

Do we truly believe it's about them and not us? Do we truly believe that we are caretakers whose only legitimacy derives from our employers who elected us? If that's true, then it's time for the Representatives of the people's House to start listening to the people.

With that, it's time to bring our troops home.

SPENDING CUTS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I appreciate an opportunity to talk about a subject that I think has been on a lot of Americans' minds over particularly the last couple of years, and it's the subject of spending cuts in the Federal Government.

Now, unless people are perhaps tuned in to some other planet, they realize that the Federal Government is spending more money than we take in, and so we're running all of these deficits. Therefore, the idea is that we need to do some spending cuts. So that's what we wanted to talk about here for a little while, and I'm joined by some good friends and some very trusted Congressmen on this subject.

Just to try to frame what we're talking about a little bit—and I usually have some charts to go along with this, but the charts haven't been printed yet—if you take a look, these are pretty simple numbers. If you take a look at the spending projection for 2011, it's \$3.834 trillion, and the income projection is \$2.567 trillion. The two numbers aren't the same, as you notice, and basically we're spending more than a trillion, close to a trillion, trillion and a half dollars that we don't have. And that suggests, for most Americans that have some level of common sense, that we're going to have to make some cuts in spending. So that's the overall subject, and I think it's one that gets everybody's attention and that we need to give some thought to.

Now, obviously, right off the beginning of the bat, the new party, the Republicans, are running the House, and we're trying to start off setting a good note in being fiscally responsible. There's a fund that's allocated to each Congressman for them to run their office, to make their airplane flights, to pay phone bills, and things like that. We cut that 5 percent just as, in the sense, an indication of the fact that we're serious about doing this spending cut. That certainly doesn't get us to where we have to go, but at least it's a start.

There are a number of different ways we can approach this subject, but one of the other things that we'll be voting on this week, aside from the 5 percent cut in congressional budgets, is the fact that we want to get rid of this tre-

mendously expensive government takeover of the health care in America. It's known as ObamaCare, I suppose. And I'm joined by good friend who has joined me on the floor many times in the past 2 years, a medical doctor from Georgia, Dr. GINGREY, and he is somebody who knows, inside and out, not only the medical profession but this bill which has the government taking over all of health care.

Now, as you can imagine, that would be expensive. It would be expensive to American citizens. It would be expensive to businesses and expensive to the Federal Government. So, one place we can start talking about spending cuts is what we'll be voting on before too long, which is to get rid of this government takeover of health care, and for that reason, I would like to recognize my good friend, Dr.—Congressman—GINGREY from Georgia.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Missouri yielding, and I know that when he was referring to my medical expertise in regard to knowing that subject inside and out, no pun was intended when he mentioned that.

I do know a lot more about health care, probably, than I do about government spending, but one thing's for sure, Madam Speaker, as the gentleman pointed out: We are spending way too much money. And I think the figures today, this year, last year, we spent a third more than we took in. I mean, you know, we have a revenue stream from taxation of the American people, and yet we went beyond that by \$1 trillion of borrowed money; and, of course, of the nondomestic creditors, the largest one is China. They hold a lot of our debt. They happen to be, now, the second largest economy in the world at \$9 trillion GDP.

We had about a \$15 trillion GDP, but the thing that is so scary and frightening about that is we owe \$14 trillion. So our debt to GDP ratio is approaching 100 percent. So, you know, when we stand up, Madam Speaker, as we're doing right now and talk about this issue, we're almost in panic, and we should be because we're right on the precipice, right on the edge of becoming part of the PIGS acronym—Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain.

□ 1440

And, you know, we point the finger at them. But goodness gracious, it's like the Bible scripture that I'm sure the Representative from Missouri probably knows by heart. But it goes something like, If you've got a plank in your own eye, you shouldn't be pointing out the speck in somebody else's. We've got a plank in our own eye. And this is why in this 112th Congress, we have a huge challenge, don't we, my colleagues? We have a huge challenge. We're up to it. We're up to it, and I hope that we are going to be up to it on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. AKIN. So let's say that we get what you've been working for, and let's

just say by some great miracle that we were able to stop that ObamaCare. Now that would save a whole, whole lot of money, wouldn't it, in terms of—

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Well, reclaiming the time that the gentleman yielded to me, Madam Speaker. Absolutely. The gentleman from Washington, our esteemed colleague, a physician, Mr. MCDERMOTT was on the floor a little earlier talking about, well, what we were trying to do in repealing ObamaCare, or the formal recognition of that bill, Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mr. AKIN. I call it socialized medicine. That's easier, but go ahead.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. That's a lot easier, socialized medicine, Madam Speaker; but that's essentially what it is. That is essentially what the former majority party was pushing towards.

But the gentleman who spoke said, Well, it's a stunt. These Republicans know they can't repeal ObamaCare. And, furthermore, even if they did, it would be at a cost of \$200 billion. And what I pointed out to him, Madam Speaker, as he was leaving the floor was, You know, that's really interesting. It's going to cost us \$200 billion, if that's accurate, to repeal while it cost us \$1.1 trillion to enact. So you can literally go broke saving money, can't you. And by golly, we're going to repeal it because that's what the American people want.

If we fall short in our efforts, despite 110 percent on this side of the aisle or, well, in this body and in the other body, then we have a backup plan B. And I know my colleagues would like to talk about that.

So I will yield back to the gentleman from Missouri, and let's continue the discussion.

Mr. AKIN. Well, I appreciate your medical expertise and your overview. Obviously, if the Federal Government isn't jumping into taking over all of health care, there is going to be a lot more in the private sector. We will maybe get into that a little bit about what really should the Federal Government be doing, and what should we allow States to do, and what should we allow the free market economy to do.

