

We know, and we teach our children in our families and our extended families, in our classrooms, that if you work hard, you exercise discipline, you show integrity, and you put others first, that inevitably, you're going to prevail and enjoy seeing your dreams come true in the marketplace of products and ideas.

We all know, and we work hard so that our children don't have to work harder. We work hard so that we're giving more opportunities to the next generation.

That is why you're going to see our Republican Conference women continue to lead the fight on preserving jobs, rebuilding jobs, rebuilding this economy, making certain that the 21st century economy is jobs-rich for our children and our grandchildren.

That is why we have taken the lead on the issue of health care. Women are the drivers when it comes to health care decisions, and we are committed to making certain that we reverse this course that we are on with ObamaCare, that we push to repeal that law, and that we make certain we preserve access to affordable health care for everyone in this Nation.

We are committed to strengthening our Nation, our economy, jobs, strengthening our people, and making certain that we secure freedom for future generations.

REINSTATING THE DRAFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. My colleagues, once again I come before this House to ask you to reconsider establishing the draft. I know some of you think politically this doesn't make sense. But after listening to the President last night, the only people that I saw that were making sacrifices in these wars that have been undeclared have been our troops. They have volunteered. They come from communities that most of them are not wealthy. But when they get there, they defend the flag.

Every war, every time our Nation is threatened, all of the American people should be prepared to make some sacrifice. Those of us in Congress, when we authorize troops to go overseas, should not say that we have volunteers willing to do it. We should say that we have Americans; they come from our families, our communities, our States, and their wealth should not even be an issue. Everyone should be up at bat.

□ 1010

Now that the President has dramatically reduced the need for all of these volunteers, why don't we mandate that every American make some sacrifice. Let them be trained during this transition as we withdraw our troops. Let them be able to do something to make certain that America remains strong.

This is too serious an issue. It's not a Democrat or Republican issue; it's a

moral issue. Trillions of dollars are spent on undeclared wars, but who's paying for it? The poorest among us, the lesser among us—in health care, in education, in homelessness, in joblessness. And now the wealthiest of Americans have the lowest tax rates since 1950. And really, it just bothers people when you say they, too, should make some sacrifices, not just for the war that I don't support, but for the security, the economic security of this Nation, where the debt ceiling is going to be an issue, and yet those that are paying for the cuts have nothing to do with the crisis that we're in.

So I conclude, I'll be back in support of H.R. 1152. And I will ask you to consider that as we wind down from our involvement in the Middle East, think about giving some relief to our volunteers. Think about asking young Americans to make some type of commitment. Think about having an America that says, yes, I support the involvement and am prepared to make sacrifices, which includes my family, my community, and our great Nation.

We should not just have professional volunteers; it is not American, it is not moral. When our country is involved, everyone should be prepared either to stand up and be counted or don't support this type of involvement. It is not just costly financially, but how America looks throughout the world, especially among our young people—most of whom do not know any period of time that we haven't been involved in a war.

So if we're not prepared to be honest enough to call a war a war, if we're not prepared to have the Congress put every President, Republican or Democrat, on the line for constitutional reasons, for God's sake, let's find some fairness as we ask people to put their lives on the line for our great Nation. And it's not just their lives, it's not just how they come back home, but the mental disturbance and problems that we are bringing to our great country is going to be not just trillions of dollars but adversely affect our ability to deal with education and training and technology and research while we try so desperately hard to bring these people to some type of normality for the sacrifices they've made to our country.

So H.R. 1152 only says, if we have to be involved, don't have just a small segment of our great Nation pay the ultimate sacrifice while others make no sacrifice at all. Please consider a bill that mandates that everybody from 18 to 25, 26 do some type of mandatory service for our great country, and we will only select those people that we need for the military. And if indeed it is a transition that we support, it means that they can support our country, our national security, support our Armed Forces, and not really—hopefully—be in harm's way.

