

to your office and say: I have an official letter for you that will clearly state that your husbands were not at fault for this accident. Mr. Speaker, I hope that's what will come from this meeting in the next couple of weeks.

It's one of those things in life that Members of Congress get involved in that you don't ask for, but you feel that there's a reason that someone has come to you and said, my husband cannot defend himself anymore, yet because of one press release that indicated these pilots were descending too quickly, they did not know what they were doing at the time, there was no indication on their software panel that they were in trouble. So my hope is, Mr. Speaker, that the Marine Corps will give Connie Gruber and Trish Brow what they're asking for.

Mr. Speaker, because I want to give God credit if we ever clear the names of these two pilots, I've asked God to please give me the energy and the strength to go with Connie Gruber and her daughter Brooke down to Jacksonville, North Carolina, to the grave of her husband and Brooke's father. I want to say to Major Gruber: Sir, no one will ever question your integrity or your honor again. It has been done. You can rest in peace because you won't be blamed.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I want to go with Trish Brow to Arlington Cemetery, and I want to stand with Matthew and Michael, the two young boys that never got a chance to know their daddy—they're young men now, they're in their early twenties, college students—and I want to say the same thing to Colonel Brow: Sir, your reputation is secured. You will not be blamed any longer for that crash on April 8. Mr. Speaker, with that, I will know that I have fulfilled my duty as a Member of Congress. I will fulfill my duty as a man who believes in the truth and integrity. It is very important in my life. And I will be able to say to Connie and to Trish, if ever anybody prints again that your husband was at fault, you have an official document to call that newspaper, call that TV station, call that reporter and say, Sir, I want a retraction. I will send you a copy of the documentation that says that my father—that my husband and my friend's husband were not at fault.

The reason I almost said "father," as I'm closing, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that 4 or 5 years ago I was in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Connie Gruber invited me to a fall reunion at the church. I had a chance to meet Bruce Gruber's father, the major from Jacksonville, North Carolina. That gentleman lives in Naples, Florida, with his wife, and he came out and we spoke. He had tears in his eyes. Mr. Speaker, he fought in Korea for this country as a marine, and he said with tears in his eyes: Congressman, I want to thank you for trying to clear my son's name. I said, Mr. Gruber, I will accept your kind words on behalf of my savior, Jesus Christ, because Christ

was a man of humility, and I try to walk in the light of Christ.

If we ever accomplish anything for this country, no matter what faith my colleagues might be, just remember that accomplishing truth and integrity for John Brow and Brooks Gruber will be God's will and not mine. That gives me one thought, and then I will close. Voltaire said 1,000 years ago:

To the living we owe respect, but to the dead we owe only the truth.

Mr. Speaker, as I always close on the floor of the House, because it's time to get our troops out of Afghanistan, they've done their jobs, bid Laden is dead, al Qaeda has been dispersed around the world, it's time to bring them home. I've seen too many at Walter Reed and Bethesda without legs and arms.

□ 1940

Spending money we don't have over there, cutting programs for children and senior citizens here in America, I don't know, it doesn't make any sense.

But on behalf of the families that I talked about tonight, Colonel John Brow's family, Major Brooks Gruber's family, and all of our men and women in uniform and their families across the world, I will close and yield back.

I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God to hold in His loving arms the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I ask God to please bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people today and God's people tomorrow.

And I will ask, from the bottom of my heart, God please bless President Obama that he will do what is right in Your eyes, God, for Your people today and Your people tomorrow.

And, Mr. Speaker, with that I'll say three times, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America. I yield back the balance of my time.

HEALTH CARE AND MAKING IT IN AMERICA

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. Mr. Speaker, before we start on our dialogue—I expect to have my colleague from New York here in a few minutes—I want to thank my colleague from North Carolina, WALTER JONES.

Mr. JONES, every day and every week you speak on this floor about the Afghanistan war and previously about the Iraq war, and you carry a message that is extremely important, one that I agree with, and one that I would hope that our colleagues here in Congress would take up this issue in a very strong and determined way to bring this Afghanistan war to an end.

I thank the President for bringing the Iraq war to an end. And now there's yet another task for all of us to do, and that is to end this continued use and abuse of the American soldiers. They endure much, and it's time for us to bring them home.