It seems like the way things are working today, we've got Georgia very well represented. And Congressman TOM GRAVES from Georgia has joined us before on the floor. You always have an interesting and articulate perspective. This is kind of a pet topic for a lot of us that think that government isn't a servant anymore, but it's the master. So if you say, Hey, let's start cutting government, that's kind of an interesting topic. I would like you to join us, please, TOM.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Well, I thank the gentleman from Missouri. And you're right. I mean, today, what a breath of fresh air to hear the syllables of the Constitution recited from Members all throughout this body, leading into this topic and this discussion because we really want to address

spending cuts and the proper role of government. What better way to start it than reciting the Constitution today. And hopefully Members of this body listened and heard. They didn't get up and just read a sentence or two or an amendment. They actually consumed it in their mind and are starting to understand what it means. Because for too long, the Federal Government has been kicking the can down the road on spending. Saying, Oh, elect me; elect me, and we will cut spending. When you look at the data, it's clear: deficit spending has occurred at an average, just in the last fiscal year, of probably \$110 billion a month deficit spending.

Mr. AKIN. Oh, wait. And \$110 billion a month. That used to be the deficit in a whole year.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Right.

Mr. AKIN. Wow, we are setting all kinds of records in the wrong direction.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. You are right. And that leads up to this discussion that we are hearing now in the media which I don't know where they've been over the last several months talking about the debt ceiling. Well, the reason we're approaching and about to pierce the debt ceiling is this deficit spending that has occurred from the previous leadership here in the House as well as the administration who is still there.

And as we approach this debt ceiling, we have got to push spending cuts more and more and more. And I'm thankful that I just was sworn in for the second time yesterday—

Mr. AKIN. We're glad to have you back again, and we thank the good people of Georgia for making a good decision there.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Well, thank you. But being appointed to the Appropriations Committee, it is clear, and I have made it clear to my constituents, that I am not going on as a spender. I'm going on as a saver. It seems for far too long Members would seek to be on appropriations because they wanted to spend money. Well, guess what. It's a new day, a new era. And it's a just fresh day when you have Members going on to say, Here is how we are going to save money. So what a great debate we are going to have in the next several weeks.

Mr. AKIN. That's good. Now, let's get on to this just a little bit more. Let's try to get into the details in terms of procedurally. Okay, now you've got a new Congress. Republicans are in the majority, and we've got the problem. When you take a look at the numbers and we're spending a third more than what we're taking in, we know we've got to do some cutting. But yet one of the things that people want to pin us down on, okay, you guys are such big mouths about cutting spending, what are you not going to fund? Because there is going to be some group that is going to get mad at you. So how are you going to it approach it?

And one thing that I know in State governments they do sometimes is

they say, Well, what we've got to do is, we're 10 percent over budget, so we need to cut 10 percent off of everything. That makes it seem to be fair. And that would be one way you might approach what we've got going on.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Oh, you are absolutely right. I think what we've heard about repealing ObamaCare—yesterday I introduced the legislation again to defund it, to take away all authorizing funds going to the legislation as well, which is another step forward. You know, why don't we defund some czars. That's a whole other discussion that we've all seen.

And then as we move back to those 2008 levels, and we might need to go even just a little bit further and begin cutting more and more and more, I mean, are the decisions going to be difficult? Sure, they are. But that's why your constituents and mine elected us to come here and make those tough decisions.

Mr. AKIN. Congressman GRAVES, let me lay out two ways you could approach it. If you've got just a little bit you've got to cut, you could maybe take a little bit from everything. But there's another way you could take a look at it when you've got to cut one-third. One way you could do it would be to say, What are the essential functions that the Federal Government has to do, and what are things that we really don't have to do because a State could do it or the private sector could do it?

I yield to the Chair.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

The SPEAKER. If Representative SESSIONS of Texas and Representative FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania would present themselves in the well.

Messrs. SESSIONS and FITZPATRICK appeared at the bar of the House, and the Speaker administered the oath of office to them as follows:

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

Congratulations. You are now officially Members.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER). The gentleman from Missouri may resume.

Mr. AKIN. So we were just talking about now you've got the situation with the Federal Government spending a third more than it takes in. So we've got to figure out some way of how we're going to skin this cat.

And one way is to just try to take a certain 10 percent or whatever the percentage is. Actually, it would be 33 percent off of everything or whatever. Or what you could say would be, what are the things that we have to do, and

what are the things that maybe are nice but we can't afford it, and what are the things that may be actually unconstitutional. And I suspect when you're one-third over budget, it's going to be hard to just do a set percentage across the board. I suspect we're going to get into, I think, some very interesting questions about what's really constitutional and does the Federal Government really have to do that function? Maybe it's an important thing to get done, but maybe the Federal Government shouldn't do it. So I just wondered if you wanted to jump in on that subject.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Yes, I would be happy to just add a little bit more to that.

I think a few approaches you could take when you ask the question, Is it duplicative? Is it occurring somewhere else? Is another agency or Department doing it? And that is after you've cleared the hurdle. Is it a role of the Federal Government in general itself? Then you could also ask, is it something you could devolve back to the States? Have we usurped the States in which I would think many Members of our conference here would probably agree. In some cases, the Federal Government has overstepped its bounds, and it's time to remove ourselves from the States and allow the States to take over.

But you know, from a business owner's perspective, what if you looked at the Department heads or the agency heads, and you said, You go back and you cut 25 percent and you bring back your recommendations; and then you show us a budget estimate with 20 percent cuts and then one with 10 percent, empower those agency heads to make those decisions, to analyze their Departments and come back.

□ 1450

While we're also on the theme of physicians, we're taking a surgical approach as well as pulling out those unnecessary programs. So that would be some approaches I would take.

Mr. AKIN. Well, those are some great recommendations here. To reinforce what you've said, I didn't have time to get some of the charts that we normally have printed, but here's some examples.

We've got 342 economic development programs. Do you think we really need 342 of them? Talk about duplicative. That seems to make your point.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. With unemployment at what?

Mr. AKIN. 10 percent or whatever. 130 programs serving the disabled. Do we need 130? Maybe it would be better to consolidate, just do a couple of good ones.

