

PUTTING OUR NATION ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Iowa is pleased to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the House, and I want to express my disappointment in the gentlemen who spoke before me. I usually come here to pick up my material for rebuttal. And as I listened to you talk about your affection for the Peace Corps, I didn't come up with a single thing that I seek to rebut here tonight.

So I'll go off on the subject matter that I came to address, Madam Speaker, and that is the situation where we are in this country today with debt and deficit and the growth in government and the things that we must do to turn this country back around and put it on the right track.

This House here this afternoon voted to pass a continuing resolution that has within it an aggregate of about \$4.1 billion in cuts over a 2-week period of time that if you multiply or extrapolate that out to the end of the fiscal year, it comes in that neighborhood of about \$61 billion in cuts which arguably holds the reductions in place. But it did specifically go in and make the cuts in areas where the President had recommended those cuts. It dialed down the contention and tried to find a way to find a solution and a resolution. A list of the President's recommendations I have, but I don't think I'm going to take the time or the trouble, Madam Speaker, to read them into the RECORD. I'll just say that it suffices to show that a number in the neighborhood of \$2.7 billion would be to earmarks savings, and the termination of programs saving is about \$1.25 billion, so we get to that number that's just slightly more than \$4 billion.

It's perhaps a victory. It's perhaps a success. It's perhaps a temporary one. I think most likely that it is. These cuts that were offered here today will, most likely, be met with an agreement down on the other end of the Capitol Hill building in the Senate that is run by Majority Leader HARRY REID of Nevada. I think I saw some language in this appropriations bill that might directly affect him. That might be what helps convince him as well.

Madam Speaker, this is a short-term piece that was designed to be a period of time that would allow the Senate to mull over the House position, which is H.R. 1. H.R. 1 is the bill that has the highest priority for the Speaker of the House. It's been traditionally the case. And 2 weeks ago, this Congress negotiated, debated, and offered amendments. Some 500 to 600 amendments were filed. Nearly 200 of them were debated and voted upon. And many of them that went in were cuts in spending or prohibitions from using that spending to implement certain policies

that have been since rejected by this Congress.

And, Madam Speaker, we need to remember that there was an election last November 2 of 2010. And to quote the President of the United States, he famously said after the election of November, 2008: We had an election, and we won, which means that he dictates the policy. Well, Madam Speaker, to the President of the United States, I would say, we had an election November 2. You didn't win that one, Mr. President. In fact, you declared it to be a "shellacking." It was a shellacking.

And the Republicans won the majority in this House by huge numbers. We're looking today at 87 new freshman Republicans and nine freshman Democrats, to give you a sense of the poor proportionality, or the disproportionality. The seats that were picked up have dramatically changed. The gavels all changed hands in the House of Representatives. The agenda changed. It has gone from an agenda that has been driven under the speakership of NANCY PELOSI for 4 years, of an agenda of accelerating spending, increasing government and pushing socialized medicine—which is what I have long declared ObamaCare to be. That doesn't shock anybody, Madam Speaker. It is common vernacular out in the central part of the United States at a minimum.

And so we saw this push to grow government. We saw the President participate in, as a United States Senator, and accelerate his efforts as the President of the United States in the government take-over, first promoting a \$700 billion TARP bailout program that was designed to pick up toxic assets that could have been far better picked up by the private sector if he would have just identified them and we would have exempted capital gains taxes on the profits that would be have been made. We would have seen private money go in and pick up these toxic mortgages in a large way and be managed—managed for a better result that would have kept more people in their homes. The list of good things goes on that might have happened had we had more free market solutions and less government intervention.

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But that \$700 billion TARP plan was a mistake, in my view, Madam Speaker. And behind that came the call for the economic stimulus plan which was \$787.5 billion that rolled up to around \$816 billion for the economic stimulus plan. Not all of it was spent, but it was to keep unemployment below 8 percent. We know that it sailed up into the upper 9 percentile, 9.7 and above. It has dived down now to around 9. But we have a lot of people who have given up and stopped trying.

It is clear that the stimulus plan didn't stimulate the economy at all in the way that it was described or the way it was promised to us, but it surely added to the debt. We have seen about

\$3 trillion in unnecessary spending driven by this President. We have watched as proud companies went into hock to the Federal Government and found the Federal Government engaged in managing some of those companies.

