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That pressure starts being brought to bear on the Senate. I would hope that the Republican leader would make clear in writing to the majority leader, HARRY REID, that we have at least 47 people ready to vote on this bill; and then the pressure goes on the Democrats who are in tough election cycles. Well, are you going to be supporting these automatic increases? And are you going to stand with HARRY REID and prevent this from coming to the floor of the Senate to make us more responsible as a government and force us to look at each Department and determine whether they needed an increase or not? Or are you just going to go along with the same old automatic extra spending every year, like no other American can do?

I have that hope that springs eternal in the human breast, and I hope I keep it until the day I die. But I believe we have a real opportunity to get it through the Senate, to have at least 60 Senators do the responsible thing in a bipartisan way, follow the lead of the House, which couldn't have been done without all these wonderful fresh faces, like Representative WOODALL. Follow the lead of the freshmen who have now, for the first time in all these years, said, you know what, no more automatic increases.

I think it's a harbinger of good things to come. I'm greatly encouraged as we start—at least early in this year—with such a great bill. And I don't know how long the wonderful people of east Texas, who I love with all my heart, and I want to live around all of my life—I don't know how long they'll allow me the honor of representing them here. But I think there is also a message here. It may take 7 years to keep pounding on an issue. But when it's the right thing to do, when people are struggling across America to pay their bills and they've had no automatic increases—in fact, I've talked to people and they indicate—they're Democrats—and they say, Please help us. We're having such a tough time. We've just been cut in our pay. So could you cut us a little slack from Washington?

We owe it to those people to quit spending so much so they can have even a little more of their budget. And I would think, as the President has talked about, people paying their fair share, we should take him at his word and ram through a flat tax that says, if you're rich, you pay more because you're making more. And a flat tax does that. And if you are poor, you're not making as much as others, you pay less.

And in the discussion with Steve Forbes, who ran for President on the idea of a flat tax, talking to Steve last week, I was asking him about some of the nuances of his plan. But he said under his flat tax proposal, if you were a family of four, he provided a \$46,000 exemption. So if you make less than that as a family of four, you don't pay

any tax. So it's kind of hard to say that you're going after the poor in American society.

A flat tax would eliminate the games. It would allow everyone to pay according to what they receive. That way, to whom much is given, more would be required, as the President quoted yesterday. And for those who are given less, less is required. That would be the way to go.

Let's cut the automatic expenditures. Let's be more responsible as a Congress in supervising those things. As the Oversight Committee, oversight hearings progress, move forward, we'll show responsibility in doing that; and the American people will be the beneficiary. And I hope and pray that within the next few years, the polls and surveys will turn around that will show the American public we can get this thing back under control so that it can go on for another 200 years. We can do that. And then we'll see the surveys turn around so they don't say 70 percent of American adults don't think we're going to leave our children as good a country as we got it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS) is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. HARRIS. May I inquire of the Chair how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 16 minutes remaining.

Mr. HARRIS. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas who spoke so eloquently about the condition of the country and the condition it's left in. I want to remind the American people that one of the obstacles we still have to overcome is that we have a health care plan that was passed out of the last Congress that isn't in full effect yet, but we're starting to feel the problems with it.

What I'm referring to is, of course, what everyone else calls the ObamaCare legislation, passed 2½ years ago now, not fully implemented until after this next election, but influencing Americans in their daily lives. Now, the majority of Americans don't agree with the plan. A majority of Americans don't want the plan, but we still have it.

Interestingly, about a third of Americans think we don't have it anymore, that when the House passed their repeal last year in January—one of the very first actions we took in the new House—they thought we were done with it, that America could wash its hands of it. But, in fact, the repeal bill was sent to the Senate where, as many other bills coming out of the House last year, it suffered the same fate. It sits in the Senate without the Senate taking action to do what the American

people want, which is to repeal ObamaCare.

America understands that that bill has many, many problems, some of which we'll talk about in the next few minutes, just to remind Americans this is still there. It's still causing problems.

The gentleman from Texas spoke about the problems with our economy. As I go through the district I represent, I talk to businessmen and -women every week; and they tell me the same thing: they're worried about the economy. They're worried about government regulation. They're worried about health care insurance for their employees because they're worried about what the effect of ObamaCare is. And as this shows, 74 percent of American businesses surveyed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce say: The recent health care law—that's ObamaCare—makes it harder for their businesses to hire more employees.

The bottom line is they don't know what the rules are. The rules are changing. As we know, 1,700 businesses and unions have to get waivers from that bill in order to keep their health care going this year. And of course those waivers will disappear in a year, and businesses don't know what's going to happen once those waivers expire.