And then 130 programs serving at-risk youth. And so these are all of these things where you say it doesn't even make common sense. We have to really start getting into analyzing, first of all, should we even be doing it, and then, if we should, do we need hundreds of programs doing something that should be done with one or two.

I see that Dr. GINGREY is back at it again. He just couldn't sit still when we talk about cutting things. So just welcome to the discussion.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding back to me. And I know we've got two other colleagues on the floor that want to speak. I can only stay for a few more minutes because of a prior engagement, so thank you for giving me an opportunity kind of in front of the queue, if you will.

But I'll tell you, one of the things in regard to how you cut, is it by picking and choosing, or in one fell swoop across the board?

You know, we just passed a bill, last vote of the day, in regard to our own budgets. And that was a 5 percent across-the-board cut, Madam Speaker, in our member representational account, our expense account that we're allotted each year to pay the salaries of our staff members, and to have a round trip flight back to our districts once a week. And those budgets vary a little bit, depending on, obviously somebody from California is going to have more travel expense than somebody like myself and Representative GRAVES from Georgia. But we just basically voted to cut 5 percent.

And I, quite honestly, and this question that has come up, Madam Speaker, my colleagues talk about, well, how do you do it? I just think we more and more need to look at this thing and say there are no sacred cows. And let these Departments make their case for why maybe there shouldn't be an across-the-board, 2 percent, 3 percent, 4 percent cut. I know I voted in favor of that every time it comes up on these appropriations bills. We didn't get to vote on any in the 111th Congress because our Democratic colleagues didn't get their work done. But this is something we need to really look at carefully.

I know that most people, Madam Speaker, are reluctant to talk about cutting Homeland Security and cutting national defense, particularly when we have two wars going on and certainly not wanting to cut the veterans benefits. But there's waste, fraud and abuse and duplication of things across every spectrum of this Federal Government. If we're going to get serious about it, we need to have an adult conversation.

And, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, that includes entitlements as well, because if we don't address entitlements, we're looking at one-sixth of the budget; and we're never going to get there just addressing that small portion of the budget.

With that, I yield back and continue to listen to my colleagues.

Mr. AKIN. Hey, Doctor, it's a treat to have you on the floor. And I'm going to run over to, moving a little bit from Georgia to the West, to the great State of Utah, and Congressman BISHOP, you've joined us on the floor a number of times. And one of the questions that—let's say that you were on the

Budget Committee or something, and you're trying to prioritize, how are you going to—guns and butter, how are you going to prioritize defense versus endowment for the arts or whatever it is?

How do we crack this nut about trying to reduce Federal spending? I would appreciate your perspective.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Let me try and hit, for just one moment, two potential areas to address that particular question, and it goes back to the fact that we did read the Constitution on the floor today.

You know it's amazing, as P.J. O'Rourke once said, that the Constitution is 16 pages, which is the operator's manual for 300 million people. The operator's manual for the Toyota Camry, in contrast, is four times as large, and it only seats five.

But you also contrast that with what we have done in the lame duck session when the Senate's omnibus spending bill, it's not 16 pages, it was 1,924 pages. Those are the kinds of issues we're talking about. And I think if we really want an answer of how we make those decisions, we go back to the document that was read this morning.

The general welfare clause today usually puts the emphasis on the word "welfare." When they wrote that thing, they put the emphasis on the word "general." What the Federal Government should do is that which affects all of us.

Monroe, Madison, Jackson vetoed road projects because they said those road projects didn't meet the general welfare. When Savannah burned to the ground, Congress had a great deal of empathy for Savannah, but it did not actually appropriate any money for Savannah because they said giving money to Savannah to rebuild would simply help Savannah and was not general welfare.

Now, I made this speech once on the floor a couple of years ago, and I got a nice letter, kind of, from a lady in Alabama who took me to task and listed all the programs that she thought were viable and good and she wanted continued. And I said, ma'am, you actually missed the ultimate point. The point is not should these programs be available for citizens. The point is, who should be responsible for providing those programs?

Not every idea has to germinate, be funded, be appropriated, be regulated from Washington. The States are equally competent. And if, indeed, we divided our responsibilities together, we could provide better services for the people for a cheaper price.

Now, Mr. AKIN, if I could just give one second of a simple example. David Walker has written a great book called "The Rebirth of Federalism," where he simply made the effect that dangling money we don't have in front of cash-starved States does not necessarily help out the States or us, or the taxpayers who have to foot the bill for both levels of government.

For example, he said when we put conditional grants to States with

strings attached that eventually become regulations and mandates, it undercuts both the inter-level cooperation between those two bodies, and it is a term he invented called "creeping conditionalism," which means the cost to the taxpayer actually increases.

By doing his estimates, the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1986 cost the States \$2 billion to \$3 billion more than the States would have spent to provide their own safe drinking water. From '83 to '90 he estimated that the regulations imposed by the Federal Government was \$9 billion to \$13 billion more in local taxes that did not provide a benefit to the citizens. It was just the creeping cost to them.

So our mandates, supposedly with free money given to States, end up costing the taxpayer not only for the free money we don't have, but costs the States to do more than they would have done or needed to do to actually address the problem.

Mr. AKIN. To meet the mandates. You know, interestingly, and I can't help but piggy back just a little bit on your point, gentleman, it used to be a very boring place to be a Congressman down here because there were almost no laws on the books. Do you know the Federal laws, to begin with, in terms of laws about right and wrong, were, one of them was a law against piracy on the high seas. Another one was against counterfeiting. Another one was a law against espionage. Those three laws were the main laws on the books federally. And what did they have in common? Well, just exactly your point. Piracy, counterfeiting and espionage against our country were against the general welfare. They were laws that affected everything. So laws against murder and rape and stealing and all that kind of stuff were all State laws because the States made all those laws. So you had a very limited jurisdiction federally.

And now, as you say, we've got all of these different sorts of creeping red tape which keep costing. In an insidious way, everybody's cost of living keeps slipping up, but you don't really know why, who's nibbling all the money out of your wallet. But it's because of a lot of those things that you're talking about. And I appreciate that perspective you shared with us.

