

exercises, and the same government that thought giving half a billion dollars to Solyndra was a good idea.

In 1900, Americans paid about 5.9 percent of their income in taxes, and Tax Freedom Day came about 22 days into the year. It is a far cry, my colleagues, from what we have to endure in taxes today.

If you think 111 days to reach Tax Freedom Day is excessive, just wait till next year. We are on the cusp of a tax Armageddon. I like to call it a Taxmageddon. It's scheduled to hit on January 1, 2013. It will be the largest tax increase in memory, possibly ever, a \$494 billion tax increase in 1 year.

When we talk about taxes, we usually project the increase or decrease in revenue over a 10-year budget horizon. But this \$494 billion tax increase isn't over a 10-year budget window; it is an immediate massive tax increase in 1 year.

Where do these tax increases come from? There are a number of tax provisions that are set to expire at the end of this year. Unless action is taken to extend these provisions or make them permanent, it will lead to an unheard of tax increase in January.

About one-third of the tax increases will come from the expiration of the Bush tax cuts from 2001 and 2003. These tax cuts reduced the marginal rates for all Americans and expanded the child tax credit, reduced the marriage penalty, and increased the tax breaks for education costs. The majority of the tax benefits in these tax cuts were targeted towards the middle and lower income tax folks.

About a quarter of the tax increases will come from the expiration of temporary payroll tax cuts that were created just 2 years ago.

Another quarter of the tax increases will come from the expiration of the alternative minimum tax. With all of this talk about creating the Buffett rule, the President seems to forget that we already have the Buffett rule in the AMT. The AMT was created in 1969 to ensure that 155 high-income households paying zero Federal income taxes would pay income taxes. Unfortunately, it was never indexed to inflation. So more and more Americans become entangled in the AMT, and today the AMT threatens to hit most Americans in the middle class and is regularly patched to protect taxpayers, but never repealed. Unless it is dealt with, it will impact millions of middle class taxpayers.

In 2013, we get a brand new tax, courtesy of ObamaCare. There will be a 3.8 percent tax on wages and salaries over \$250,000 and investment income over that same amount. While this seems like it won't affect most people, this tax can apply to unearned income, like capital gains from selling your home, which will affect middle class families when they sell property. Like the AMT tax penalty, this tax is not indexed to inflation, which means that more and more Americans will be affected by this tax over time.

We'll also see the return of the Death Tax to its pre-Bush levels, when the maximum rate can be 55 percent of your estate. I believe there should be no taxation without respiration; that is, you have to be breathing. It is wrong to tax a business or a family farm when it's transferred from parent to child. This tax has hurt family farms and family businesses where children have been forced to sell the business or farm because they could not afford to pay the Death Tax.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has referred to all these expiring tax provisions as a "massive fiscal cliff."

When we talk about taxes, we usually project the increases over 10 years, but this is going to be immediate in the year 2013, January 1.

There has been a failure of leadership from the White House. The President's budget is full of election-year gimmicks and unwillingness to try to address the upcoming Taxmageddon. Instead, the President doubles-down on his election year rhetoric, he doesn't address expiring taxes, and instead proposes a slew of new taxes on American companies.

You do not raise taxes during a recession. Raising taxes will halt what little economic growth we had over the last 3 years and return us to the days of double-digit unemployment.

SAN JACINTO DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate the 176th anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto. Last Saturday, the State of Texas celebrated April 21, 1836, when Texas forces led by General Sam Houston dealt a decisive blow to General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

Several weeks after the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence in March 1836, roughly 900 members of the Texas Army overpowered a much larger Mexican Army in a surprise attack.

Texas soldiers ran and shouted, "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember Goliad." Some 700 Mexican soldiers were killed and 730 captured, while only 9 Texans died. General Santa Anna was captured the following day. He signed the peace treaties that ordered the Mexican Army to leave Texas, paving the way for the Republic of Texas to become an independent country and later a State in our great country.

The battle was memorialized along Buffalo Bayou and San Jacinto River with the San Jacinto Monument in east Harris County. It is in our congressional district.

God bless Texas and God bless the United States of America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Joel Osteen, Lakewood Church, Houston, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Father, we thank You that You show Your goodness and Your favor to the United States of America and to those who govern it. We ask that You bless this House of Representatives and each Member who serves in it. Help these lawmakers to search their hearts so that they may serve with dignity and honor and that through them our Nation will achieve the destiny that You have set before us. Give them wisdom as they make good decisions, courage that they will hold fast to Your truth, and compassion that all should prosper from their laws.