A real life example: a furniture business owner in the Fifth District of Texas, this is what he said: I could start two companies and hire multiple people; but based on this administration and the lack of facts with ObamaCare, I will continue to sit and wait.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, America knows that you can't possibly make another empty government promise to ensure 14 million additional Americans while you are going to save money, increase access, and increase quality. Americans have figured this out a long time ago. You can't get all those things. And they know and they suspect what's going to happen is what will happen: the quality will go down, and the amount of money spent on other health care programs by the government will go down.

What's the other major health care program paid for by the government? Medicare. The ObamaCare bill takes \$500 billion out of Medicare over the next 10 years. Most worrisome is how it takes that \$500 billion out of Medicare. It sets up what's called the Independent Payment Advisory Board. Now, every American ought to be familiar with those terms because this is what's going to control your health care when you get old or your parent gets old or a loved one you know enters Medicare.

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These 15 bureaucrats, chosen by the President, not accountable to anyone, with no appeal of their decision, will decide what gets covered and what doesn't get covered in Medicare when the government runs short of money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you read the same headlines I do. The government's \$15.2 trillion short of money, with no end in sight. The President's last budget, submitted to Congress a year ago—we're waiting to see the budget he's supposed to submit next week, which we understand will be a week or two late—that budget never balanced.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have that luxury in my household. I actually have to make a budget balance. And Mr. Speaker, I would never make a financial move that I knew was passing along a debt to my children and my family. I wouldn't go out, buy a big house, buy a big car, take an expensive vacation, put it on a credit card that I knew my children are going to have to pay.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what the President's budget and ObamaCare does. It takes the big government credit card, which is already past its credit limit, \$15.2 trillion, runs it through the swiper one more time and says, we're going to insure 14 million more people. But don't worry, the cost will go down, the access will go up, and the quality will go up. Americans just don't believe it, and they have a right not to believe it.

This 15-member board, the Independent Payment Advisory Board, IPAB is what we call it around here. What you ought to call it is the Voucher Rationing Panel.

Mr. Speaker, what they are are 15 bureaucrats, specifically excluding someone who practices medicine from participating in the decisions of what Medicare is going to cover and not cover if and when the government runs out of money. But we know the government's going to run out of money. We know Medicare's going to exceed its budget. It does every year.

But if that were all that was bad in the bill, we might be able to just repeal that and move on. But it's not. We saw earlier there were provisions on small businesses called the 1099 provision, making small businesses do tens of billions of dollars worth of paperwork so that the government can collect a few billion dollars more in taxes, meanwhile, strangling small businesses. This Congress was smart enough to repeal that aspect.

Just last week we repealed another aspect of the bill. It was called, strangely enough, the CLASS Act. Now, what this act did is, this was long-term care insurance under the Medicare provisions that starts collecting the premiums now, but doesn't provide services until the future, meanwhile, spending those premiums on other expenses in the government.

Sound familiar? Sound like what's happening to your Social Security dollars and your Medicare employment taxes now, your payroll taxes? That's exactly what this was. Set up what even Democrats called, in the Senate, a Ponzi scheme that would make Bernie Madoff proud. So we repealed it.

But last week, in perhaps one of the worst parts of the bill, which really

had nothing to do with money, was when the Secretary of Health held that religious institutions had to provide care under their insurance policies that was not consistent with their religious beliefs. That is, sterilization, contraception, and abortion. Full coverage, no deductible, zero deductible, putting it in the same category as breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer, colon cancer, the other measures that were meant to be covered by that clause in ObamaCare, the preventive care clause.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that assumes, if you want to prevent illness, that pregnancy is a disease. Or pregnancy is an illness. What a long way we have come from when society felt that pregnancy was something to be celebrated, it was an extension of life, it was an extension of society, the next generation.

The Secretary of, and I put it in quotes, "Health" in this administration, has decided that pregnancy is a disease or illness that needs to be prevented. That's not a good recipe for the future of our society or this country. And worst of all, it's a stark violation of the First Amendment of the United States that the government shall not compel anyone to go against their religious principles.

They'll tell you there's an exemption, but there isn't. Yes, if you're a church, you're the church itself, you are. But God forbid that church goes into the community and runs a center for social justice, a center for adoption, a hospital. That religious institution running that other entity would be forced to provide coverage for something that is antithetical to the religious beliefs of that religion.

Ladies and gentlemen, that is just wrong. It's bad policy, and it violates the First Amendment of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, if I might inquire, how much more time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has approximately 7 minutes.