I promised my good friend from Louisiana, Congressman SCALISE, he has become, this last year or two, an expert on oil rigs and oil spills and everything, but good on many other topics as well. And when we start talking about government, I've got to let you have a piece of the action, my friend.

□ 1500

Mr. SCALISE. I want to thank my friend from up the Mississippi River in Missouri, Madam Speaker, for yielding to me and talking about this important issue, because there seems to be a lot of energy as we are talking about energy in this House.

I think yesterday was so exciting to see not only the gavel ceremoniously

passed from NANCY PELOSI to now Speaker BOEHNER, but also that these principles that are in the Constitution be restored to the people.

This is the people's House, and it should operate as the people's House. And I think now it's starting to get back to those principles that we articulated today when we read the Constitution, a real uplifting experience. It is sad, unfortunately, to note as we look through history that this was the first time that the entire U.S. Constitution was read on the House floor. I think this should be an event that occurs every new Congress so that we reestablish and remind ourselves just what we are up here to uphold.

As we talk about the spending issues of the country, I think one area that shows you where spending has gotten out of control is, if you go to the 10th Amendment of the Constitution, as I know my friend from Utah is such a proud proponent: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

And yet, if you look, so many of the things that we are doing up here in Washington, that this Federal Government has gotten so expansive in doing, have absolutely nothing to do with powers that were delegated in the Constitution.

In fact, one of the big debates we are going to have here this week, our first week here under this new Congress, is about this government takeover of health care that a Federal court just ruled is not constitutional. The Federal Government, under Federal court ruling now, does not have the authority to mandate that American citizens have to buy a private product as a condition of citizenship.

So I think the fact that not only today did we put our money where our mouths are by voting to cut our own budgets, because as we are talking about cutting all throughout government where there is duplication, where there are departments that shouldn't even exist, these czars, these 30 or so shadow government figures that are running their own, almost, cabinets, like a secret cabinet that is running out there, and every one of them has multimillion dollar budgets and staffs, and they are not accountable to anybody except the President—not to the people, not to the Senate, that the Constitution says they should be doing. We are going to be going and looking at all of those areas to make serious cuts.

But then we also have to look—and of course tomorrow we will be voting on the start of the process—to repeal ObamaCare and do what the courts have already said—this isn't constitutional; it shouldn't be on the books—and get rid of that constitutional mandate with all the bad taxes and other things that go with it.

But then we have got to look at creating jobs. And I think that's where

you get into an area where, while we are cutting spending, which we need to do aggressively, we also need to unleash the potential of the individual.

It is not government here in Washington that makes this a great country, and really the greatest country in the history of the world. It's the power of our people back home—the small business owner, the stay-at-home mom who is raising a family—the people that actually make this country work. And there is no place I don't think any more evident of what is wrong with Washington and hurting that opportunity than in my home State where you have got this permitorium going on since after the BP disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. It's the President's policies, not the actions and failures of BP. It's the President's policies that, according to the White House, have put 12,000 people out of work through what is called a permitorium.

The government has said all of the companies that didn't do anything wrong, the companies that played by the rules, that follow all the best safety guidelines in the world and had no problems, now the government has shut them down, put them out of work, and they are not even issuing permits.

Mr. AKIN. I can't help but just jump in a little bit.

It just keeps coming back to my mind, as you talk about the particular situation of the job-killing mandates that are coming from the administration, I keep thinking an awful lot of Americans must be starting to feel the same way I do: that the government is not a servant anymore; that it's a fearful master.

We were warned by the forefathers that if you let your government, your Federal Government get out of control, it will become a fearful master. It seems to me that that's kind of what is starting to happen. And I think the last election was an understanding across the whole country that this government needs to be put back in its proper place, being a servant of the people and doing programs that are constitutional instead of things that people just think of, wow, it would be a great idea if we mandate this or mandate that.

And here you have an example of an area that's already had a tough hit from the oil spill, and we are going to take businesses that have done nothing wrong and we're going to basically shut them down because of some mandate. Somehow or another, I just don't see that as being government of the servant. Do you?

Mr. SCALISE. In fact, it's exactly the opposite of the government being the servant. It's the government being the oppressor. And as I mentioned, 12,000 jobs have already been lost in south Louisiana alone. And these aren't my numbers; this is the White House. And the White House and the President's response to that was, well, they could just go get unemployment.

These aren't people who want to get on unemployment rolls. They are hard-

working people who love and have a great, strong work ethic. They want to be contributing to America's energy security. But it's this administration that has shut them down and not allowed them to go back to work drilling safely.

And I'm not talking about BP. I'm talking about the companies who have played by the rules all along, who have never had any safety problems because they follow a higher standard. They are the ones that have been shut down and put out of work.

And not only is it affecting Louisiana in terms of the 12,000 jobs; it has now affected America's energy security, because right now, nationally, this is a time, once you get out of the summer, where gas prices typically start falling again. But what are we seeing? We are seeing the opposite of that. Now gas prices are breaking over the \$3-a-gallon mark in many States because, in part, this administration has changed our energy policies where we have shut off more areas of energy production in America, which means these Middle Eastern countries, many of whom don't like us, other foreign countries are now producing the energy that we need, which reverses our trade balance. It sends billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to foreign countries out of America, and then it makes our country less secure, which is why we are approaching \$100-a-barrel gasoline now, because the Americans have basically said through President Obama's policies: We are going to shut off most of our sources of known energy. But, of course, our demand for energy hasn't dropped in the country, so that means we are now going to have to be more reliant on many of these foreign countries who don't like us.

So it has not only devastating consequences in terms of 12,000 lost jobs in south Louisiana, but also devastating effects on America's energy security which now we are seeing reflected in these gas prices that are now breaking \$3 a gallon.

Mr. AKIN. Congressman, you have talked about Louisiana, and I appreciate that perspective, and that's the specifics.

