

Mr. SCHOCK led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

(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 recognize Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

For over 40 years, Worldwide Marriage Encounter has strengthened countless marriages through a weekend workshop to improve a couple's communication. Worldwide Marriage Encounter is totally self-supporting, and no couple is turned away because they do not have the ability to pay. In 2009, over 10,000 couples attended the Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends in the United States alone.

Marriage is a vital institution in the life of our society. Couples in good marriages live longer and happier lives. Worldwide Marriage Encounter is undertaking a project to recognize the longest married couple from every State, with special recognition to the longest married couple in the United States. As nearly 50 percent of marriages end in divorce, it is truly an inspiration to see how many couples have remained together for so long.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Worldwide Marriage Encounter and all the volunteers and clergy for their efforts to strengthen marriages throughout our country.

OMNIBUS SPENDING

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, despite \$14 trillion in debt, Congress continues to waste taxpayers' money.

The Senate is now debating the Senate bill, loaded with more than 6,000 earmarks, including research for maple syrup in Vermont. This barrel of pork totals \$8.3 billion.

America's message last month was very clear—stop the reckless spending.

This continued borrowing and spending is putting our country on the road to bankruptcy. Forty-nine out of 50 States have to balance their budgets. Yet, in the last 50 years, we have only managed to balance the Federal budget five times. This has to change.

We need to pass a constitutional balanced budget amendment, and we need to pass it today.

REBUILDING OUR OWN NATION

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I make a point every day to look in *The Times* at that black box, usually on page 7 or 8, that lists the names of those young men and women who have given their lives in Afghanistan.

Yesterday, it struck me, as we go into Christmas, that there were seven names on that list—six of them under the age of 25. Two of them, Ken Necococha and Derek Simonetta, were only 21 years old. I wonder if they'd ever bought a drink in a bar or in the country in which they were serving. On the front page of *The New York Times*: U.S. Intelligence Offers Dim View of Afghan War.

I say all this because this time last year I was in Afghanistan, watching the good work that these young men and women are doing—building roads, building markets, building a nation—and reflecting on the fact that this is a nation that, for 1,000 years, has spit out foreigners as sport.

As we go into Christmas and I think about the kids in my city of Bridgeport, whose schools have leaking roofs, whose highways are crumbling, whose rails are coming apart, I wonder, Mr. Speaker: Is it not time that we start rebuilding this Nation, not one that seems to not want us there?

ANOTHER HOUSING BUBBLE

(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, American Enterprise Institute fellows Peter Wallison and Edward Pinto have warned, "It is hard to believe, but it looks like the government will soon use the taxpayers' checkbook again to create a vast market for mortgages with low or no down payments and for overstretched borrowers with blemished credit. As in the period leading to the 2008 financial crisis, these loans will again contribute to a housing bubble."

They go on to state, "The goal of Congress and regulators should be to foster the residential mortgage market's return to the standards that used to prevail in 1990, before the affordable housing requirements were imposed on Fannie and Freddie."

We should fix the current problem. For starters, the Dodd-Frank Act needs to be amended so that quality standards are applied to FHA and other government agencies. This should not impair credit availability for the important home-building and real estate industries.

As a former real estate attorney, I know the government should not overwhelm homeowners with mortgages they cannot afford. This destroys neighborhoods and families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

TAX CUTS THROUGH BIPARTISAN COMPROMISE

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, as we work to close out this session of Congress, Members of this House today will vote on a major piece of legislation to extend tax cuts for every American. While this bill is expected to help provide a boost to our economy, perhaps equally important is the way that we arrived at this stage in the legislative process—through bipartisan compromise.

This bill is a result of negotiation between Republicans and Democrats, between the President and the Congress, between the House and the Senate. That's right. This bill which we are going to pass today and send to the President is a result of the type of give-and-take negotiation that is supposed to be part of the legislative process but that, unfortunately, has long been lacking in Congress.

Hopefully, passage of this bill today will be but a sign of things to come. I hope the new Republican leadership in Congress taking office on January 5 will incorporate all points of view—of Republicans and Democrats alike—and will continue working in a bipartisan way to put the American people ahead of partisan politics.

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INTERNATIONAL PREVENTING CHILD MARRIAGE ACT

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

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the International Preventing Child Marriage Act.

I had the opportunity to travel earlier this year in September with the well-respected nonprofit CARE to the country of Ethiopia. During that time, we visited the Hamlin Fistula Hospital and saw firsthand the atrocities and the realities of the situation with so many of these young girls who are forced into early marriages beyond their wishes, marriages that rob their potential to grow and mature both physically as well as mentally, for them to be able to establish their own life and their own goals and hopes and dreams for them to pursue.

As a leader here in our country and around the world in preventing world poverty and spreading goodwill, there can be nothing better that we can do as a country than to join with our international partners in trying to prevent child marriage, both in Ethiopia as well as other countries around the world, and give these young women the

hope and opportunity that people in our country have for themselves.

I urge a "yes" vote.