Three large investment banks were taken over by the Federal Government, at least by the power of management or influence—AIG, the insurance company, over \$180 billion that flowed into AIG to protect other investors that had an interest in AIG, the insurance company, or in policies that they had offered that were guaranteeing the return on mortgage-backed securities, Madam Speaker. So there is \$180 billion there. Three large investment banks and AIG, the insurance company.

We saw Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac transition from quasi-government to government, to taxpayer guaranteed, stepping in to play a role in the majority of the mortgage loans in the United States, guaranteed by the taxpayers.

I recall standing on this floor, the floor of the House of Representatives, October 26, 2005, listening to the most immediate past chairman of the Financial Services Committee arguing that he was never going to participate in bailing out Fannie and Freddie. And if anyone was considering buying stock in either one, they should not do so under the consideration that BARNEY FRANK from Massachusetts would be engaged in bailing them out. And so he later became chairman of the committee, and that's what happened.

We saw Dodd-Frank become law, which gives the Federal Government massive regulatory control over the financial institutions in America. We saw the government, the White House, takeover of General Motors and Chrysler. And we saw ObamaCare pass, which I have declared to be the nationalization of our skin and everything inside it. And by the way, it includes a 10 percent tax on the outside if you go to the tanning salon. That is over 51 percent of our economy swallowed up by the Obama administration and supported by the Pelosi House and the Reid Senate.

And we come to this point where America can't take it anymore, Madam Speaker. We can't take it anymore. And all over the world they know that too much spending has put America in debt. It has put our currency in question. It has put our economy in an unstable position, and it guarantees that we will be in a long, drawn-out recovery because we have the overspending. We have the debt to service, which is pay the interest. And then we also have to eventually pay off the principal. And we are borrowing from the Chinese and begging them. And we are borrowing money from the Saudis and begging them. Yes, it affects our foreign policy. We are watching a foreign policy that is a conflagration in the Middle East. Country after country is blowing up and seeking to throw off the yoke of its long-term dictatorship ruler and replace it with—we are not sure what

their ideals are, but they have hit the end of their patience line.

So here we are. Here we are with a continuing resolution that the government is operating on today that was negotiated and passed here in the House and in the Senate in December. It extended the funding for the government over until March 4 of this year; midnight, March 4, which is somewhere around Friday night, I think. Maybe Thursday night.

So there has been an action here on the floor to pass a continuing resolution to do temporary stopgap funding to keep the government running for another 2 weeks, up until March 18. And that CR has now been messaged to the Senate. And the Senate can decide if they want to take it up tomorrow or the next day, get it to the President's desk. If the President signs the CR, the government keeps running; if the President doesn't, the government shuts down.

I am watching as my colleagues seem to think that there is one data point of message for them to learn from, that because there was a government shutdown in 1995, it was one that was pushed for by Republicans, it was driven by Republicans. They wanted to face President Clinton down and insisted that they pass a balanced budget and to get to a balanced budget. In spite of all of the things that happened in 1995 and in early 1996, that was the result, Madam Speaker. They shortly had a balanced budget, and that balanced budget came a lot sooner than it would have otherwise and it lasted at least until such time we were hit by September 11 and the calamity that sent this America into an overspending binge.

I think we could have faced the calamity of September 11 without having to blow our budget in the way we did, but that is not what happened. But what did happen in 1995, if that is the only data point, I want to make this point, Madam Speaker. First of all, there are thousands and thousands of students all over America who are studying political science. Some of them are watching tonight. Some of them are reading in the paper the things that we say and we do, and they are analyzing it. They are listening to their professors analyze what goes on here in Congress, and they are listening to the instruction of the rules, the standards, the axioms that come from certain data points along the line of continuum of political history. And that one data point on that line of continuum of political history is the government shutdown of 1995, and some of it drug over into very early 1996, and the argument is that House Republicans lost that because they had to concede their position to the President and to the Senate.