If we sort of back up a little bit from what you have said and take a look, and the subject here that we are talking about today is cutting government. If you take a look at the Department of Energy, the Department of Energy was founded years and years ago with the purpose of making sure that we were not dependent on foreign oil.

Now, that department has grown with more and more and more buildings and bureaucrats and people in it I'm sure with well-meaning intention. But as the Department has grown, we have become more dependent on foreign oil. Now, there is something in that equation that's fundamentally nuts, so we have to take a really good look at this subject.

I am interested, too, and sometimes I point out to my constituents, I think

people don't understand this, but our opinions in this Chamber are pretty divided. If I were to say to some of my constituents that there is a big difference between Republicans and Democrats on the abortion issue, they would go, Gee, whiz, no big surprise. But they may be surprised to know that if you look at voting records, there is a bigger difference on development of American energy between Republicans and Democrats than there is on the abortion issue. So there is a difference of opinion as to whether or not we need to become energy independent in this country.

And I'm glad you've got the common sense to say we need to be energy independent; we need to develop all of our resources for energy. And the fact that you have taken a strong stand on that, Steve, I think you are doing a great job for Louisiana, and it's a treat to have you joining us here today and bringing that expertise.

I am going to run back over to Georgia in a little bit and jump over here to Representative GRAVES. Jump in, please.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Well, thank you for yielding some time. And, Madam Speaker, this should be the final few minutes of my discussion as I am going to leave and yield to the gentleman from Utah. I sort of want to follow up on what he said. But before I do, I want to point out that the Republican Study Committee, which I believe all of us are members of and actively a part of, is putting together a rescissions plan which has \$2.6 trillion in cuts identified already that would occur over the next 10 years and an amazing set of proposals that, to me, as we stand here today in the majority, JOHN BOEHNER as our Speaker that we nominated, we elected, and we are still talking about spending being the number one issue. That's how committed we are.

Going back to the gentleman's statement, he was referring to the Constitution and the general welfare clause in the Preamble there. I thought I would bring up an interesting point, because it says to "promote the general welfare," not "provide the general welfare." An interesting distinction there. And what a notion we have taken from a central government role to want to provide for everyone.

But if you go one clause prior to that, it says, "provide for the common defense." Not "promote," but "provide" common defense and "promote" general welfare. Two distinct differences and clauses. And we have certainly mistaken that second clause there.

□ 1510

Mr. AKIN. That is such a good point. I don't think it does any harm to repeat that. Let's go back to it again. We are talking about the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, it sets the whole framework for what this country rests on, and you've got two words that are

loaded with meaning. The first one is the general defense. That's national security. The general defense is general. It's security for every State, for every American, rich or poor, black or white, male or female. When Americans are secure, Americans are secure; and we use Federal money to do something that is general. And it's not to encourage it; it's to provide for that defense.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Clearly the word is provide for common defense.

The next phrase or clause is then promote general welfare. Not provide. Promote the general welfare.

Mr. AKIN. Now I think there were Federalist papers that were written to help make that point and to define the fact that to promote general welfare is not a clause big enough to run tanks through and say that anything that seems like a nice thing to do for somebody is constitutional.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. You're right. I will wrap up with this, two quotes from two very different Presidents. Ronald Reagan once said: "Revenue is not the problem; spending is the problem." We all know that. But then another quote is this: "Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means the buck stops here. Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and our grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership."

Mr. AKIN. Now who was it who said that? Was that Ronald Reagan?

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. "Americans deserve better." End quote. That was then-Senator Barack Obama on the Senate floor.

Mr. AKIN. So there's a big difference between Senate and Presidency apparently.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. A big difference.

But he is absolutely correct that America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Mr. President, here is your opportunity.

Mr. AKIN. And the interesting thing is that if you take George Bush's biggest deficit year, which was when Speaker PELOSI was here in Congress, 2009, his biggest deficit was one-third of the first Obama, which was \$1.4 trillion. So what is the connection between the quote and the action? I think what we need to do is to take a very, very good look at what really is constitutional.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. I think the connection is in his quote—a failure of leadership.

Mr. AKIN. A failure of leadership. His own words.

Thank you, Congressman. It has been a treat to have you joining us here this afternoon.

I want to run back over to Utah to my good friend, Congressman BISHOP.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Thank you.

I do appreciate the Congressman from Georgia talking about the difference between "provide" and "promote."

Let me just go with one historical example of how that works, because I think in one of your earlier questions it was said, How are we actually going to handle this spending problem? Part of it is we have to think outside the box and make some things that have been common assumptions not necessarily have to survive.

And instead of going with some issues that we're funding right now, which may be too close to people, let me just go back to history. In most of the history books that I do, that I have seen, when we taught high school history, they always talk about how this nation came together with the uniting of the railroads, the UP and the Central Pacific joining together and how the Federal Government subsidized that process and was the only viable way of getting that done. We provided the railroad system.

One of the concepts, though, as I was reading another book that took a closer look on this issue is that not only did the Federal Government help with this railroad building craze but the idea that the Federal Government became involved changed the mechanism in which railroads were built and the kinds of ways they were built.

We paid railroads for every mile of track that was laid, which meant you gave them more money if they went to a mountainous route than on flat land. So many of those routes took a very circuitous route going through some elevated terrain because they got more money than if they had just taken a simpler flat route. One of the, I won't mention which one but they refused to put up masonry supports. They put up wooden culverts only for their train tracks. In the winter they laid track over ice which meant as soon as the thaw came, the tracks disappeared. Much of our railway system had to be rebuilt within 2 years of its actual completion.

I live in the State of Utah and my only national monument is the Golden Spike National Monument in my district in which both the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific came and they passed one another continuing to lay track because they were paid for it by the Federal Government, until Congress finally told them not to track off and link up somewhere; and they picked Promontory Summit which is in the State of Utah in my county to finally link up.

