

this failed policy. Not so fast. Sixty-six percent of all growth between 2001 and 2007 went to the top 1 percent of Americans. Did that trickle down to the rest of us? All you have to do is ask a family in Albany or Schenectady or Troy, New York that I represent. My district will say it most certainly did not.

In the debate over extending tax cuts, the choice is clear. I stand with the 98.1 percent of households in my district, the middle-income community, the working families. I hope my colleagues on both sides will review their own district numbers and do the same.

FINISH BUSINESS

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, on November 2, Americans sent a message to Washington that we are sick and tired of the out-of-control spending and bigger government that has existed over the last 2 years. While the lame duck Congress has unfinished business to complete, such as permanently extending the current income tax rates, Democrats in Congress have hinted at other plans to continue their irresponsible spending spree by passing a massive omnibus spending bill.

Mr. Speaker, after the bell-ringing on November 2, surely Democrats in their few remaining days of control are not intending to use this lame duck session to continue the failed policies that got us into this mess to begin with. I implore this body to act immediately to cut spending, balance the budget, extend the current tax rates, and send this Nation on a new path to greatness while ensuring the people's voice is once again heard in Washington.

EXTENDING TAX CUTS VERSUS UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. PINGREE of Maine asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, in the remaining days of this Congress we have some choices to make, and those choices couldn't be more clear. Are we going to extend tax cuts for the rich, giving millionaires an average break of over \$100,000, or are we going to continue unemployment benefits of about \$245 a week for out-of-work Americans? Are we going to approve a giveaway to high-paid CEOs that the Congressional Budget Office puts at the bottom of their list of what would stimulate the economy, or are we going to extend the unemployment benefits the CBO puts at the top of that same list? Are we going to hand out tax breaks to the wealthy that will add \$700 billion to the deficit, or are we going to continue funding unemployment checks that generate \$2 in economic activity for every \$1 in benefits paid?

The American people sent us here to set priorities and make tough choices.

Putting American workers ahead of millionaires and billionaires should be our priority, and it shouldn't be a tough choice to make.

BIG GOVERNMENT ORDERS BIG SIGNS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Highway Administration is ordering all local governments to go out and purchase new road signs. Why? Because the brilliant bureaucrats say these signs are easier to read. It took 800 pages of "easy-to-read" regulations and redtape to mandate making letters two inches taller. The new signs must be reflective and cannot be in all caps. New York City alone will have to spend \$27 million just to revamp their sufficient signs. Millions will be spent by other financially troubled cities.

Why is this happening? Because, as the saying goes, "We're from government, and we're here to help you." What if the towns refuse to replace their perfectly good signs with the Federally authorized signs? Will the intrusive Federal street sign police come out and cart the city officials off to jail for road sign violations? And what's next? Will the Feds soon require signs be in multiple languages? Once again, Big Government solves problems that don't exist and answers questions no one is asking. And that's just the way it is.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS AND JOBS

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, we must remind the American people when President Obama took office, he inherited a \$1.2 trillion deficit, the recession, and mounting job losses. In the last 2 years we have worked hard to end the outsourcing of jobs overseas and lay the groundwork to create new jobs here at home. But with the unemployment rate at 9.6 across the Nation and over 14 percent in my area in California, we must do more. If Congress does not act to extend the unemployment insurance benefit, 2 million Americans stand to lose benefits during the holiday season. Yet, instead of working with us to provide assistance to struggling families, Republicans—I state Republicans—continue to obstruct and push for budget-busting tax breaks for America's millionaires.

We must extend unemployment benefits, and we must approve the Obama middle class tax cut plan without the deficit-increasing tax breaks for America's richest few. Let's work together to help families through these tough times and create the jobs the American people need.

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, Ireland, with a population of just 4.4 million, has been forced to get a \$90 billion bailout to keep from crashing. With our debt of almost \$14 trillion and trillion-dollar yearly deficits, we are very close to becoming a gigantic Ireland financially. A similar bailout for the U.S. would be over \$6 trillion.

In yesterday's Washington Post, columnist Fareed Zakaria, concerning what he called our economic crisis, wrote this:

"Washington is asking consumers to stop saving and start spending, while the government issues more debt and the Fed lowers rates—all measures designed to increase debt." "In other words," he wrote, "we are fighting a crisis caused by excessive debt by encouraging excessive debt. Is that really the best way to get growth?"

A few months ago the Post editorialized, "It's time to stop worrying about the deficit and start panicking about the debt. The fiscal situation was serious before the recession; it is now dire."

The problem is that the Post, like too many in this city, always attacks any attempts to cut spending.

□ 1020

CONGRATULATING CHARLES BARNUM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan placed a call to the principal of the Charles Barnum Elementary School in Groton, Connecticut, to congratulate the school's 100 percent math score and 92 percent reading score in the Connecticut Mastery tests.

The school's success was notable for two reasons: First, because Barnum is a good old-fashioned public school that raised its test scores to almost perfection the right way—through teamwork by administration, teachers, staff, students, and parents—and second, because it's a school adjacent to the Groton Navy sub base with over 90 percent of its student body children of active duty Navy. These are families which face tremendous challenges with parents away at sea for months at a time incommunicado with their kids. Despite that environment, the Barnum community has made sure that its kids are achieving the highest level of proficiency in reading and math.