Well, it is a fact that the House had to concede. They did concede. It is also a fact that the Republicans that controlled the Senate at the time passed a unanimous consent agreement to go

ahead and spend the money that was demanded by Bill Clinton and send it over here to the House. The House was in a position where they couldn't push that chain back uphill and President Clinton and the Senate got their way and imposed it over the House.

But I will still say that there is not a dime that can be spent by the Federal Government if the House of Representatives insists that it not be spent. We have to concede and go along with it at some point, or it won't be spent. And the negotiating position that was there for the House Republicans in 1995 was one that was marginally stronger because they had at least a majority in the Senate. That is the difference in the dynamics. But it was also about \$300 billion, as I recall, on Medicare spending.

So whenever you put down a dollar figure and you try to stand on that as a principle, it is a different stance than if you put something that is principle down and stand on it. For example, whether we are going to spend \$300 billion on Medicare in 1995, or 250 or 200 or 150 or 100 or no more, you will lose or gain people along that line of that continuum. If you want to cut Medicare by \$350 billion, you would lose some people that might be with you at 300. And if you move the line up \$400 billion, 450, you lose some people who might have been with you at 350 or 400.

Money is something that there is a sliding scale. You cannot find a principle there that you can stand on. It is like going to an auction and seeing something that you want. And maybe you go to the auction and you decide I want to buy a bicycle and I am willing to pay \$100 for that bicycle. If you go to the auction and the auctioneer is crying out he has a bid for \$100, now he wants \$101, do you pay that extra \$1 and go home with the bicycle, something to show for it? Or do you say, no, that was my principle. My principle was I am not going to spend more than \$100.

Well, some people live by that principle. I do, occasionally. But it is not a principle that is tied to anything that is definable from a sense of right and wrong. It is a percentage scale. If \$100 was the right number, it is only 1 percent wrong to pay \$101. If you get it for \$99, do you have any more virtue? No, you just got a bargain from what you anticipated.

But when you stand on a principle, it is a different story. The principle here that is better for the House to stand on than the principle of the \$300 billion in 1995 is the principle that we must not be funding ObamaCare willfully with appropriations bills here in the House. We must not do so because every Republican and a handful of Democrats, and there will be more, voted to repeal ObamaCare.

We passed the repeal and sent it over to HARRY REID. Furthermore, now that that has happened, every Republican, with H.R. 1, has voted to shut off any funding that can be used to implement

or enforce ObamaCare. That is also a fact. They are principled votes. They are not votes that are measured on the dollar figure. In fact, most people who voted in that fashion didn't know how much money it actually saved us for voting to repeal ObamaCare.

And it is hard for me to take a position on that. I'll just say that the chairman of the Budget Committee, PAUL RYAN, has used the words about \$2.6 trillion is the spending that is saved by repealing ObamaCare.

That is the best number we have, and I don't disagree with that. I accept that number, but it is hard to come down to something and then argue are we doing it because of the money savings. Did we vote to repeal ObamaCare because it would stop the spending of \$2.6 trillion? I think not, Madam Speaker.

□ 1840

I think it's part of it. It's part of the equation—and we can't afford it—but there are many other principles. The most important one is: ObamaCare takes American liberty, and puts it into the hands of government to manage our, I'll say, the second most sovereign thing we have, which is our bodies and our health.

That's what's wrong with ObamaCare; it's a matter of principle. It's the takings of American liberty that must be stopped. No, we can't afford it, and it's money that's better spent by doctor-patient relationships and by individuals making decisions on their health insurance and moving on down the line with those conservative principles. We need to stand on principle.

We have this opportunity here in this 112th Congress to stand on principle. The stance needs to be that we will not vote to fund ObamaCare. I'm going to add to this that neither shall we vote to fund Planned Parenthood, and I shall be looking for ways to unfund every other entity like them that promotes abortion or provides abortion as a matter of practice in their facilities. Planned Parenthood has invested in promiscuity, but that's a longer discussion than I will engage in tonight, Madam Speaker.