We thank them for their service. We see them as they return.

Some of my colleagues and I are working on a major effort to try to deal with more than 365,000 of those men and women that have returned that are suffering from posttraumatic stress syndrome, dealing with everything from suicides to depression and other issues as they return home, and many of them still in the military dealing with those issues.

We also have the traumatic brain issues, and so there's much to be done. And there will be much more to be done for those that are currently suffering. And the longer this war in Afghanistan continues, the more men and women will be suffering from all sorts of medical, physical, and mental issues.

So, WALTER, thank you so very much for what you're doing here on the floor day in and day out and reminding us that it's time for us to end this war.

What I want to spend some time on today is really talking about America's middle class. The middle class in America has suffered. For the last 25 years, the American middle class's circumstances have stagnated, and in the last 5 years—actually, 6 years—have seriously declined. We've seen this in the statistics. We've seen them in the economic statistics.

The only way the American middle class has been able to sustain its economic position has been for both husband and wife or children to join in providing the income for the family. It's no longer a single-person income sustaining the American middle class.

It is about our policies here on the floor of Congress and the Senate that has led to the decline of the American middle class. Specific policies have been enacted over the last two decades that have hollowed out the opportunities that the American middle class has counted on, specifically, manufacturing in America.

Once, 20 million Americans and their families were in the manufacturing sector. They enjoyed a good salary. A good hourly wage was available to them such that one individual in that family working in the manufacturing sector was able to support the family, own a home, take a vacation, buy a boat, provide for the college education. That is not the case today. Only 11 million and a few thousand beyond that are actually engaged in manufacturing in America today.

So what happened to the 9 million? They lost their jobs. Those jobs disappeared, not from the Earth, but disappeared from America. They went overseas. They were outsourced. American jobs were outsourced.

Why? Well, they'd like to say it's simply the nature of the free market

system, and, indeed, that's part of it. But that's not all of it. A major part of it had to do with specific tax policies and other manufacturing industrial policies that were enacted by Congress and remained on the books for some 20 years or more.

We need to address that issue because, if, in fact, it is the policies of this Congress and previous Congresses that have led to the great outsourcing and decline of the American manufacturing sector and, along with it, the American middle class, then there's something that we can do about it.

We make laws. We establish policies. And if we find that there are policies that are contrary to the good ability of the American economy to prosper and the middle class to prosper along with it, then we ought to change those policies. That's what the Make It In America agenda is all about.

The Make It In America agenda is specifically designed to rebuild the American manufacturing sector. This is an issue that's been taken up by the Democratic Caucus, led by our Minority Whip, Mr. HOYER, and carried on by my colleagues and I. So we're going to talk a little bit about that.

I notice that my colleague from New York (Mr. TONKO) has joined us. Mr. TONKO, we were going to start out on health care, but we kind of morphed into the issue of the American manufacturing industry and the role of the middle class.

Now, the middle class, I went off on manufacturing and the need to rebuild that and the Make It In America agenda, but also, a key part of the inability of the American middle class to sustain itself is health care. And the Affordable Health Care Act, which the Supreme Court recently confirmed was constitutional, is constitutional, is a major effort on the part of the Democratic Congress and President Obama to provide not only health care, but to lift up the American middle class.

So let's hold, for a moment, the issue of Make It In America. We'll come back to it in the latter half of this hour. But let's take up the health care agenda, which I know you wanted to speak to initially.

While you're doing that, I'm going to run and get a couple of placards that show what it is we're talking about. Please, Mr. TONKO, from the great State of New York, part of the East-West team.

Mr. TONKO. There you go. Always a pleasure to join you on this House floor. And thank you for leading us in a very important discussion this evening here on the floor.

It's important for us to recognize that for our business community to compete, and compete effectively, they need to be able to contain costs; they need to be able to have predictability and stability in their day-to-day routine. And I think that the Affordable Care Act takes us toward those goals. It is a predictable outcome. It enables our small business community to have a sound and well workforce.