We receive Your presence here today. Father, we pray that these lawmakers will remain mindful of You and that they will honor You in everything they do here.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SABLON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING REVEREND JOEL OSTEEEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great amount of privilege today to welcome two humble

spirits in Pastor Joel Osteen and Co-Pastor Victoria Osteen, and to recognize their entire family and their delightful children, Alexandra and Jonathan. Two humble spirits.

As was reflected in his prayer, Joel Osteen has taught us to embrace God's grace and mercy, and for those who will listen, to stand in the sunlight of joy as one looks toward the hopefulness of the future.

I am delighted that Lakewood started in a feedstock store in the 18th Congressional District. The story is told that there were spiders and a lot of dust, organized by his wonderful father, John Osteen, and his mother, Dodie Osteen, two who loved each other dearly but really loved the Lord.

Out of that wonderful union came five children. And out of that wonderment, as John Osteen preached for over 40 years, as the love of his wife, Dodie Osteen, provided a comfort at his side, they built a wonderful church called the Oasis of Love.

But John was taken from us suddenly in 1999. A young man by the name of Joel was at school. But, knowing how much he loved his family, he came home, just happening, a month or so ago or a few years before, working with his father's ministry, and gave a sermon for the first time one week before his father died. Maybe it was the father telling the son that now it is your time.

As we look to the future, Pastor Joel Osteen, who has published many books, continues to be a humble spirit, is known to have the largest and most growing church in American history and, as well, continues with a humble spirit. His phrase that "Our God is a good God who desires to bless those who are obedient and faithful to him" is one that we're reminded of. He continues to ensure that those who are in need have a sense of inspiration and hope, and he continues to preach this word around the world.

He asks for all of us, and he asks for America and the world, to become all that God created you to be, and continues to emphasize that we are better than we think. As he was the product of John and Dodie Osteen, he is now, along with his wife and along with his mother, continuing to shine a light.

We're delighted to have him today because we need a light in America. As he reaches those who are seeking light, we ask Pastor Joel Osteen, in his books, in his message, to continue to bless us. He is, in fact, someone who warmly says: America is a great country, but we're better when we work together.

Thank you, Pastor Osteen, for keeping the dream alive, that of your father and mother, of a church that was started in 1959. Thank you as well for opening the doors of your church to everyone that would come. But more importantly, every background, race, color, or creed is welcome in those pews, now some 16,000. And that was a former basketball stadium, or arena, but yet now people come and worship.

I'm delighted to host Pastor Joel Osteen and his co-pastor, his wife, Victoria Osteen, for what they are doing not only for their church and their members, but really what they're doing for harmony and the spirit of America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the achievements of a native Houstonian Joel Osteen, his wife of 21 years Victoria Osteen, as well as, Joel's parents John and Dodie Osteen. Their Church Lakewood was established in 1959 in my district the 18th Congressional District in Houston, Texas.

Joel was born in Houston on March 5, 1965 and has become an internationally known televangelist, theologian, speaker and writer.

He was born into a family dedicated to serving their community. In 1959, six years before his birth, Joel's parents, John and Dodie Osteen, founded the Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. Joel bore witness to his parents' commitment to the church and the community that they served.

Joel has married a woman who shares his level of commitment. His wife Victoria is also his co-pastor and together they have two children Alexandra and Jonathan.

John Osteen was not only a founder but also the Pastor of Lakewood Church and as the years progressed he along with Dodie was able to develop a loyal local following. John was a prolific writer and authored 45 books and his wife, Dodie joined him in his passion for writing. She also published a book which described her battle with metastatic cancer of the liver. Dodie's survival was a miracle and a blessing for all who heard her story.

Joel, who has always been strongly committed to his family, left for university; however, he returned home early and continued to help his family with the church. Joel had found his calling in life, and gave his first sermon one week before his father's death. That moment set his future destiny—he was called to pastor Lakewood Church.

Before that, Joel believed the next step for the church was television and he worked without ceasing behind cameras and as a producer of the church's broadcasts. Young Joel had a vision and the Osteens, as a family, worked towards that vision to bring their church into the homes of millions of people around the world as a conduit to deliver the word of the Lord.

In 1999, Joel reached his 34th birthday and in that year he along with his family had already celebrated many successes. Sadly, they also had to come together that year to mourn the loss of their patriarch, John Osteen, who died of a heart attack.