I do think these two issues are tied very closely together going forward in that ObamaCare funding must be shut off, and we cannot be asking our Members to vote again to appropriate funds that can be used to fund ObamaCare. Some will be saying we didn't have ObamaCare funding in this short-term CR, just as they said there wasn't ObamaCare funding in the CR that passed at the end of December that takes us to the 4th of March, but here is the answer to this:

There are at least 21 different components to ObamaCare that are beneficiaries of funding that go into the various departments. There is no prohibition for that money going into or for being used to implement or to force ObamaCare. There are at least 21 different areas. Then when you look at

the money that's in there, we discover altogether the automatic appropriations. There was something like \$4.9 billion for the balance of this year that was automatically appropriated. That's not prohibited in this CR. We didn't get it into H.R. 1, actually, either. But the 21 programs are there, and the money is there for them. I can roll those into the RECORD, Madam Speaker, but there is another component to this that is a blanket component:

It is language in ObamaCare that gives the authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, to do intradepartmental transfers so that she can use that money to implement and force ObamaCare at her discretion. We failed to shut that language off, too.

So this appropriations bill that passed today, H.J. Res. 44, the 2-week CR, has 21 places in it that could fund ObamaCare, and it still allows for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to take intradepartmental transfers to use at her discretion, at will, which funds ObamaCare.

Then the Pence language, the Pence amendment that he has worked on so valiantly and for so long to shut off all funding to Planned Parenthood, was passed by this House in H.R. 1. It became a component of the position of the House that was delivered here at about 4:30 on a Saturday morning, a week ago last Saturday morning.

Those components, I believe, need to be part of everything we do going forward. I will stand and promote those, and I will stand with those who will stand for life. I simplify it when I say the Pence language shuts off funding to Planned Parenthood, but there are other components that also were left out.

One is the Dornan amendment, which prohibits funding for abortions in D.C. There is the Mexico City policy that shuts off funding to abortions in foreign lands, which we've always done, which is not part of it. The international population control and planning fund gets money still, along with Planned Parenthood.

This is what has taken place, Madam Speaker, in this short-term CR. Boy, it's hard for many Members to vote for it. They want to be team players, and I appreciate that sentiment. From my standpoint, I have an obligation to my constituents and to God and country to do the best job I can to serve, and it goes in the opposite order: God, country. Constituents are right up there with country. Sometimes the best interests of my district are not always going to be the best interests of America. I haven't had that conflict that I can articulate yet, but if that comes, I'm pretty confident my constituents will understand the priority.

We have to do the right thing for the long term for our country, and the right thing is for us to stand on principle and to shut off this funding to ObamaCare, to shut off this funding to Planned Parenthood, to make sure that

we are standing on solid, moral, principled ground so that we have a firm place from which we can then negotiate those things that are negotiable with the Senate, which, by the way, is a proxy for the President of the United States. So, if it can be negotiated with the Senate, it's also negotiated, in my view, with the President.

In a moment, I'm going to look forward to yielding to my friend from Texas, who has just arrived on the floor, but I want to also add this:

For weeks now, the Democrats in the House and the Democrats in the Senate have been clamoring for a government shutdown. They seem to be determined to shut the government down. They seem to think that, if there's a government shutdown, they're going to win that debate, and they're going to maybe pick up seats in the House and pick up seats in the Senate, and they'll be able to impose their government growth/government spending/expansion of debt proposals that they've been pushing for the last 4 years, which have failed and which the American people have rejected.

We should not be deluded into believing that Democrats somehow want to go through this period of fiscal austerity. They want to drive this spending up, and they want to have more excuses for increasing taxes. If government grows and taxes grow, at some point the taxes grow to the point where they consume everything, and then those business entities that I talked about being taken over by this White House become the small part of a long list of business entities that are taken over.

I've spoken of this before. On the Web site, the Socialist Web site, they say: We don't want to nationalize everything like the Communists. We're just Socialists. We only want to nationalize the Fortune 500 companies. Thanks a lot. Give the barber, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker some relief. Thanks a lot for that. They want to manage the Fortune 500 companies "for the benefit of the people affected by them."

That's the unions.

The President handed shares in General Motors and Chrysler over to the unions, who had no skin in the game, no equity invested, but he handed the shares over to them anyway. It's right off the Socialist Web site, and the Progressives that are left in this Congress adhere to the agenda of the Socialists, which is on the Web site.