□ 1950

I know that that is in the ether of the mind-set of our business community in that they know a productive workforce begins with the soundness of a health care plan. We are the last industrialized nation to come to the table to begin to resolve that dilemma, and it has held back our business community. What we will have with this important Affordable Care Act is the opportunity for exchanges to be developed, either along the State line or in a national setting, that enables us to provide for the opportunities for business and to do it in a way that is vastly improved over present situations. Status quo, just about everyone agrees, will not cut it. It is unsustainable to continue with a system of health care delivery that we currently operate under.

This, I believe, will be welcome news for our business community. They will have the opportunity to address this dilemma which has found the business community, the small business community, to be paying anywhere from 18 to 20 percent more than industrial settings and getting reduced services, or a smaller bit of service package, than the industrial setting would get. This allows for better services at reduced premiums that will enable them to have that affordability factor addressed. To go to the marketplace with that operational motif is going to be, I think, a very strong enhancer for the competitive edge of the American business community.

So underpinning, supporting the small business community, is important because, as we know, it is the driver; it is producing the great majority of new jobs in the private sector in America today. If we can take that outcome and enhance it by addressing an Affordable Care Act that impacts soundly and progressively and positively the small business community, then we are doing something to increase America's growth in jobs. We do it also by having the ability to provide for various tax credits that go toward the small business community, especially for those that have 50 and fewer employees.

We have seen what an economic engine the small business community is. Since time beginning for this Nation, the small business community has been that pulse of American enterprise. It has been that predictor of soundness, of job creation, and of economic recovery. If we treat the small business community with the respect and the dignity and the assuredness that it requires, we have done something. We will be doing something.

So, Representative GARAMENDI, I think it is important to understand and to outline that the Affordable Care Act is the beginning of providing that foundation for the small business community to have a sound workforce, which is essential in this very competitive sweepstakes for jobs and landing contracts in that international sec-

nario where we all compete for the right to serve the general public.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, I am really pleased that you brought that up. You have reminded me of a rather lengthy article from *The Sacramento Bee*. I am from California. *Sacramento* has one of the hometown papers, and the *Bee* was writing a major article on the exchange.

In the Affordable Care Act, there is an insurance exchange, and California was the first State in the Nation to follow up on the Affordable Care Act's exchange portion and to put in place a law to build an exchange. Now, at least our Republican friends think that's an awful situation. Governor Schwarzenegger, who was a Republican and is a Republican, signed that legislation before he left office almost 2 years ago now.

So this article is very effusive and upbeat about the establishment of an exchange in that they expect to have it online. What they talked about, a lot of it, was of individuals who could get insurance in a large pool and have the same opportunities for reasonably priced policies as occurs in a big business.

They also spent a lot of time talking about small businesses. How correct you are that the Affordable Care Act really offers small businesses an extremely important and heretofore unavailable opportunity to get insurance for the employer as well as for the employees, and a very big subsidy is available for those small companies that choose to buy insurance. Up to 50 percent of the cost of the insurance could be subsidized and costs reduced to the employer. Now, that's a lot of money. It's calculated at about \$4,000 per employee if you're looking at an \$8,000 or \$9,000 policy. So it's really an important opportunity. Why is that good for business?

Go ahead, Mr. TONKO.

Mr. TONKO. I was going to say, too, that many people will say, well, if the option is made available, which it is, why would they choose that? Why would they want to spend even if there is a tax credit made available?

Think about it. The sound business community leader is going to want to recruit, and when you recruit and get the best employees, you offer the best package, and you have, as a result, a soundness in your workforce.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Exactly.

Mr. TONKO. So the management style is driving that sort of benefit so that you will reach to the program so as to recruit and retain quality workers. I think that driving element will influence it more than anything, and then the tax credits will become part and parcel to that package, which, as you suggest, can be as great as 50 percent. This is a huge cost savings and a sound policy to which they're attaching. So I think it's a benefit.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Absolutely true.

In addition to that, because of the exchange situation, individuals as well as

businesses find themselves in a large pool.

Now, I was the insurance commissioner in California for 8 years in the nineties and then again in 2000 with an 8-year hiatus in between. I understand that, in insurance, for it to work, you need a very large, diverse population so that the risk is spread. In the individual market today, you can't get that; but in the exchange, the concept is to allow all of these individuals and these small businesses to be part of a very, very large pool so that they can take advantage of the spreading of the risk and, therefore, the lower cost and the subsidy on top of that.