Mr. HARRIS. So let's walk through some of this.

Why do we need to repeal this bill?

The bottom line is there is so much wrong with this bill, a bill that not only will cut \$500 billion from current Medicare recipients, because you'll hear a lot of talk about, oh, that Ryan bill, it destroyed Medicare as we know it. Well, they forget to tell you that it doesn't touch Medicare for people over the age of 55. In fact, we restore that \$500 billion for people who are currently covered or for people who are 55 and older who will be entering Medicare in the next 10 years.

The little secret of ObamaCare is it takes current Medicare and cuts it by \$500 billion. Now, my mother's 88 years old. I don't want a board of bureaucrats in Washington making a life-or-death decision on whether she gets Medicare treatment paid for—by 15 bureaucrats sitting in Washington who never met her. I think that decision ought to be made by my mother and her health care providers. No government bureau-

crat in the room, no appointed bureaucrat with no appeals process who can say no, we don't really know your specific situation, but you know what? This is what it sounds like to us, and we think that shouldn't be covered, so you're not getting that care covered.

And ladies and gentleman, you know, with the cost of medical care, if the government says it's not covering it, it's not getting done. Is that the way we want health care delivered in the United States? Is that what we want?

Do we want a bill that says what kind of care you're going to receive, even if you're not on Medicare, that you have to go into specific health care plans, your employer is shoehorned into them? That promise—don't worry, if you like your plan, you'll keep it—had to have 1,700 waivers in the first year alone, 1,700 waivers. That's not the kind of health care we need. That's not the kind of health care plan we need.

Do we want a plan that can be taken to the extreme by the Secretary of Health to say that we're going to violate closely, deeply held religious principles in certain religions in the United States, and we're going to force those people to do things against their religion? Is that what we've come down to?

So, ladies and gentlemen, the cure is simple. We need to simply repeal ObamaCare. There is too much wrong with it. We tried to fix it piece by piece. We tried to pull out the things that hurt small business. We tried to deal with why you need 1,700 waivers. We tried to deal with that long-term care coverage. I'm convinced that bill will go to the Senate and it will die. We'll have instituted yet another Ponzi scheme in the United States.

And those are not words from this side of the aisle. Those are the words of a Democrat Senator describing that long-term care plan that was part of ObamaCare, the one that takes your dollars, your dollars that you will put in it now, spends it now, with a promise, don't worry, when you get old and need it, there will be some money there.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've heard that before. That dog don't hunt anymore. We've heard it with Medicare. We've heard it with Social Security. Americans have realized this Congress has spent us into bankruptcy with promises like that in the past. If we have made those promises in the past, we have to keep the promises we've made.

But ladies and gentlemen, we have not implemented ObamaCare in its fullest, and now is the time to repeal it before we begin that. So, ladies and gentlemen, that's why over the next few weeks you'll hear, and Mr. Speaker, we'll see things come to the floor that deal with it, like we did last week and repealed that long-term care act that a Democrat Senator called a Ponzi scheme that Bernie Madoff would be proud of. A Ponzi scheme that Bernie Madoff would be proud of. That's why

congressional approval rating is at 9 percent, because America watches as we come down to Washington and create Ponzi schemes.

It's just time to stop. It's time for common sense to prevail. Common sense is we have to stop spending more money than we have. We have to stop burdening the hardworking taxpayers of America. We have to balance our budget. We have to pass a balanced budget amendment so that future Congresses can't create more Ponzi schemes.

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We have to deal with the debt and the deficit. Are they hard decisions? They certainly are. Are they decisions the American public expects us to come together and make? They certainly do. Let's rise to the occasion. I join with the President, who, a week ago, says let's work together to solve these problems.

Mr. President, you don't solve these problems by impeding people's First Amendment rights to freedom of religion. You don't solve these problems by proposing \$300 billion new stimulus spending in your State of the Union speech. You don't solve these problems by going out and doubling down on Solyndra. You don't solve these problems by denying the Keystone XL pipeline.

Mr. President, we're ready. Let's come together and solve America's problems.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEST). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

#### JOB CREATION

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, preliminarily, I'm here to discuss today's very encouraging jobs report.

I am struck. The previous speaker said he would never engage in expenditures on a credit card when we were already deeply in debt on behalf of his family. I note that he was not a Member of the Congress when this Congress voted to go to war in Iraq, for example, and also in Afghanistan. I voted for the war in Afghanistan. I thought the war in Iraq was a terrible mistake and still do.