But Democrats who are clamoring for a shutdown fail to understand that the American people are more sophisticated today than they were in 1995. They've seen this movie before, and they fear it ends with Republicans giving in to the demands of tax consumers. I have that same fear, but I'm encouraging all of us on this side of the aisle and those discerning Democrats who remain—and there are some—to join with us in putting an end to ObamaCare, in putting an end to fund-

ing for Planned Parenthood, in putting an end to overspending.

Let's get serious about real cuts. Let's get serious about holding the line. When every Republican in the House voted to repeal ObamaCare and when every Republican voted to unfund ObamaCare, then, by golly, that's our obligation. That's what we must do. That's what we shall do.

Madam Speaker, I'd be happy to yield to the gentleman from Texas, my friend Judge GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank my friend from Iowa.

I've been listening to your well-thought-out comments. This is a serious time, not just in American history but in world history; and it's a little difficult to get beat up from our friends from the other side of the aisle over what's going on right now over a continuing resolution when there is one reason we're doing any continuing resolution—they didn't do their job last year. This was supposed to have been done last year. They didn't do it. Why?

I guess they were concerned if people saw exactly a budget that's required by law, but that wasn't done last year—they just ignored that—just like the President is now going to ignore the Defense of Marriage Act. I didn't know Presidents could pick and choose the laws that were duly passed and signed into law and just say, We don't choose to defend that anymore.

But to get beat up by people across the aisle over what's going on is a little tough to take, because they didn't do their job, and now we're having to do it.

□ 1850

And then to further get beat up over spending issues because we're trying to cut spending.

I know my friend from Iowa, as I did, voted "no" on the CR today because it didn't continue the hard-fought battle that was won in H.R. 1, where we were defunding ObamaCare. But I recall in 2005, 2006, my first term in Congress, getting beat up—figuratively speaking—by my friends across the aisle because they said, rightfully, we were spending too much money and that we were going to run \$100 billion to \$200 billion in deficit over the amount we were going to receive in, and that that was irresponsible. Well, they were right. We shouldn't have been spending \$100 to \$200 billion more than we were getting in in 2005 and 2006. They said we were spending too much, they were right. And what happened in November of 2006? They promised they would get the spending under control if they were given the majority, they got the majority, and they immediately started spending more than we had spent.

And so here we are after a Democratic President gets elected promising hope and change, and people didn't realize that the change was going to be the few pennies left in their pockets after this government was spending so much and leaving little that banks can

loan for new businesses and small businesses to hire people. So the economy is struggling. I mean, this government has sucked up all the capital that there is to create jobs and to get the economy going.

So one of the things that has troubled me is hearing people complaining about wanting to cut hundreds of billions of dollars—in fact, trying to cut \$1.5 trillion of the President's proposed \$3.65 trillion budget, \$3.7 trillion. We're only supposed to get in about \$2.16 trillion total of all Federal revenue, and this President's proposing a budget that's \$1.65 trillion more than that.

So I keep wondering, since our Democratic friends across the aisle were beating up on us in 2006 for spending too much money, what would be wrong with saying not cut \$100 billion, but cut \$1.65 trillion, and let's get back to where we were in 2006. That was only \$200 billion over what we were receiving. The Democrats were right: Republicans were spending too much money in 2005 and 2006. What would be wrong with going back to that budget? And yet here there's all this rancor over just cutting \$100 billion. And the President's talking \$1.65 trillion more than we received in?

I don't know if my friend from Iowa noticed, but 2 weeks ago when the President came out with his absolutely irresponsible budget that was going to spend \$1.65 trillion more than we brought in—not the \$160 billion more that we got beat up for spending more than, but 10 times that, \$1.65 trillion—I noticed in the paper the next day that the Chinese were selling off some of their U.S. bonds, some of the debt from our country. Well, it immediately came to my mind, if I were China and I were holding our debt, and I saw that the President of the United States, despite making almost daily speeches about how we're getting spending under control—it would be irresponsible, he says, not to get spending under control—and then he reveals his budget and it's spending \$150 billion more than he did last year, I'd start selling off our debt too. I would be thinking these people are so crazy.

