particularly the ones who are always, you know, acting really religious and more holy than everybody else, they're voting against unemployment insurance, that's really kind of a head scratcher to me.

Anyway, today there are 15 million people out of work who got an extension of unemployment benefits. Today 15 million people, 15 million people out of work got an extension of unemployment benefits, which contribute to paying mortgages, health care bills, utility bills, food costs, eggs, groceries, cereal for the kids.

The Democrats' unemployment bill provides up to—and it is the Democrats' unemployment bill, by the way. Republicans want no part of it. They don't want to be part of the unemployment bill. So it gets to be our bill. We would love to share it, but they didn't want any. The Democratic unemployment bill provides up to 99 weekly unemployment checks averaging about

\$300 to people whose 26 weeks of State-paid benefits have run out. The benefits would be extended through the end of November 30. November 30, as I said.

In the new Washington Post-ABC News poll that was released just a few days ago, more than 6 in 10 Americans, 62 percent, support Congress's action to extend unemployment benefits for jobless workers. Now, 62 percent is a lot. That's a very healthy, strong majority of Americans. And I daresay, you know, I'm glad I voted for the bill, because I wouldn't want to go back to my constituents, unemployed people, and say I know you needed help, but I wasn't there for you. Sorry.

Earlier this month the House passed the Restoration of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act to restore and extend emergency unemployment benefits. That was passed again today, and now it's off to the President. Eighty-three percent of Republicans opposed the bill. Eighty-three percent of the Republicans said we can't do anything for you, Sam and Jane. You are on your own. If you are well to do and need a tax cut, then we can talk. But if you are not rich, we really, really don't have any time to help you out. We've got to worry about the deficit. Not that we have to worry about the deficit if you are part of the top 1 percent. But if you're not, then we've got a deficit, and we can't help you out.

The analysis of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, as I mentioned before, suggests that extending unemployment benefits is one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to get the economy moving again. It's something that we've got to do, and it's something that we need to do right away to make sure that our economy is strong, and make sure that Americans are getting back to work. Very important. And I'm so glad we are here to talk about it.

Now, one of the things that my Republican friends like to say is that they only want private jobs, they don't want public jobs. But I want to bust that myth up for folks tonight, Mr. Speaker, because public jobs are important jobs. Are they saying they don't like police? Are they saying they are against teachers? Are they saying that they don't want anybody to fix the roads? And the potholes all over the place, just fine? Are they saying they don't want people to fix the bridges and they don't think that these bridges need to be painted so they don't get corrosion? And they don't think those gusset plates holding those bridges up need to be replaced so they don't fall down like they did in my State of Minnesota? I just don't understand what they mean when they start attacking public jobs.

I actually have to confess to you, Mr. Speaker, that I resent it when they attack public workers. I think public workers do great work. I think public workers do a great service for the American people. When I had a break-

in at my house, I called a public worker, also known as a police officer, and that officer came to my house. He took down my report. He took the report of all the things that that thief had taken from us. And he was cordial, and he was kind, and I felt a whole lot better seeing him there.

□ 1830

He's a public worker. And it is public workers just like that police officer who are facing layoffs all across America.

What about teachers? They don't like teachers? We're seeing classroom sizes increase and increase. There are over 250,000 teachers facing layoffs across America because I guess our friends in the party opposite, the Republican Caucus, feel that, oh, those are not private sector jobs.

Teachers do a valuable service for our country. Teachers are important. Or what about medical professionals who work for public hospitals? Or what about people who make sure that our roads and our bridges and our other infrastructure are in good working order? All these jobs are important.

What about the people who work at the DMV, the Department of Motor Vehicles? Do you want to get your tags on time? Do you want to get your registration on time? These are all folks who perform a valuable, important public service, and I think it's really ugly when we hear our Republican colleagues say, oh, well, they just want public jobs. They admit that we've had public jobs. We've also had private sector jobs. But I don't like this idea of them attacking public sector jobs. It's not right. In fact, my opinion is we need to pass a local jobs for America act. We need a bill that says we're going to help State and local government hire the people they have had to lay off over the last year and a half. Nearly every State in the union, not every State but nearly every State, has had massive deficits and these States have seen themselves have to cut off a lot of State workers. Now the Federal Government can't cover all of those losses, but we can cover some of the essential ones.