Please consider it, and please rest assured I will return with this plea from time to time. I thank this House for the opportunity.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

THE FAIR TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today after the former chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. I want to talk about taxes today, but I want to associate myself with the previous speaker's comments about how we make different decisions when we have skin in the game because that is absolutely something that we are losing in this country. We are losing what used to be that common value that we rise and we fall together.

I see my colleague from the Rules Committee, Mr. MCGOVERN, sitting in the Chamber today. And he tells the committee on a regular basis that we need to pay for those things that we do. We're involved in wars, and we need to pay. We need to have a populace that believes in what we're doing in such a way that they are willing to sacrifice not just their time but their treasure to support those measures. When we don't have folks who have skin in the game, we make different decisions. When a minority of the folks get the benefit or a minority of the folks are bearing the burden, we make different decisions.

Now the former chairman of the Ways and Means Committee is absolutely right; we have the lowest tax rates among the highest earning individuals that we've had in this country since 1950. Now what the gentleman did not mention is that we also have the lowest tax rates that we've had in this country for the lowest income individuals that we've ever had. We have fewer Americans paying income tax today than at any time since the 1950s, since the expansion of the income tax that happened during World War II, and I hear that. We have the wealthiest paying the least that they have ever paid as a percent, as a marginal rate. They're actually paying more than they've ever paid as a percentage of all the Federal receipts in this country. We have the lowest income individuals paying the least they've ever paid as a percentage of the income that comes into this country. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that much like we make bad decisions about foreign policy when we don't all have skin in the game, we make bad decisions about economic policy when we don't have skin in the game.

Now when we talk about Iraq and Afghanistan, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, those are complicated solutions. It is not obvious to me how we move from today to peace. I don't know how we get that done. We have externalities at play there that we don't have control

over, but not so with our Tax Code. Folks, when you look at the American economy, there is nothing that is going on with the American economy that we did not do to ourselves. Think about that. Mr. Speaker, do you have any constituents back home who have lost their jobs to corporations that have moved overseas? I do. And yet we continue to have the highest corporate tax rate in the world in America. Now who decides that? We do. We decide that's the kind of country we want to live in, and we can change it. Folks, there is nothing wrong with America that we collectively can't fix.

Now I've introduced a bill that I believe is going to make a dramatic impact in that direction. It's called the Fair Tax. It's H.R. 25 in the House, it's S. 13 in the Senate. And Mr. Speaker, as you know, it is the most broadly cosponsored piece of tax reform legislation in either body. In fact, it is the most widely cosponsored piece of legislation on tax reform in both bodies. And what the Fair Tax does is this—it's no magic solution, Mr. Speaker; it doesn't have some sort of clever math that's going to make everything okay. It simply goes into the American Tax Code and erases it. It says, if you could start with a blank sheet of paper, what would you do?

And Mr. Speaker, we can. We can start with a blank sheet of paper. We can choose our own destiny. We can make sure that we're making the best decisions for jobs and the economy in this country. The Fair Tax does this. It will eliminate the income tax code, that income tax code that punishes people for what they earn, and it changes that Tax Code with a Tax Code that collects taxes based on what people spend.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, it pains me every time I open up *The Wall Street Journal* and it bemoans the fact that American consumerism is in decline. Why can't we celebrate American savings? Why do we have to celebrate American consumption? The reason is because we have been building an economy based on an income tax code that is based on debt and refinancing and debt and refinancing, but we can change that today, Mr. Speaker. We have 1 billion new consumers coming online in China, 1 billion new consumers coming online in India, and they want what we produce.

The Fair Tax erases the income tax code that forces American productivity overseas, forces American jobs overseas, and it returns us to our roots as a country, our roots as a country that reward productivity, that encourage folks to stay.

□ 1020

There is only one taxpayer in this country. I know we have a corporate income tax. I know we have taxes on goods and services and excise taxes, and on and on and on. But there is only one taxpayer in the American economy, and that is the American con-

sumer, because every single tax we have rolls downhill.

Do you want to charge that corporation tax? Do you want to charge Wal-Mart an excise tax? What do you think is going to happen at Wal-Mart? Prices are going to go up. Do you want to charge Coke a sugar tax? What do you think is going to happen to the price of your Coke? The price of Coke is going to go up. There is one taxpayer in this country, the American consumer.