Ironically enough, in 1893 James Hill built—maybe the Madam Speaker has the name of this railroad—Northern Railroad that went from Chicago to Seattle. He did that without any government subsidies whatsoever. He paid private property for renting his lines even during the panic. It survived. It was functional. It was profitable.

Sometimes we make assumptions that only the Federal Government has the ability of doing things when in reality we don't. And we forget that once again if we were to make States a true partner with us in projects, States

have the ability of being creative, much more than we do; they have the ability of providing justice for its circumstances much more than we do; and more importantly if the States make a mistake, it doesn't harm the entire country. I think ObamaCare may be one of those particular examples, where State creativity was going on a proper road with some wonderful ideas that were stopped dead in their tracks, no pun intended, by ObamaCare.

Mr. AKIN. It is interesting that you talk about, there was a great little short book, and I don't remember the title of it, gentleman, that came out with some of the very facts that you just mentioned, and it was a study of how the government in the 1800s got involved in the six major industries in America because the assumption was that the Federal Government has to get involved in these big industries to make us competitive in an industrial world. They got involved in the oil industry, the steamship industry, the steel industry; of course the railroad industry.

The example you're talking about, again the government created this incentive that you're paid by the mile. So among other things they did, they used cheap steel rails which wore out right away and wooden ties that were not treated, and also they wouldn't blast which was expensive to go up a steep grade but they would make these long grades back and forth. The result was the company that used all the government money had a rail line that you couldn't maintain it. And, as you said, the northern route was done totally with private money. They had to scrimp and borrow. They built a little piece at a time. At the end of what they could built, they would form a little town and they would give them free shipping to encourage the trade and they built the railroad in pieces that way using the cash that they had. And that, like the other industries, the steamship, steel and the oil industries, the same pattern occurred where the Federal Government got involved, the businesses that were using Federal money all went bankrupt.

So there was an example where again you think the government's got to get involved. The answer was every time the government got involved, the companies went bankrupt. That's a good principle.

Let's get over, though, to take a look at this big picture of how in the world do we deal with the budget. One of the big things that everybody has been taking a look at, and I know you know this, gentleman, and that is that we have this new category that are called entitlements. That is, we passed some law; the law then runs like a machine and spits out money to people. If you get enough of those machines going spending money, pretty soon you've spent a lot of money. We've gotten to the point now where Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, are spending

almost half of the revenue that the government is taking in.

So when you deal with that, as we take a look at overspending, people have projected that if you let Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid continue as they are, there will come a time when there will be no money for anything else in the budget at all. These are some of the hard choices that we have to face.

It seems to me, gentleman, as we have made an emphasis on the Constitution; in fact, in the rules package that was passed yesterday, we have created a new mandate that every bill that comes to this floor has to have a constitutional justification. I think that's the start of where we really have to get at this problem, and that is, what really is the job of the Federal Government and can we afford to be all things to all people.

I just wanted to let you piggyback on that.

□ 1520

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate that very well, because, to be very honest, this is not an easy task which this Congress faces. We have spent probably eight or nine decades digging the hole which we are in. To think that there is a simple way of getting out of it is naive. To think that in one year we could get out of this is maybe also naive. We have to think in terms of moving forward in a general direction that would go there.

I am very proud that the rules that were passed yesterday will enable this body, if we decide to do it, to take the time to think outside the box with new ideas. The idea that for the first time since the 1960s we have set aside a specific time during the day so that the committees could function will allow every Member on this floor to sit and work in a committee to come up with ideas to reach this goal of how we can control or at least limit the runaway spending that we have had.

Mr. AKIN. I need to stop and interrupt just a minute here, because you will never say this, but, Congressman BISHOP, you were one of the main people that helped put that rule in place and I think the whole country needs to say a big "thank you" to you, because what you are doing is trying to make Congress just a little more efficient and do a few commonsense things.

A lot of people might not say this thinking outside the box, but the box is small down here sometimes, and you have provided us with the idea that we are actually going to get into some of these questions and we are going to approach them in a systematic kind of way. We are going to take time and not have votes running all day long so people can't focus on their work, and say now, systematically, what do we have to do to deal this problem?

I congratulate you on the first step, and also the rules package that says you have got to have a constitutional justification for everything you bring

to the floor. I think we are starting on the right spot.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. You make me embarrassed right here. I wish I could take full credit for the time management plans that we are implementing here. I may have said it, but somebody else had to make the decision to go forward with it. I think it was the right thing to do because it requires us, instead of running around in circles like a bunch of squirrels on a treadmill or chipmunks on a treadmill wasting a lot of time, we try to focus our energies so that when we are on the floor it makes some kind of difference.

Let me just give one other historical example of what I think we need to be doing and dedicate ourselves, since I have been throwing out too many already.

I believe it was in the first Congress that the issue came up of postal roads, where to draw the line, where would the postal roads for the new Post Office go. There is some kind of economic benefit of having actually mail dropped along a route.

But Congress, eager to get out, said let's just allow the President, the executive branch, to decide where the postal routes will be, which seems to be a logical thing to do. And I believe it was Congressman Paige, I hope from Virginia, who stood up and said, no, our job of Congress is to legislate, which includes taking the time to agree on where those postal routes will go. It is not our responsibility to give it to an executive branch or a bureaucracy or some other group to come up with all the details. And he forced Congress to stay there, and they did their job.

Too often we as Members simply have the tendency of coming up with a grand and noble idea, and they say all right, we will empower. I think the language in the TARP bill is a perfect example of where we empowered the Secretary of the Treasury to make all kinds of decisions which were legislative decisions by their very nature.

Well, I hope what this schedule allows us to do and what you were talking about is to say we have a great deal of work to be done here. We are still looking at ideas. I am sure there are great ideas that are out there that will be coming from the people as time goes on, but we have to make sure we dedicate the time to not simply running around in circles playing silly games, but coming here and zeroing in on our task.