There are cities in this country who have police forces of one and two and three people, and they've had to lay off one. So if they lay off one person or two people, that's basically the whole department.

This is a serious issue. We don't need larger class sizes as we're trying to educate young people to be more competitive in the global arena. We don't need our fire departments to have fewer firefighters. We don't need to have our streets have fewer cops and be less safe. Since the recession began, an estimated 500,000 Americans have lost their jobs in local communities because of tight local municipal budgets. That's public workers that the Republican Caucus doesn't seem to respect very much.

The Economic Policy Institute, which is a think tank, estimates that

by the year 2012, more than 400,000 jobs would have to be restored just to return local government services to pre-recession levels. That's worth repeating. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that by 2012, more than 400,000 jobs would have to be restored just to return to pre-recession levels. This means a critical loss of services. This means that, yes, you have potholes; yes, you have longer response times for police and fire; yes, you have infrastructure that's not in the same kind of repair that it used to be. Yes, you have a streetlight that has not been replaced. And as your daughter or your son are walking home at night, you want that streetlight there if you're a parent and I know it. Not even for your daughter or your son; for yourself. If you're walking home, you want that streetlight working. Well, who replaces that? They don't get up there by magic. My friends in the Republican Caucus act like they just appear. No, they don't. Municipal workers put them there.

Cuts to public jobs also reduce employment in the private sector. This is an important point that bears repeating as well. Cuts to public jobs reduces employment in the private sector. What is the point, Mr. Speaker? Well, look. A dollar is a dollar. Whether I'm a cop or I work for a private security company, if I get my check and I spend it at the local store, it's revenue for that store and it will go to pay the workers at that store and pay a profit to whoever owns the store. Now if the public worker doesn't have a job, that's one paycheck fewer that that store has to rely on in order to make it.

So public sector jobs contribute to private employment. Why? Because public sector jobs contribute to the economy just like private sector jobs do, too. It's not a good thing that public sector jobs are going down. Not only is it loss of vital social services in our cities, but it also decreases consumer demand for those public workers who are now laid off and for our economy as a whole.

Again, the Economic Policy Institute has important information for us here. They estimated that for every 100 public sector jobs, 30 private sector jobs are let go because of the reduction in consumer spending. For every 100 public sector jobs, 30 private sector jobs are laid off because of a reduction in consumer spending. This forces local governments to choose between cutting services like public safety and raising taxes during an economic recovery which, I already talked about, no one likes to do.

Now there's a bill out there that I think the people of America ought to know about, Mr. Speaker, and that is the Local Jobs for America Act. The goal of the Local Jobs for America Act is to create 1 million public and private jobs in local communities this year. This jobs legislation directs targeted resources to communities hardest hit by the economic downturn. Federal

funds will be provided directly to States and municipalities with the greatest number of people out of work to restore critical services like teachers, police and fire. Our bill is about getting America back to work and making investments for the long term and the prosperity of our country.

Throughout the recession, local governments have been one of the hardest hit as cities have had to reduce budgets as their revenues have declined. Local governments across the country lost over 140,000 jobs in 2008 and 2009, and the number just keeps on growing. In 2009, 62 percent of all cities dealt with their budget deficits by delaying or canceling construction projects. Now when a city says, we're not going to build that ramp, that parking ramp; we're not going to fix that road; we're not going to build that community center, that means that the contractors they were going to hire don't get that job. So what that means is that the people who work in the private sector on the construction site, they're not working on that job. They're not bringing food back home based on the money they earned at that construction job.

The bill funds teachers, firefighters, child care workers and other critical services:

\$23 billion to help States support 250,000 teachers who are scheduled to be laid off very soon; \$1.18 billion to support 5,500 law enforcement officers on the beat; \$500 million to hire and train firefighters; \$75 billion to save or create 750,000 jobs to help the local community fill those jobs where they need it; 50,000 on-the-job training slots to help private businesses expand employment.

The goal is to have family wage jobs and help people get back to work, promote our good services for our cities, which is safety, which is education, and then also help the private sector by moving forward on needed construction projects and making sure public workers have their paychecks to make sure there's adequate consumer demand.

The Local Jobs for America Act will target funding to community based organizations serving communities with poverty rates 12 percent, or unemployment rates that are 2 percent or more higher than the national average. Now it's not State by State. It's community by community. So even if your State has an unemployment rate lower than the national average, if your community has one that is higher, then you would be eligible.