All of us who voted to go to war in Afghanistan were voting to go into further debt. War is very expensive. We don't want to send our young people into battle—and some of our middle-aged people—without the best possible equipment. So I thought we had to go to war in Afghanistan in self-defense.

I thought the war in Iraq was a terrible error. The majority of my colleagues, including virtually every Republican, voted to do that.

So this principle that you don't vote to spend money when you don't have it is apparently, for some, a fairly flexible one. In fact, not only did the majority at that time under President Bush vote to go into two wars, they did it while voting for several large tax cuts. So they were exacerbating that very difficulty.

As I said, I voted to go to war in Afghanistan. I was prepared to vote for some revenues to pay for it.

Mostly, though, I want to talk today about the very encouraging report we got today about the economy.

We are in the early stages of recovery. It's not going nearly fast enough. What is now clear is that the recession that President Obama inherited from the previous administration in 2009 when he took office was deeper than people realized at the time. It was clearly the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression; and, in many ways, it was more disabling in the sense of the interconnections, although overall it was not.

President Obama and others underestimated the depths of that recession. Many of us did. So the recovery has been slower than it should have been in the interests of the American people.

But the fact is, very clearly, it is underway. I want to talk about that, and I want to talk about what's retarding it.

One of the interesting things today was the jobs number: 257,000 private sector jobs created, a very significant number. Enough, if it is a pattern, that can continuously cut into the unemployment figure. But it was accompanied by a 14,000 job reduction in public sector employment; and that, unfortunately, is a pattern.

If you go back to the worst of the recession, the end of 2009—remember President Obama comes in in early 2009. We did pass an economic recovery package which clearly, by virtually every economist's acknowledgment, improved the situation. It didn't cure it. It didn't do as much to reduce the rate as had been hoped because the deficit in the economy was deeper.

But since that end of 2009 when things began to turn around after we had passed an economic recovery program that began to help, after a Federal Reserve under a Bush appointee, Ben Bernanke, reappointed by President Obama, continued its stimulative efforts, here's what happened basically since the last months of 2009 and the beginning of 2010:

We have had, in this economy, in the 2-year period, the creation in the private sector of 3.663 million jobs, approximately. You can't be exact. But over 3.6 million jobs. Unfortunately, during the same time period, a couple months earlier, public sector employment has declined by more than 550,000 jobs. In other words, if the public sector had simply been allowed to stay even, if there hadn't been firings of firefighters and people who shovel the snow and clean the streets and main-

tain the parks and teach young people and preserve law and order, if we hadn't fired police officers, public works employees, municipal engineers, teachers, sanitary workers, if we hadn't required them to be fired by a perverse set of Federal budget policies that had that negative impact on the municipalities, we would have had a half a million more jobs.

I'm not talking about the public sector increasing. If the public sector had simply been allowed to stay even, if this Congress had not sent money to build Afghanistan—futilely, in my judgment—if it hadn't wasted money on a war in Iraq that never should have begun and kept that money home and we could have had more police officers and firefighters and teachers and public works employees working here in our country, then the unemployment rate would be below 8 percent today.

This is exactly the opposite of what my Republican colleagues claim. Oh, the public sector, they say, is strangling the private sector. No. The truth is exactly the opposite. The private sector has increased, not yet at the rate we had hoped; although, if the private sector can continue to add 250,000-plus jobs a month, then we will. That's 3 million jobs a year. That will substantially reduce unemployment to the point which is where we should be, if we can persuade our Republican colleagues to stop forcing the cities and counties and States to lay off important public employees.

I got an anguished letter the other day from the mayor of the City of Fall River, Massachusetts, about a great addiction program, the Stanley Street treatment program, in his town. He wanted to know why they were cut off from the \$1.4 million they had gotten to deal with addiction. The answer is this Congress voted out the whole program. I couldn't be their advocate and say, look, this is a good program, give them money because I was told by the agency about, you know, We know it's a good program. You Give us money. We can't give out money when you voted against it.

That money is in Kandahar. That money is in Basra. If it were doing any good over there, I would feel better about it. But we are spending money futilely overseas in wars, one of which shouldn't have started and one of which should have started—and, by the way, should end.

By the way, I heard my colleague, the previous speaker, talk about spending too much. In fact, one of the major criticisms the Republican Party now has, certainly their Presidential candidates and many here in the Congress, is not that the President is spending too much but that he is spending too little. They've criticized him for withdrawing our troops from Iraq, even though it was on a timetable President Bush had set forward. They want more troops in Iraq. Nothing is more expensive than keeping troops in a near combat situation; and that's right, because