I mean, the dollar is the reserve currency of the world. Nations around the world have been advising us as friends, look, you don't realize what you're doing, but people are getting ready to dump the dollar as a reserve currency for one reason—well, two reasons: One, a lot of them are jealous, but number two, we're being irresponsible with our economy and with our spending. And so I couldn't help but vote “no” today on the CR with my friend from Iowa.

I also heard a lady yesterday talking about 30 people had lost their jobs because of ObamaCare and what this administration is doing. I've heard from people who are extremely upset back in Texas who have lost their health care just because ObamaCare has been passed. I've talked to doctors who have said, I'm done, I can't play these games anymore. I have not saved as much

money as I had hoped before I retire, but I'm done. And they're giving up the medical practice. I talked to a doctor just this morning who said the very same thing.

It just keeps bringing back: If you care about people, if you care about them having jobs, if you care about their self-respect that comes when they have a meaningful job, earn their own keep instead of having the government luring them into indentured servitude status where they are servants of the government and just running around wherever they can find a government that will hand them a check and demanding checks, America deserves better.

There are people that have given that last full measure of devotion to make sure that freedom existed around here, not freedom to go begging the government for a check, not freedom to go begging the government for health care, to pass some law that we're going to take someone's money that they earned, they don't want to give up, and force them to spend on people who don't want to work. We owe them better than we've been doing.

And so when we hear our friends talking about how we shouldn't even have to go through this process, I couldn't agree more. If they had done their job, if they had cut spending instead of putting the dollar in jeopardy, putting our economy in jeopardy, then they're right, we shouldn't have to be going through this. But we have got to defund ObamaCare before too many more people lose their health care and end up having rationed care. I heard about more doctors today who are no longer taking Medicare or Medicaid. We owe all of the people across this country better than what they've gotten in the last 6 years, and what they've sure been getting the last 2 years.

These are dire circumstances, and we just can't keep this going. I mean, we are really in serious trouble. And I know my friend knows that or he wouldn't be spending his time here when he could be doing so many other things. But I appreciate my friend from Iowa more than he could possibly know. I appreciate his courageous stands, and I look forward—I can't really say that. I don't look forward to the battles ahead, but I look forward to having a friend as we go through them.

□ 1900

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Texas. He sparked some things in my mind that in about the 6 minutes we may have, a little bit of dialogue with regard to that.

One point that I wanted to make about what's going on with the strategy on ObamaCare is that I've spoken significantly about how this House has voted to repeal it, this House has voted to shut off the funding to it at every single opportunity.

And if there's a strategy out there that says we're going to do death to

ObamaCare by a thousand cuts, I'd ask those folks that are concerned about a real showdown with the President on ObamaCare to think about what really happened not so much in the 1995 shutdown, which I said earlier I don't think is applicable under these circumstances. There's a better issue to understand.

And that is in 1998 when the impeachment of President Clinton was brought up, when America found out about what was going on in the Oval Office and in the room next to the Oval Office in too stark of detail for the children of America to be so rushed in to the birds and the bees discussion in the way that they were, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I apologize. I didn't hear your gavel earlier.

So even though it's abrupt, I am happy to yield back the balance of my time.

WHAT CAUSED THE FAILING ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity this evening to talk about something that we're not talking much about right now. We talk about the loss of jobs, the unemployment. But what really caused it?

You know, a few weeks ago the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission actually submitted its report to Congress. The good news is that it's on the best seller list. The bad news is that I am fearful that it's going to be gathering dust in the Chamber here and throughout this building because in this document it speaks volumes about why we are sitting where we are today; why our economy has tanked; why there are 15 million people unemployed in this country; and why there are 4 million people who now have been foreclosed on, and another 4 million who are underwater relative to their mortgages.

So this evening I am joined by the distinguished member from the Financial Services Committee, my good friend from the State of North Carolina, who is a powerful voice on consumer protection and the financial crisis that we've endured. And we're going to spend the next half hour just talking about it.

Well, first and foremost, what was this commission? This commission was a bipartisan, independent 10-member committee composed of private citizens with experience in economics, finance, housing, market regulation. They held 19 public hearings in affected communities across this country including Washington, New York, Miami, Sacramento, Las Vegas, and Bakersfield; 115 witnesses appeared before the