It was said by you, it was said by the gentleman from Georgia as well as the gentleman from Louisiana, it is the spending. That is our problem. That is what is hurting jobs, that is what is hurting Americans, that is what is bloating our budget. We need to zero in on that, and until we do that, we will never come close to meeting what the American people expect the Congress to do, nor what we really morally need to do.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. AKIN. Well, I think that Ronald Reagan, you know, he had a way of

putting complicated things in simple words. He said we are buying more government than we can afford. That is not a bad summary of the situation. And it hasn't gotten better since Ronald Reagan was here—we are buying more government than we can afford.

I appreciate your historic examples. Of course, there is no way Congress can do the example of the postal roads that you made out when we are trying to basically do everything under the sun, be all things to all people. We are going to have to make some decisions saying this is a nice thing to do, but it could be done by a State government or it could be done by the private sector.

We are going to have to make some of those choices and just say, look, there are some things that the private sector and the States cannot do and we better fund that first. Certainly, providing for the common defense is one that has to be up at the front end, because the other governments can't do that, and the individual citizens can't do that. Whereas when it comes to some of the other kinds of things, such as in the energy areas or education or insurance or a lot of those things, they could be done by other governments.

When we start to get into this, hey, let's start to do something that feels good about this subject and turn it over to a bunch of administration bureaucrats, we have really lost control of where we are, and I appreciate your bringing us back to ground zero.

Now, there have been some shifts. Here is one that is kind of interesting, and it is the tradeoff. They always talk about the tradeoff between guns and butter, between defense and basically welfare programs.

If you go back to 1965, the entitlement spending was 2.5 percent of GDP of the overall budget, 2.5 percent in 1965 was entitlement. Defense was 7.4 percent. Now we have shifted to 2010, the estimate is 4.9 percent is national defense. We have gone from 7.4 down to 4.9 percent, while entitlements has gone from 2.5 percent to 9.9 percent in entitlements.

That is getting to that area where if the entitlements continue to climb, if you just look at demographics, there will be no money for defense or anything else and the budget will be dominated by just simply Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

So we are going to have to ask ourselves what are the top priorities. We are going to have to fund those and do a good job at those. That is what I was getting at. I don't think we can have the mentality of just saying we are going to take 10 percent out of everything or 30 percent out of everything. I think we are going to have to make some decisions. Some we may not want to cut, we just want to make them more efficient and leave that amount of money in it, and other ones we may say it is not a matter of cutting it, we don't even need the thing at all. Let's just get rid of that entire functional area. That is where we have to be going.

But, again, where we started today is the right place, with the U.S. Constitution, and making the key distinctions that the Constitution makes so clear. There is a difference for providing for defense and then basically encouraging general welfare.

I appreciate your very specific historic examples. If you remember the name of the book, there was a book, I don't know if it was the same one you were quoting from, but it had examples of those six industries. All of them where the government was in subsidizing the corporations, there was all kinds of corruption and the companies all failed, and the ones that stayed away from government funding were the ones that stayed in business. Just a fascinating study.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. If I could just add one comment to that as well. I think it is very clear that we need to say it is not that the Federal Government will always be bad and is incompetent at doing things. The problem the Federal Government has is the size of the Federal Government.

Any big industry has waste, fraud, and abuse, and that is one of the reasons why if we could coordinate and work with local governments—that is why the old cliché that the government that is best is the one that is closest to the people. It is not necessarily that they are smarter or better; it is because they don't have the problem of size in a one-size-fits-all issue and they have the freedom to be creative.

As you were talking about, especially with the entitlements, this is an area in which creativity is going to be the most important element. And some things, especially with the cost of Medicare, are driven by one-size-fits-all Federal mandates and Federal decisions, when allowing creativity could help us solve this problem.

I also want to say one other thing too when your comment about the general defense is so significant. It is not because we are funding for the defense of the America today. The decisions we make, the plans we make for defense today will not come to fruition for another 10 to 15 years, and indeed, the ability for us to have diplomacy in the future depends on wise decisions that we make today.

I appreciate the gentleman from Missouri coming with this issue. This is something that the people care about, something that the Congress cares about. I think the fact that we just passed a 5 percent cut on ourselves with overwhelming bipartisan support says that this is the direction we should be taking, and we should continue to talk about this over and over and over again. I appreciate you allowing me to be part of this.

□ 1530

Mr. AKIN. It's just a treat, Congressman BISHOP, to have you here with us today talking about a very important subject, something that is on the front of the minds, I think, of many Ameri-

cans, understanding that we are buying way too much government than we can afford. Certainly, the guiding compass and the guiding light for us has got to be the U.S. Constitution. And the fact is that we had hundreds of years of history, or at least a hundred of years of history, where the Constitution has stood us in very good stead. And when we get away from our foundational documents and principles, that's when we really start to get into trouble.

The principle on defense that was just made—I have to underscore, I'm on the Armed Services Committee. We deal with defense issues day in and day out. And the problem in defense is that the things that are on the drawing board today won't be fielded for probably 10 years in the future. So decisions that we're making today are going to have their effect a long way out. And that's why we have to be particularly careful. The situation in defense is one that, as you take a look around the world, we are rapidly being challenged by China and Russia, and we are not keeping up in those arms situations where we do not have the capability diplomatically to have options that were otherwise available before when we had put enough funding into defense.

And so as we see entitlements increasing way, way up and defense being cut down as a percentage of GDP, we are risking not doing the most fundamental principle in the preamble of the U.S. Constitution, which is providing for the national defense. And our objective, of course, is not parity. We're not trying to be equal with other nations. Our objective is to be overwhelmingly superior. That's why we don't have wars, because of the fact that people say, We don't want to take on the United States. And it's why we can be a great Nation of peacekeeping, because of the fact that we have been strong and successful and set a good example for other nations.

So what we have before us is a very difficult question. It is the question of politics in America. If you take a look at all of the fights, the debates, the discussions that go on in politics in America, most of it revolves around this question, and that is: What should the Federal Government be doing? Should it be spending more or less? Should it be doing that at all? Or, are we doing a good enough job? That's what the discussion and debate is about. And until we get back to the Constitution, until we start asking the question, "Is it necessary for the Federal Government to do this function?" we will never solve this problem of overspending.

