

law for our own minority citizens? It will cause great damage to our country and to the very most vulnerable Americans that we are supposed to be representing.

So tonight I would ask the American people to look closely at the vote of their Member of Congress. Was their Member of Congress representing them? Was their Member of Congress representing, and with all good intentions, but representing the interests of someone else? I would say that the illegal immigration issue is an issue that reflects that dichotomy more in our country than any of the other major issues that we face as a people.

So tonight the choice is stark, and the people here have cast their vote. It is now time for the American people to hold us accountable; if we are representing their interests and the interests of the less fortunate people in our society or whether or not we are giving away scarce resources and putting our own people in jeopardy in order to perhaps attract as voters, or whatever, illegal immigrants who are coming to our society and thus attracting even more illegals to come here. And of course, now after they come here, they will make sure that they bring their entire family. And once, by the way, a young person is legalized, that young person, through family unification laws and programs, will be able to then start the action necessary to bring even more and more illegals into our country to have their status changed.

Is this in the interest of the United States? Is this in the interest of the American people? I say no. And I say that the American people need to pay attention and judge us on our vote on this act tonight, the DREAM Act, which is the Nightmare Act.

Let's wake up, America. Your country is being taken from you and given to somebody else.

CONGRESSMAN MITCHELL BIDS FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, Mo Udall once said that those elected to positions of leadership have a moral obligation to exercise leadership. Since coming to Congress, and throughout my whole career, I have always done what I believed was in the best interests for this district, for our State, and for our country. This is what I was elected to do, to make tough decisions, knowing that some were not always as popular as others; and I would not have changed one thing, not one vote, not one decision.

When I think about what we have accomplished together in Congress over the last 4 years, I know that there are many reasons to be proud. We were able to make college more affordable for millions of young Americans. We were able to invest in clean energy

technology that will clean our environment and set our Nation on a path to energy independence.

□ 2130

We raised the minimum wage for working families across this country. We were able to ensure equal pay for an equal day's work for women. We passed historic health care reform that will benefit millions of Americans, making health care insurance more accessible and affordable for thousands of individuals, families, and small businesses.

But I am most proud of the work we've done to take care of our Nation's veterans. Together, we made it possible for our veterans, active duty, National Guard, and reserve to empower themselves by furthering their education. I was honored to be part of an effort to pass the 21st century GI Bill into law.

We also know that many of our returning veterans and those who served in past generations bear wounds that can't be seen. Too many continue to struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder and are at risk for suicide. Together, we've pushed the VA to provide more mental health assistance to those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan because our veterans deserve the highest attention and respect they have earned when they come home, and we have work to do to bring them all home.

But as much as we've accomplished, there is still more to do. I have always said that you can't be successful unless a lot of other people want you to be. And I have been blessed to have so many people who have been supportive of me. For the better part of close to 40 years, I've held the titles of teacher, councilman, mayor, senator, and Congressman.

And there are a lot of people I want to thank for being with me every step of the way. A special thanks goes to my family: My wife, Marianne; my son, Mark; my daughter, Amy; and my five grandchildren. I also want to thank my staff. They were the most hardworking, talented, and loyal bunch that you would ever find, and I am very grateful for them. Lastly, I want to thank the people of Arizona's Fifth Congressional District for allowing me to represent them in the United States Congress for the past 4 years. It's been an overwhelming honor to have had the opportunity to serve my district.

TAX CUT REPERCUSSIONS

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

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, here in the House and in the Senate and with the President's pen, we make policy for America. We make foreign policy. We make security policy. We make health policy and environmental policy. And we make economic policy. And it's time to take a close look at exactly what the tax cuts for the rich have

done for us for the past 9 years because now we are going to make policy for not just the next 2 years, but I believe for far longer than that.

Let's simply take a look at the 9 lean years that we have experienced under tax cuts for the rich and compare them to the 9 fat years that preceded that. The first thing you'll know, which you can see from this chart here, is that in the 9 previous years before we enacted the Bush tax cuts for the rich, 23 million jobs were created. Since we enacted those tax cuts for the rich, we have lost 2 million jobs in America.

The next chart shows that the average unemployment rate as a result rose from 5.5 percent approximately to well over 6 percent after we enacted the Bush tax cuts. So often I have heard that the Bush tax cuts for the rich will somehow create jobs when the record is directly to the contrary. In fact, it doesn't only affect people who work, it affects everyone.

If you look at the net worth of this country, the net worth of America, the value of all of our schools, our homes, our 401(k)s, our small businesses, our cars, our furnishings, everything that we own in America, according to the Federal Reserve, in the 9 years before we enacted the Bush tax cuts, home values in America rose by 37 percent. In the 9 years after we enacted the Bush tax cuts, our home values in America rose only 13 percent. And as a result of that—because our homes are, for many of us, the most valuable thing that we own—as a result of that, our net worth as a country increased by 93 percent before we enacted the Bush tax cuts and by only 26 percent after we enacted the Bush tax cuts. Now I think that's a very important statistic. We are taking into account the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the male and the female, people all across the country. When we didn't have the Bush tax cuts, our net worth as a country increased by 93 percent. When we did, it increased only by 26 percent.