One more thing. I was at a bagel shop. It was in the early morning, and I needed a cup of coffee and a bagel, so I stopped at a bagel shop. There was the owner and one or two employees—I think there were actually three. One was in the back. I didn't see that employee. We were talking about health insurance, and there was an excitement by this employer because she could get insurance. So it's the employer as well as the two employees who were going to be able to get insurance. Previously, she couldn't. She was a single mother with a new shop, opening it up—pretty good bagels and the coffee was very good. Now she can get insurance through the exchange. It was a new shop, and income was going to be low, so she could also get the subsidy. For the first time in many, many years for this woman—a divorcee whose husband went one way and she went the other, who lost the insurance—she can get insurance.

This is part of the Affordable Care Act, and it is specifically designed in a way to encourage businesses to provide insurance and, in that process, as you say, to find the good employees and keep them. It's very exciting.

Mr. TONKO. If I might add, I know that we want to get into the talk of job creation, but if I might add some of the dialogue that has been developed in the district I represent—and I'm sure it's not unique to the 21st District of New York.

Again, there is this proliferation of small business that has been the driving force and that has really built our economic recovery from this painful recession. What you will hear time and time again is, if I'm a small operation of 10, 15, 20 people, one person—just one person—in that workforce impacted by a catastrophic illness will throw the actuarial science into a frenzy. That means that your premiums will be adjusted in a way that makes it difficult as the employer to continue to afford that insurance or to have the copayments from the employees.

So, as you're suggesting, if you enter this large collection called an "exchange," in which many more numbers than 10, 15, or 20 work in this concept together, it shaves those peaks, and the shock—the premium rate shock—that is dulled is a good thing.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Let me take that a little further.

I wish I'd had this law when I was insurance commissioner because I used to see this all the time when I'd get complaints. We had a consumer hotline, and we would take several thousand calls a week. We'd always get these complaints about: They dropped my insurance.

□ 2000

And we get from businesses, They dropped my insurance. Why did they drop the insurance? You said it right on target. Suddenly one of the members of the workforce of a small group of people had a significant illness. When it came time for the annual renewal—insurance is an annual thing that is renewed every year—they heard back, I'm sorry. We can't renew you this year because we're changing the market. All kinds of excuses. But the reality was there was one sick person in that group. This law will end that.

There's also the opportunity for people that have become unemployed in this economy to get a job, particularly if that person happens to be 50 years or older. That person today has a pre-existing condition called "age." They're beginning to enter that part of life where you're going to have more medical issues, and employers go, Wait a minute. We don't have a position for you. We're not discriminating based on age, but your resume isn't exactly the way it ought to be. It's very difficult for a person 50 and older to get back into the workforce because of health insurance.

With the exchange and the anti-discrimination policies in the Affordable Care Act, which we call the Patients' Bill of Rights, they will be able to get back into the workforce. We're talking about people going back to work with health insurance no longer being a barrier to employment.

Mr. TONKO. Representative GARAMENDI, you cite a very awkward dynamic that can be used as a pre-existing condition: age. How about gender? There are more and more small business startups that are women-owned businesses, women working in a small business situation as the employer. A preexisting condition is being a woman. It is gender penalizing.

There are many aspects, and the pre-existing condition is something that's getting more and more attention, especially in the weeks that accompanied the decision of the Supreme Court. There was a lot of recognition of what was in the Affordable Care Act, and preexisting conditions are now being denounced and not being allowed as a reason, a rationale for denying insurance. That's a prime aspect of the progress made here.

As I've said in my district: Is it perfect? No. We aimed for perfection, and we achieved success. We will continue to work on this order of health care in a way that will continue to build the progressive nature of the outcome.

Mr. GARAMENDI. These are all part of the puzzle of putting people back to

work. As I started this discussion, talking about the laws of America, the policies that have been enacted by this Congress and by previous Congresses and the way in which they impact the middle class of America, that impact has been devastating on the middle class for the last 20 years. It is our determination as Democrats to change the policies so that the American middle class can once again thrive, so that a family can enjoy the fruits of their labor, and so that they can enjoy the potential that America brings to them.