The current Congress—and this is my opinion, but one that I think other Congressmen that I have discussed this with share, and that is we have another problem, and that is the House and the Congress is a product of a lot of time. There are various fiefdoms and ways that we have gotten accustomed to doing things which may not be very logical or practical.

I've been here 10 years. I have learned about authorization and appropriations and about the Budget Committee and the way we do things. But if we're going to seriously get at this problem, other than shaving a few percent here or there, if we're going to seriously get at the problem of having to radically reduce our appetite for spending, it's going to require changes in the structure of this Congress. And that will be one of the things that you can see we've already started on and are continuing and pledging to continue to do—to take a look at our rules and how the organization is set up so that we can make those hard choices and decisions.

There has been a commitment that those decisions will be made in a transparent way; in a way that everybody who is elected to be a Congressman, so that every district in this country will have somebody that can stand up and have an opportunity to weigh in and have an opinion. You won't see, as we had in the last Congress, bills that are being written in the Speaker's office and brought to the floor and rammed through in the dead of night. You're going to hear open debate, a lot of discussion, and a lot of ideas being discussed. I think that's a good thing and a proper thing. But, ultimately, we have to deal with the question: What are the essential functions that must happen in Federal Government?

Now, I've just heard that there are going to be some very significant cuts in defense. That's very concerning to me. Why would we be taking the Defense Department and doing major cuts there and no other department in government is being looked at? This is something that some of us will probably react to some because we believe we have to control spending, but why do you single out the Department of Defense? We're fighting two wars. Why are you going to whack that budget when you have all these other budgets that have never been touched whatsoever? And so we have to take a look at those percentages. When you see entitlements going very, very high, defense budget going low, that signals that we've got to be careful about the choices we're making, because the choices we make today, 10 years from now, your sons or daughters or my grandsons and my granddaughters may be affected by those choices.

So we start out a new Congress, I think, on the right foot. Emphasis on the U.S. Constitution; emphasis on the fact that we have to be responsible; emphasis on the fact that everybody in every congressional district is going to have a piece of the action; and the fact that we're going to have to be responsible, we're going to have to be cutting Federal spending. You cannot run, as we have in the first 2 years of the Obama administration, with \$1.4 trillion deficit. And that will stop.

REPEAL OF THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, it's a great privilege to be here on the floor with you. Congratulations to you and the other new Members of the Republican Party.

We have some extraordinarily important tasks ahead of us. This afternoon, I'm going to be joined by some of my colleagues. We've just heard a very useful discussion on the role of the Constitution and how it plays into it. And indeed, today we did spend about 3 hours reading through the Constitution, and I think it was to all of our benefit. We started off with the new Speaker actually reading the preamble. I think that's a good place for us to start, because we're going to discuss health care today and we're going to discuss an effort by the majority party, the Republicans, to repeal the Affordable Health Care Act that was passed last session. And this issue has become a constitutional issue, so reading the preamble to the Constitution and Article I, section 8 is useful.

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare"—promote the general welfare—"and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States." And then later, in article I, section 8, "Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States."

It's about the general welfare of the United States that we'll be discussing in this next hour, and that's the welfare of the people of the United States. It speaks to us, the citizens—all of us—whether we are a newborn baby or a senior in the last of life—how do we provide for that general welfare?

Last year, in a major step forward, the first time in more than nearly four decades, this Congress, together with the Senate and the President, passed the Affordable Health Care Act, a very, very important and extremely useful step in providing for the welfare—that is, the general welfare—of the American population. It's a law that makes life better from birth to retirement. Part of this law, a very, very important part of it, deals with what we call the Patient's Bill of Rights—the Patient's Bill of Rights, vis-à-vis, the insurance industry.

I think all of us can go back to our districts, to our homes, and even to our own lives and find numerous episodes where the insurance industry has said, No, you cannot have this procedure; or,

No, you cannot have coverage because you have a preexisting condition.

□ 1540

Today, we are going to talk about the Patients' Bill of Rights and the Republican effort that is now underway in the Rules Committee in this building, as we speak, to write a rule that they will bring to the floor next week, without one hearing, to completely wipe out this extraordinarily important effort to provide for the general welfare of the American people. We are going to discuss that in great detail.

Now, for me, this is a very important part of my life. I spent 8 years of my life as the insurance commissioner in California, taking on the insurance companies, trying to force them to honor their commitments, to force the insurance companies to pay the claim of a patient who had undergone chemotherapy, to provide insurance that was contracted for and not to rescind that health care policy. I cannot even begin to count the number of cases that came before me as insurance commissioner where the insurance companies would rescind a policy because the person suddenly became ill and had a very expensive episode.

The Patients' Bill of Rights prohibits that. We are going to talk about that. I want to start here, and then I'm going to turn this over to my colleagues.

I am going to give an example of a very dear friend who lived here in Washington. He was a Peace Corps volunteer, married. He was working here in Washington, DC, as the director of the National Peace Corps Association, the returned volunteers. He had a child. That child had a severe disability—kidneys didn't work. He was insured. His wife was insured. The pregnancy was insured. The delivery was insured. But that child, on the day the child was born with that preexisting condition of kidney failure, was uninsurable under the parents' policy.

That kind of action is prohibited by the Patients' Bill of Rights. No more would that happen to men and women, families, pregnant women across this country who deliver babies that have some problem. Those babies will be insured whatever the condition might be.

Our colleagues on the Republican side will bring to this floor next Wednesday, without one hearing in any relevant policy committee, a repeal of the Patients' Bill of Rights. What of the babies that are born in the future that have some issue? How will they be provided for?

The rest of the story is this family has spent 20 years now struggling to provide the health care services that their child needed. They have been close to bankruptcy many, many times. They have struggled through it. The child is no longer a child—a young adult—and under the law today, he has health insurance.

Is that what the American public wants from the Republican Party—the