Congratulations to Principal Valerie Nelson and everyone at Barnum, and thank you for giving the country an example of educational success which we in Congress should carefully examine as the time approaches to reform America's schools.

EARMARKS

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

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, earmarks represent the culture of spending that has led to record deficits and debts that are literally costing us our future. We've got to change that culture, and we've got to start right now. Today, we can save the American taxpayer as much as \$16.5 billion. That money can go to pay down some of the debt we've accrued against our children's future. That's why I made the decision last year to forgo earmarks. It wasn't an easy decision, but it was the right one. That's why President Obama and Montana's Democrat Governor have also thrown their support behind eliminating earmarks.

But earmarks are just the beginning. We also need to balance the budget and seriously cut spending across the board. If Congress doesn't have the courage to cut earmarks, how can we hope to tackle the bigger problems later?

HONORING ANTOINE GARIBALDI

(Mrs. DAHLKEMPER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great leader in Erie, Pennsylvania, Antoine Garibaldi, the sixth president of Gannon University.

Dr. Garibaldi has been a dynamic force in higher education and throughout the community. Since 2001, he has worked to ensure that Gannon remains a world-class university. Dr. Garibaldi's visionary leadership has helped Gannon's enrollment grow by more than 24 percent.

With his wife, Carol, Antoine has led revitalization efforts to make downtown Erie a vibrant, thriving area. The Garibaldis' work benefits not only the students of Gannon but the whole of the Erie community. I am grateful for their commitment to our city.

Antoine Garibaldi is a pillar in the Erie community, and it is with grateful hearts that we wish him the greatest of fortune as he takes on the role of president of the University of Detroit Mercy next year.

Dr. Garibaldi's service in the area will be greatly missed, and we thank him for all that he has done.

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor of the National Day of Recognition for Parents of Children with Special

Needs to honor those who have dedicated themselves to making the lives of their special needs children better and more fulfilling.

I saw a news program over the Thanksgiving holiday that talked about a time in this country when children who were different or had special needs were often institutionalized or forgotten. That was less than 50 years ago.

There are still children who need extreme care that can't be given by their parents alone, but many of these parents begin a journey with their special needs child with a goal of making their lives as complete and stimulating as possible. The journey takes them through medical journals and expert opinions. It often places them in opposition to established school procedures and leads them to new solutions to pave the way for other special needs students. It takes their time, their treasure, and most of all their love and patience.

These parents don't give up or give in, and their children are the better for it.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND TAX CUTS

(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, I rise today to give voice to the growing chorus of millions of hard-working Americans who are without their unemployment benefits and to middle class taxpayers who deserve tax cuts on their income up to \$250,000 permanently.

We're seeing a steady improvement in the economy, but families are still struggling and need unemployment benefits to put food on the table and remain in their homes. Extending unemployment is more than support for our families, friends, and neighbors; it's also good economics. According to the independent Congressional Budget Office, it's hands down the most cost-effective stimulus available.

Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up the confusion. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are fighting for tax cuts for millionaires while millions of Americans are losing unemployment benefits. My colleagues on the other side are calling for us to pay for \$18 billion to extend unemployment but refuse to see the hypocrisy of putting \$700 billion of tax cuts for millionaires on the backs of our children and grandchildren.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, this Congresswoman and congressional Democrats are fighting for real families, 98 percent of middle class families, 9.6 percent unemployed. Republicans are fighting for the 2 percenters, the millionaires.

Let's stop it right here.

HONORING "CHI CHI" RODRIGUEZ

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

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1430, which honors "Chi Chi" Rodriguez for his commitment to Latino youth programs.

Chi Chi was born into a poor family in Puerto Rico and began working at the age of 7. He taught himself how to play golf and enjoyed a very successful professional career, becoming the first Puerto Rican inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

I rise today, though, to commend Chi Chi not for his extraordinary golf skills but for his philanthropy. His civic work has helped countless youths and earned him membership in the World Humanitarian Hall of Fame.

Yesterday, it was suggested on the floor of this House that it is a waste of time and resources to consider and pass this resolution. With all due respect, it is never a waste of time to recognize and praise the actions of a great human being, particularly when those actions help our youth.

It is one thing to promote fiscal responsibility; it is quite another to ignore or, even worse, intend to demean the feats of an extraordinary American.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote for House Resolution 1430.

JEC UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REPORT MAKES STRONG CASE

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, last night the unemployment benefits expired for 2 million Americans, including over 159,000 New Yorkers and 95,000 residents of New York City. The Joint Economic Committee, which I chair, released a report that finds that there could be serious unintended consequences if Congress should not renew this vital program; consequences not just for 2 million Americans who lost their jobs, but for our larger economy as well.

Failing to renew the program with its 99-week cap could result in the loss of over 1 million jobs over the next year, wiping out almost a year's worth of hard-won progress. Failing to preserve unemployment benefits would also drain the economy of \$80 billion in purchasing power just as our fragile economy is recovering.

At a time when there are five unemployed Americans for every job opening, failing to extend unemployment benefits goes against both all common sense and economic sense. We must support and extend this vital renewal of this program.

MIDDLE CLASS TAXES

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)