I notice that we've been joined by our colleague from Pennsylvania. Please, join us. Thank you for coming in this evening and sharing with us your thoughts.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman from California.

I was listening to the discussion, as I often do, and I wanted to bring a perspective to join that discussion, Mr. Speaker, as they were both talking about health care.

As one who did not support the health care bill originally, I do think it's important to recognize, as has been happening in this discussion, what's working with regard to the health care bill, what's already been implemented that's making a real difference in people's lives.

The reason I did not support repeal of the health care bill both times we brought it up was because I have the fourth most Medicare beneficiaries of any district in the country. I have 135,000 Medicare beneficiaries. Many of them are caught in the doughnut hole, what we have come to know as that gap in coverage in the Part D prescription drug program. We are now entering the third year of the phase-in to completely close that doughnut hole. Already, people who are in the doughnut hole have received a \$250 compensation for coverage through the doughnut hole. They're getting a steep discount on brand-name drugs. Moving forward, as I say in the years to come, they're going to completely close the doughnut hole and get coverage all the way through. That's something that would not have happened if we had repealed the health care bill.

Small businesses all across the country that struggle with the skyrocketing cost of health care that's affecting every family and every business in this country, they're getting a tax credit to help offset the cost, to provide coverage, if they choose, to their employees. That's something that's making a real difference in the district that I represent. They are being able to cover people up to age 26. Often, they are recent college graduates struggling in the down economy. With the job market of today, the parents' plan is being able to for a short period of time insure those young adults after they've graduated from school and may be in transition in their life or in the job market. That's making a real difference for people that I represent. For people with preexisting conditions—

children today and, beginning in 2014, for adults—they will not be able to be denied coverage because of a chronic health condition. That's something that's long overdue in this country. Those are all things that have been implemented. They're in the law today. They're taking effect, and they're impacting people. We can't overlook that.

The legal issues have been decided. This is settled law now. What we need to do is make sure—especially with the Medicaid ruling, which was not talked about as much because the court focused on the mandate. But with the States being able to opt out on the Medicaid side, we have to find a way for health care providers to be guaranteed coverage for people who come to their door, whether they be a hospital, a physician, a long-term care facility, whatever it may be. When the health care bill was put into place, before it became law, the deal that was made in return for universal coverage covering people in this country was the providers—all those provider groups I mentioned—gave a little. They understood they had to take some cuts to help offset the cost of that, the cost to the government and to the taxpayer. Now the court has said that States can opt out of part of that through the Medicaid program. We need to make sure that those health care providers are able to keep their end of the bargain and the government keeps their end of the bargain by finding a way to cover everybody.

I did want to add that perspective again as someone who didn't originally support the bill. There are things that are working and have been implemented, and I commend both my friends from California and New York for having the discussion tonight.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much for joining us, and thank you for bringing that perspective.

Twice, now, our Republican colleagues have voted for a full repeal of the law, and you very correctly and, I think, almost totally pointed out the things that would disappear. The doughnut hole would open up again, the preexisting conditions, the patients' bill of rights would be gone, and the insurance companies can then re-engage in discrimination, as they have so often. All those things that are very positive would disappear. So we're fighting fiercely to keep them. As Mr. TONKO, our colleague from New York has said, We will work through the years ahead to improve and to deal with the unknown issues that are certain to arise.

We've got work ahead of us, and we can do it.

Mr. TONKO. I just wanted to speak to the issue that Representative ALTMIRE raised with the doughnut hole—such a sweet label thrown onto a hidden attack on our senior community, asking them to dig into their pockets when they hit the threshold of \$2,930 and up till they hit the threshold of \$4,700.

I can tell you painful, heart-wrenching stories that many of the seniors I represent—and again, I have a huge proportion of seniors in my home county of Montgomery County, New York. Many will reach that threshold early in any fiscal year. It's a phenomenon with the prescription drugs. Those prescription drugs are their connection to quality of life. It's not only keeping them well and healthy; it may be keeping them alive. There are far too many heart-wrenching stories of people who will cut their prescription or their pills in half so that they can balance their budget. That is not the way to respond to their medical needs. They are told by their physician what that prescription drug intake is to look like for their wellness or their getting well. We ought not cause them to be pushed to the brink where they actually adjust their intake of prescription drugs just to meet a budget.