At the time of his father's death, Joel had to decide what to do next. He had spent his life dedicated to supporting the mission of the Lakewood Church. He could have chosen a different path in life but had remained steadfast in working with the congregation for so long.

Instead of leaving the church upon his father's death, Joel decided to pick up the torch lit by his parents and stepped into his father's shoes as Pastor of Lakewood Church. The rest is history.

Within the space of 9 years, Joel has transformed the Church and left his mark on history. According to reports, Lakewood Church under Joel Osteen's leadership has become America's largest and fastest growing church. The Osteen family has lived their vision; they

are indeed being seen in millions of homes around the world.

Currently Joe's services can be seen in nearly 100 countries. Lakewood Church is nondenominational—there are no crosses or other visual representations of Jesus—instead, the focus is on the message as delivered by Joel and his co-pastors. He wants to teach people on the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Joel has been preaching to millions of people around the world. He has a strong message of unity and encourages diversity and acceptance. Joel is arguably the most popular preacher in the country. Lakewood Church is the largest congregation in the United States, averaging more than 43,500 in attendance per week. The congregation in Houston meets in a 16,000-seat former sports arena.

On any given Sunday over 7 million people watch his services. And his ability to embrace technology has allowed even more viewers to witness his services. Currently the church has 48 million podcasts with over 1 million people downloading their podcasts every week.

I commend Joel Osteen, his wife Victoria, his family and his Lakewood Church team ministry who have worked together to put forward a message that has engaged the hearts and minds of millions.

JOEL'S STORY

Joel Osteen is currently in negotiations with a major network to anchor a primetime reality series based on the inspirational themes of his Sunday sermons. The show will originate from Lakewood Church and tell the stories of ordinary people meeting extraordinary challenges.

Joel Osteen is a native Houstonian and the Pastor of Lakewood Church, which according to Church Growth Today is America's largest and fastest growing church.

On July 16, 2005 after completing \$95 million in renovations, Joel moved Lakewood Church into its new 16,000-seat home—the former Compaq Center. It is the largest regularly-used worship center in the United States.

Each week Joel delivers God's message of hope and encouragement to more than 38,000 attendees.

According to Nielsen Media Research, Joel is the most watched inspirational figure in America.

His weekly sermon is broadcast into every U.S. television market where it is viewed by 7 million Americans each week and more than 20 million each month. His weekly broadcast is also seen in almost 100 nations around the world.

In 2004, his first book, *Your Best Life Now*, was released by Time Warner debuting at the top of the New York Times Bestsellers List and quickly rising to #1. It remained on the New York Times Bestsellers List for more than 2 years and has sold more than 4 million copies.

Joel was named as one of Barbara Walters' "10 Most Fascinating People of 2006" and he was selected as the "Most Influential Christian

in 2006" by the readers of Church Report Magazine.

PREPARED FOR GOD'S CALLING

Joel, the son of John Osteen, a highly respected minister of the Gospel and the founder of Lakewood Church, attended Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he studied radio and television communications.

In 1982, Joel returned to Houston and founded Lakewood's television ministry where he produced John Osteen's televised sermons for 17 years until January 1999 when his father passed away suddenly from a heart attack.

For many years, John Osteen encouraged Joel to preach, but he always declined preferring to work behind the scenes. But, in early 1999 Joel felt compelled to accept his father's invitation and he preached his first sermon on January 17th of that year. Little did anyone know that would be the last Sunday of John Osteen's life. Two weeks later, Joel began preaching and later that year was installed as the new Senior Pastor of Lakewood Church.

A NEW VISION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Almost immediately, weekly attendance began to grow at an extraordinary rate and in 2005, Joel moved Lakewood Church into its present location, the former Compaq Center, a 16,000-seat arena that was once home to the Houston Rockets professional basketball team. Now, with his wife Victoria, and the leadership staff at Lakewood, the innovative church is poised for the new millennium.

Joel's extraordinary success can be found in his core message: "That our God is a good God who desires to bless those who are obedient and faithful to Him through Jesus Christ."

It is Joel's deepest desire that his own life be an example of that principle and that everyone who hears this message of hope and encouragement would choose to accept God's goodness and mercy and to become all that God wants them to be.

JOEL'S BACKGROUND

Born in Houston, Texas, Osteen married Victoria L. Iloff on April 4, 1987. They have two children, Jonathan and Alexandra.