Local Jobs for America will help ensure that local communities can still operate essential services; and the Local Jobs for America Act will include on-the-job training for thousands of workers, and this bill would target communities hardest hit by the recession.

□ 1840

Now, that's just one good idea that I think we need to use.

I just want to take you back and say, you know, I'm from Minneapolis, and in my town we boast the finest series of lakes and trails and bike paths in the country. In fact, even though we're a cold weather State, we commute by bicycle more than any other city, including Portland, Oregon. Now, I know those people from Portland are coming after us on this great honor, but we're determined to keep Minneapolis in the first place on bike trails.

My point is simply this: I was riding my bike along the bike trail the other day, and I stopped to rest and sip a little water, and I saw a picnic table that really looked like it had been around for a while. What I saw on that picnic table was interesting. It was a plaque. It said, "WPA 1934." That picnic table had been around since 1934, and the Roosevelt-era program that put Americans of that generation back to work had caused that picnic table to be built.

Some of you young people are like, What is WPA? Go ask your grandparents. WPA is the Works Progress Authority. This was something that put valuable people to work doing valuable work that needed to be done—making trails, making picnic tables, doing things that last to this very moment. And Americans all across America are benefiting from them right now. This is what the WPA is.

And what I'm saying about the Local Jobs for America Act is that if that generation had a heart for its people and would respond to their needs and the needs of the unemployed by putting them back to work, I don't think this generation should do less. I think this generation should do at least as much as prior generations have done. Let it not be said that Americans have grown more stingy over time. Let it be said that Americans still care about other Americans whether they're working or not. Very, very important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to begin to wrap up my remarks right now because it is getting late in the hour. But I just think it's important to just point out that from the Progressive Caucus' point of view, what we need is we need a stronger, more robust economy that has more people working at livable wages; that when people don't have enough, don't have a job, that they can get unemployment benefits until they can find that next job.

We don't think of our people as lazy and who don't want to work. We think of our people as active who do want to work. And when they get a job, we know that they're proud to have that job. But right now in America, we just don't have enough jobs. And we don't need the Republican Caucus standing in the way of jobs.

There are many people of faith in the Democratic Caucus, but we live our values. We don't pontificate about our values like some Members of the Republican Caucus are wont to do. The fact is you have to live caring, you have to live charity, you have to live

commitment to other people, you have to live empathy. And just lecturing to others about your religion is not a valuable exercise in a country dedicated to religious tolerance.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say it's always a pleasure coming before you and the people on the House floor. It's important to get back to real policies that work for real people. I'm so proud that the Democratic Caucus responded to the American people's needs for health care reform, responded to the American people's needs for financial Wall Street reform, as the President signed the bill yesterday. I am so proud that the Democratic Caucus was able to pass unemployment insurance benefits despite very little help from the Republican Caucus.

I look forward to being back soon to talk about the Progressive Caucus and progressive values in the United States Congress.

THIS ADMINISTRATION MUST FIND ITS VOICE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRITZ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. This administration must find its voice on human rights.

On April 21 the New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof authored a piece that closed with the following words: "If President Obama is ever going to find his voice on Sudan, it had better be soon."

Two weeks after the article ran, I wrote the President, and I submit a copy of the letter for the RECORD, putting forth a number of recommendations in the hopes in salvaging the administration's languishing Sudan policy. My concerns echoed those voiced by six respected NGOs who the week prior had run an ad in the Washington Post and Politico calling for Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice to exercise "personal and sustained leadership on Sudan" in the face of a "stalemated policy" and waning U.S. credibility as a mediator.

Sadly, Kristof's assessment can be applied elsewhere around the world. It seems that President Obama and the administration as a whole have struggled to find its voice when it comes to the promotion and protection of basic human rights and religious freedom. These most cherished ideals, which are at the very heart of the American experiment, have time and again been sidelined by this administration's foreign policy. This is a grievous mistake which has dire implications for the world's dissidents and democrats who yearn for freedom and look to America to be their advocate.

Looking back to Sudan, a nation I first visited in 1989, and most recently in 2004 when Senator SAM BROWNBACK and I were the first congressional delegation to go to Darfur where there is genocide, I remain deeply concerned