This closing of this doughnut hole, making prescription drugs more affordable, where we finally in 2020 close it completely—I mean, people have realized already billions of dollars of savings. There have been 5.3 million seniors that have received \$3.7 billion in savings.

□ 2010

Is that something you want to take away? So when this House, with the majority, the three of us obviously said no, but when the majority said repeal, why? What's the replacement? We didn't hear replace, we heard repeal, and it left many stunned in this Chamber because the progress just begun to be tasted was attempted to be pulled away, and it's regrettable.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, we heard many, many things during that debate last week that are just, I think, incorrect and inaccurate.

One of them was that the Medicare program was cut and benefits taken away from seniors. It didn't happen. What happened was that about \$50 billion a year of expenditures going to the insurance industry unnecessarily, an unnecessary bonus was removed, that was about \$160 billion, about \$16 billion a year; and then there was the Medicare fraud. That is a big problem and other adjustments, but no reduction in benefits to seniors and, in fact, significant increases.

Mr. ALTMIRE talked about those with the drug benefit, as you did. There was also the prescription drug savings, which, Mr. ALTMIRE, you raised. We also know that every senior now has a free annual health checkup, which is an exceedingly important way of keeping seniors, well, anybody, healthy. You get a checkup—we got blood pressure issues, diabetes issues, other kinds of medical issues—you get ahead of them, and then with the drugs you can keep ahead of them. There are many, many improvements in the Medicare program that are as a result of the bill.

Mr. ALTMIRE, I know that you have been spending a lot of time on these

issues, and I thank you for your participation here tonight. If you would like to expand on maybe some experiences in your own district, go for it.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate the gentleman opening the door for that issue, and health care is just one issue facing American families in the country today. I know that this group that meets periodically when we're done with session to have these discussions, as I'm sure both of my colleagues do, Mr. Speaker, I hear from people in my district after these discussions show up on people's TVs.

I hear from people all over the country, in fact, that say you need to continue talking about the job market, continue talking about infrastructure repair, something we have talked about at length, talk about health care, talk about issues facing small businesses and working families in America, because that's something that I think gets lost in the politicization that takes place in a Presidential election year. We're starting to head towards that time of the year when politics trumps everything, and it's unfortunate because what gets lost is these are real people. These are real Americans that are suffering in the job market.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Excuse me just for a moment. I noticed in our gallery two gentlemen, soldiers, who are here, both of them wounded in the wars. This is part of a group that comes in here every day when we're in session to watch what we're doing. They just stepped out the door, and I wanted to catch them before they left to recognize them for the services that they provide. They may come back in, in which case I will interrupt you again.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Absolutely, I would agree. I had a chance to chat with them earlier today, and there is no group that should stand ahead of our Nation's veterans when it comes time to making Federal funding decisions, so I'm glad that they are joining us today.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, they are coming back, and I just want to, maybe the three of us can simply recognize them for the service that they provided to this country. I suspect that, normally, I see a gentleman that's always escorting them here in the gallery. Normally, they come back with some wound or another, and that's difficult; but I want them to know, and I would ask you to join me in this conversation, to know that this House, Democrat and Republican alike, are determined to make sure that all of our men and women that are returning from the wars, and those that have served even though they were not on the field of battle, deserve both our respect and whatever services they need, veterans services, medical services, and a job.

I thank them for coming here.

Mr. TONKO.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative GARAMENDI. Let me also thank our military, our active forces out there as we speak who are defending us in some

very far-off places, deserted deserts and mountains that extract great courage and commitment to this Nation and her cause.

You know, again, so many veterans returning are looking for work. There ought not be a battlefield in their homeland to find a job, and it's why the American Jobs Act makes it possible for businesses to realize benefits when they hire our veterans, when they hire the active military that are returning, and that's a commitment that ought to be understood by all of us. That's a commitment that should be part and parcel to unanimity in this House. Let's go forward with something like the American Jobs Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, this is the only thing that's actually been done. When the President last September proposed the American Jobs Act, the second thing that he talked about was the veterans jobs bill, and it kind of languished around here for a couple of months. It was early September when the President spoke.