Joel, son of John and Dolores (Dodie) Pilgrim, is one of five children. His older siblings, Paul, Lisa, and Tamara, and his younger sister, April, are also involved in full-time ministry.

Joel's half-brother Justin does missionary work out of New York.

Joel's father, John Osteen, a former Southern Baptist pastor who became Charismatic in the late 1950s, founded Lakewood Church on Mother's Day, 1959.

Osteen's father developed Lakewood into a body of approximately 6,000 members with an active television ministry, conferences, missionary support and food distribution.

Currently, Osteen and several Lakewood Church personnel travel across the nation, presenting programs in large arenas. The event, titled "A Night of Hope," includes worship music led by the church's music ministry, a testimony by Joel's mother Dodie and a sermon from Osteen. In 2007, the tour expanded to include stops in several other countries, including Canada, England, Northern Ireland and Israel.

MISSION/VISION OF LAKEWOOD

LAKEWOOD CHURCH

Vision Paragraph: Lakewood seeks to become a vibrant community for God growing

deeper in faith, knowledge, love and relationship with Him. We desire to express the spirit of Jesus through the individual members of the body; through uplifting public worship and intimate small group fellowship; and through committed prayer and dedication to God's will. We strive to offer a welcoming environment for truth-seekers irrespective of knowledge, experience, and background. We want to follow God wherever He leads to make a difference in others' lives by identifying individual talents and preparing people for kingdom service locally, nationally and globally. We desire to do this with humility and love giving God the glory!

Community: God wants me to be a MEMBER of His family—This is the purpose of fellowship. Following Christ is not just a matter of believing; it also includes belonging. The Christian life is not a solo act. God has given us the church as a spiritual family for our own benefit. You are members of God's very own family . . . and you belong in God's household with every other Christian (Ephesians 2:19).

Loving God: God wants me to be a MAGNIFIER of His name—We are called to worship God. O Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together (Psalm 34:3). There is an inborn urge to worship in every human being. If we don't worship God, we will find a replacement. We may worship our job, family, money, a sport, or even ourselves. That is why the very first commandment says, "Thou shalt have no other god's before Me." (Exodus 20:3)

Loving Others: God wants me to be a MESSENGER of His love—Once we have been born again, we become messengers of the Good News to others. It is part of the job description for every believer. For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors. God is using us to speak to you: we beg you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, receive the love He offers you—be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

Loving Others: God wants me to be a MINISTER of His grace—A responsibility of every Christian is service. God expects us to use the gifts, talents, and opportunities He gives us to benefit others. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms (1 Peter 4:10).

Imitating Christ: God wants me to be a MODEL of his character—The goal of discipleship is becoming just like Christ. For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son (Romans 8:29). In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul describes specific areas where we are to model the character of Christ . . . set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. Notice that maturity is not measured by one's learning but by one's lifestyle.

USC HONORS COLLEGE NAMED TOP HONORS COLLEGE IN NATION

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, based upon their rigorous curriculum, retention and graduation rates, honors housing, study abroad programs, and enrichment opportunities for students, the University of South Carolina Honors College was recently named the number one honors

program by the Public University Honors organization. This achievement will be published in "A Review of 50 Public University Honors Programs" later this month.

The University of South Carolina Honors College was established in 1978 and has more than 8,000 alumni spread across the world. Since its founding, USC Honors College students have won over 363 national awards, including the Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater, and others.

The 2011 incoming Honors College class had an average SAT score of 1427 and an average weighted GPA of 4.61. Congratulations, Dr. Steve Lynn, dean of the Honors College, and university president, Harris Pastides, on their leadership and accomplishments.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

□ 1410

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF WE THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, this year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. Since We the People began in 1987, more than 30 million high school students and 90,000 teachers have participated in this valuable program that promotes the understanding of the constitutional principles that shape and guide our Nation and instills a sense of civic responsibility in young people.

This year, more than 1,000 students from every part of our country will take part in the National Finals here in Washington. The competition will test students' knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, showcasing their intelligence, determination, and teamwork.

I want to recognize 24 exceptionally talented and hardworking students from Saipan Southern High School in the Northern Mariana Islands who return to the Finals as repeat regional champions. Working together and striving for excellence are defining traits of this time. I congratulate them and their teachers and coaches, and wish them all success in this year's We the People competition.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHUCK COLSON

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Chuck Colson, a former Nixon administration lawyer, founder of Prison Fellowship, and a good friend, passed away.

I first got to know Colson through his incredible ministry. I knew of his