INCREASING THE NATION'S DEBT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yesterday, with one vote, the United States Senate increased the debt of the United States by \$858 billion. Is this the best we can do to help those out of work, the best we can do to begin a sustained economic recovery, to enshrine the trickle-down, supply-side tax cuts of the Bush years that have failed so miserably over the last decade and some of the worst aspects of the so-called stimulus debt finance consumption of goods made in China with money borrowed from China?

Worse yet, \$112 billion of this is going to come from Social Security, the first time Congress has ever broken down the firewall between the general fund of the United States and the sacrosanct Social Security trust fund.

No, we could do much, much better.

REJECT THE OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, when the Obama administration was faced with a massive omnibus in January of 2009, the President stated that he had to sign it because this is simply last year's business that he had no part of. Well, he's going to face another omnibus this year. This was all done under his watch by the Congress. It's not his fault, but he has a veto pen and he should use it.

This omnibus that's going to come to the President is going to contain more than 6,000 earmarks for things like a couple of hundred thousand that was mentioned for maple syrup research or \$500,000 for biodiesel research from sewage-based biodiesel and thousands and thousands of other earmarks like this.

The President recently said: I agree with those Republican and Democrat Members of Congress who have recently said that, in these challenging days, we simply can't afford what are called earmarks.

Well, Mr. President, please make good on that statement. Veto this omnibus bill coming. Better yet, convince your colleagues in the House and the Senate to reject it before it comes to the floor.

WE CAN DO BETTER

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to fight for new jobs, protect the retirement security of America's

seniors, and give middle class families a fair shake in this economy. Yet our efforts, the basic bricks in the foundation of a working economy, have been cast aside by my Republican colleagues.

The Republicans have sweetened the tax deal today by demanding that American taxpayers fork over \$26 billion for an estate tax break that will go to about 6,600 families. I offer some perspective.

There are more than 6,600 people in Century Village, King's Point, and each of the major retirement communities I represent. There are more undergraduates at Florida Atlantic University in my district. And my teenage daughters and their high school friends are together on track to have more than 6,600 Facebook friends.

And \$26 billion? 16.2 million Americans who depend on food stamps to eat could eat for a year. 3.5 million American college students at our public universities could see their tuition paid in full. And most striking, more than \$175,000 could go to each of the 140,000 families whose sons and daughters are serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We can do better, Mr. Speaker.

EXTEND ALL THE CURRENT TAX RATES FOR EVERY AMERICAN

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today is December 16, 2010. There are only 15 days left until the American people are burdened with one of the largest tax increases in almost three decades. We must act now to extend all of the current tax rates for every American. We must allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money.

Stopping the tax increases leaves more dollars and cents in the pockets of those who need them. It will also encourage small businesses and the private sector to invest and hire. We need to spur economic growth to pull us out of one of the worst economies in our recent history.

The President and his party currently control both Chambers of Congress and will maintain a majority in the Senate and will hold the White House come January. Let's not just tell our fellow Americans that we listened and have heard their concerns about the economy and their money. Let's show them by extending all the current tax rates for every American and do that without other items that add to the deficit.

WE MUST DO MORE FOR OUR NATIONAL ECONOMY AND JOB MARKET

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today proud to represent the third fast-

est growing high-tech job market in the country, that being Albany and the capital district of New York.

According to a new Tech America Foundation report, Albany grew its high-tech positions last year by 1.6 percent. While this is good news, there is also bad news. Nationwide, the number of high-tech jobs shrank by 3.2 percent. Albany's success is at least partially due to the resources available at the University at Albany's College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering. These jobs were not created by a government handout to millionaires or massive estates. They were created by investing in the local infrastructure and economy to create jobs.

While Albany added 900 high-tech jobs over the past couple of years, with an average wage nearing \$80,000, we must do more to lay the groundwork for our national economy and job market to grow the high-tech outcome. Those investments yield great returns and produce jobs.

OMNIBUS

(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, it's over 1,900 pages long. It contains more than 6,000 earmarks. It costs over \$1.1 trillion. It's the new Senate omnibus bill and it's a legislative travesty.

A lame duck Congress with Members who won't be here in just 3 weeks should not saddle the American people with hundreds of billions of dollars in new debt. This bill increases spending over last year, even though we ran up a \$1.3 trillion debt this year, and will run up a similarly high deficit next year. We don't need to be growing the Federal Government; we need to be shrinking it.

This bill totally ignores what happened in this country on November 2, but seeing as some of the earmarks come from Senators who won't be back next year, I guess we shouldn't be surprised. The American people are tired of paying their taxes so that \$165,000 can pay for maple syrup research and \$1 million can go to AFL-CIO training programs.

Congress' approval rating this session is at a record low, 13 percent. With bills like this, we shouldn't be surprised.

TAX CUT PROPOSAL DEFINES CONTRASTING PRIORITIES

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I'm here this morning to simply say that Democrats continue to fight to maintain tax cuts on income up to \$250,000 for couples and \$200,000 for individuals. My Republican colleagues continue to demand tax cuts for all incomes, including millionaires and billionaires.