That is a radical idea, I won't kid you. And by radical I mean it is the same one Thomas Jefferson had. By radical I mean it is the same one Alexander Hamilton had. By radical I mean we haven't done it in the last 100 years. But we can do it today, Mr. Speaker, with H.R. 25 and S. 13.

CHANGE COURSE NOW IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, last night the President outlined his strategy for Afghanistan, which included a drawdown of 10,000 troops by the end of this year and an additional 23,000 by the end of next year. I believe this is insufficient and I fear that it means more of the same for the next 18 months. The same strategy means the same costs, and I am sad to say even more casualties, more American soldiers losing their lives in support of an Afghan government that is terribly corrupt and incompetent.

We have been doing this for 10 years. It is the longest war in our history, Mr. Speaker. Enough. Our focus should be on encouraging a negotiated settlement, a political solution, and bringing our troops home where they belong. Our troops are incredible men and women. I am in awe of their dedication and their commitment. They don't belong in the middle of mountains and deserts fighting a cruel war.

According to the Pentagon's own figures, U.S. and coalition casualties in Afghanistan are steadily rising. Last month was a record high for the number of coalition forces killed. March and April were also the worst respective months of the war in terms of casualties for U.S. forces, coalition forces, and Afghan civilians.

A poll last month by the International Council on Security and Development found that Afghans are overwhelmingly opposed to the current U.S. strategy, with nearly eight in 10 believing that U.S. and coalition operations are "bad for their country." These are serious matters, serious consequences of the strategy the U.S. will pursue at least through next year.

We need a change in direction now, Mr. Speaker, not 18 months from now. We are borrowing nearly \$10 billion a month to pay for military operations in Afghanistan. Borrowing. We are not paying for it. We are putting it on our

national credit card. Our kids and our grandkids will pay the price. Each day we remain in Afghanistan increases that burden.

We currently are having debates about how to reduce our deficit and debts. There are some who have advocated deep cuts in programs that help the poor, in Pell Grants, and in infrastructure. For those who support the status quo in Afghanistan, let me ask, where is the sense in borrowing money to build a bridge or a school in Afghanistan that later gets blown up, while telling our cities and towns that we have no money to help them with their needs? It is nuts. Some of our biggest problems, Mr. Speaker, are not halfway around the world. They are halfway down the block.

Americans are willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure our national security, but let me remind my colleagues that national security includes economic security. It means jobs. It means rather than nation-building in a far-off land, we need to do some more nation-building right here at home.

Contrary to the tired and ugly rhetoric employed by Senator McCAIN yesterday towards thoughtful critics of our current strategy in Afghanistan and its consequences, I am not an isolationist. As my colleagues know, I firmly support human rights and the U.S. being engaged around the world. Those who advocate a political solution in Afghanistan are not isolationists.

I don't believe we should walk away from the Afghan people, but tens of thousands of U.S. boots on the ground in Afghanistan does little in my view to advance the cause of peace, protect the rights of women and ethnic minorities or strengthen civil society. If you want to protect Afghan women, we must end the violence. You end the violence by ending the war. You end the war through a political solution.

I have great respect for President Obama. I believe he has the potential to be a great President. I also realize, as Lyndon Johnson once said, "It's easy to get into war—hard as hell to get out of one." It is not easy to end this war. It won't be neat or pretty, but I believe with all my heart it is in our national security interest to focus on al Qaeda and not waste our precious blood and treasure in a conflict that can only be ended through a political solution.

Rather than crafting a compromise and trying to chart a middle course, I believe we need to change course. I urge the President of the United States to rethink our Afghan policy, rethink it in a way that brings our troops home sooner rather than later.

[From the Washington Post, June 9, 2011]

A PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN: DECLARE VICTORY—AND LEAVE

(By Eugene Robinson)

Slender threads of hope are nice but do not constitute a plan. Nor do they justify continuing to pour American lives and resources into the bottomless pit of Afghanistan.