Now, there's been a lot of discussion lately about the deficit, the debt. If you look at what the effect was on the deficit and on the debt, you will find that in the 9 years before we enacted the Bush tax cuts, we had on average a 2.37 percent surplus in the Federal budget. In those 9 years, we actually had a surplus on the average of 2.3 percent of gross domestic product. And since the Bush tax cuts were enacted, we have had a deficit of 8.5 percent on the average each year.

We all know the dramatic effect that the decline in the economy has had on the poor and on the middle class. But let's take a short moment to look at what effect it actually had on the rich. Before we enacted the Bush tax cuts, the S&P 500 index—the most broad measure of stock market performance in the United States, 500 different companies—the S&P 500 increased in those 9 years by an amazing 285 percent. Now, since more than half of all stocks in America are owned by the top 1 percent, the most wealthy Americans,

that means that the most wealthy Americans benefited by not having the Bush tax cuts to the tune of a 285 percent increase in the stock market.

In contrast to that, since the Bush tax cuts were enacted, the stock market has actually gone down over the past 9 years by 11 percent. So I ask you whether you are working, whether you are not working, whether you are poor, whether you are middle class, whether you are rich, isn't it obvious what will happen if we extend these tax cuts any further? Whether it's for 1 year or for 2 years or for another 9 lean years. I think the answer is obvious. Fewer jobs, higher unemployment, a lower value to our homes, lower value to the Nation's net worth, and a drop in the stock market. That's the future that we face if we extend these pernicious tax cuts further.

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

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

JOHN LENNON 30TH COMMEMORATION

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

Mr. MCCOTTER. The poet John Greenleaf Whittier wrote, "For all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

Mr. Speaker, given the prevalence of tenebrous sadness in our oft benighted world, tonight on the 30th commemoration of the murder of Mr. John Ono Lennon, I rise not to lament his inestimable loss, but to celebrate his inspiring life.

Perpetually along our earthly journey, we stand at the crossroads of comfort and truth. Imperfect souls, we are mercifully measured not solely by our missteps into numbing comfort but also by our redemptive return to enlightening truth.

□ 2140

As shown in a recently released 1980 interview with Rolling Stone's Jonathan Cott, Mr. Lennon understood this. "I've never claimed purity of soul. I've never claimed to have the answers to life. I only put out songs and answer questions as honestly as I can. But I still believe in peace, love, and understanding."

Striving for honesty is how, in his family life, Mr. Lennon ultimately fulfilled his most challenging and rewarding role, that of devoted father and loving husband. Striving for honesty is how, in his music, Mr. Lennon met the artistic challenge expressed by Andre Bazin, namely, to "have the last word in the argument with death by means of the form that endures."

Thus, because truth is beauty, beauty is truth, and the most beautiful truth is love, I thank Mr. Lennon for striving through his enduring art to reveal the immutable human truths that eternally unite us in our mortality, our frailty, and our beauty when we love.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering the life of John Ono Lennon, and in extending our heartfelt sympathy to his widow and sons, to all whom he loved, and to all who love him. May he, and we, all shine on.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

PUTTING AMERICA BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK ECONOMICALLY

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to join you and my colleagues this evening. We have had a busy day and dealt with a lot of different questions and issues. And, yet, on the minds of Americans I believe all across our country people are thinking about the economy, they are thinking particularly about jobs, and they are also thinking about what appears to be imminently approaching, at least the beginning of the new year, the largest tax increase in the history of our country.

That's an odd thing to be approaching at a time when there is a high level of unemployment and a lot of uncertainty in terms of the economy. And of course that is a matter of some considerable debate and discussion and different political maneuvering. We won't talk so much tonight about political maneuvering, but try to stick more in the area of some understanding of economics and the things that we need to be doing to put America back on the right track.

I think Americans really want Congress to fix it. They don't want to hear a lot of discussion and talk. They want to know let's just get things organized, get it straightened out, get the economy going, get people back to work. You know, there is a choice people really have in our country of two different things. One, you can have bureaucracy and food stamps, or you can have a job and a paycheck. I think most people in America really want a job and a paycheck.

So that's what we are going to talk about tonight. I am joined by a couple of my esteemed colleagues, people that are very long on common sense, so they are my friends, but also people that I believe that very much are respected not only by their own delegations, the people that elected them, but increasingly known across the country.

I am joined by my good friend Dr. GINGREY. I don't know how many careers he's had. That's why he got the