Then came this special day every year called Veterans Day, and all 435 of us, we would go home, and we would go to the veterans parades and, lo and behold, we came back and we found compromise, and we found bipartisanship and the veterans jobs bill actually became law shortly thereafter.

Mr. TONKO. But the full package could have been done, which allows for even more opportunity for our veterans if we're hiring police officers and firefighters and educators, teachers. We're building the fabric of the Nation and the infrastructure, the human infrastructure that's required to educate our young, protect our neighborhoods, make certain that we're there in response efforts when tragedy hits. These are the things that can also in a broader sense affect positively the employment factors for our veterans. That full package offered the greatest hope.

The fact that we would nitpick and that we would be pushed to pressure points and finally acknowledge the work getting done is not the way to achieve what we know has to happen out there. We've seen the growth, Representative GARAMENDI, of private sector jobs, 29 consecutive months of private sector job growth, well beyond 4 million jobs.

It is a wonderful number, but still a lot of work to do when we think of the Bush recession and the loss of 8.2 million jobs. Now people want to take us back to those failed policies that saw us losing as many as 800,000 jobs a month and say that's the way to move forward. That's moving backward. We need to move forward with efforts like the American Jobs Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, before we carry further with the American Jobs Act, I know that the two veterans who were here in the gallery were headed out the door when I recognized them, I saw them leave and I wanted to thank them for their service. I suspect that they were headed off to some

other meeting, or wherever they were headed; and I don't want to keep them here, but rather just to thank them for their service and to know that 435 Members of this House care deeply about your situation, what you're dealing with, and all of the others that are in the field and have returned, in providing the extraordinary service to this Nation.

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Mr. TONKO. Yes. We are, in fact, very proud of their efforts and very proud of the training they endure to be able to be the greatest force on the globe, and so we thank them for that.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Exactly.

Now the American Jobs Act had many, many pieces to it; and this is one of the great what-ifs, you know, one of the woulda, coulda, shouldas. What if back in September this House had actually taken up the elements of the American Jobs Act. There was, I think, almost 250,000 teaching jobs that were in this piece of legislation. There was also almost the same number of police and firemen and public safety officers in the legislation.

It didn't happen and so I know that in my daughter and son-in-law's own school district there have been layoffs because of the economic and financial circumstances of the State of California, and the class size went from 22-23 to 33-34, an extraordinary burden on the kids.

When you're in the second or third grade, you never get a chance to go back and repeat. That's a lost year, and that will carry through perhaps all the rest of your life, that you missed that opportunity to really advance your education.

Just on the educational side, you go, whoa, what if we had another 280,000 teachers in the classroom across America today? How would that advance the well-being of our children? I think it's very clear they'd be far better off, far better off. But it didn't happen.

Mr. TONKO. Representative GARAMENDI, you're offering a very powerful statement, a powerful challenge, the what-if.

When you take that statement and failure to commit to our Nation's children and then contrast that with what's happening in competitor nations, where they're investing in education, investing in higher education, investing in research, investing in advanced manufacturing, these are the challenges that are facing us as a government, as a body, as a House of Representatives.

□ 2020

And if we do not respond accordingly, we're holding back the Nation. We're actually pushing us backward. This discussion here in this House ought to be about moving us forward—moving us forward with progressive policy and investments of human infrastructure.

Mr. GARAMENDI. So the President also talked about building the foundation for tomorrow's economic growth.

This is the infrastructure of the Nation—a big word, but one that I think most Americans understand as being the roads, the bridges, the railroads, the sanitation systems, the water systems, the research, the schools. We delayed—I guess all of us, in some respect, but really the Republicans in this House controlled this—the transportation bill. We delayed the implementation of the reauthorization of the transportation bill until the middle of the construction season. Just 2 weeks ago, we actually passed a 2-year transportation authorization program—very, very important and very beneficial. But what if that had happened last September? We lost half of a construction season and States and localities were unable to plan and put in place the projects that they needed to put in place because of the dilly-dallying and the delay that went on here.

We'll take some of the blame on our side, but we don't control the legislation. It's controlled by our Republicans here. Ultimately, they were unable to even put a bill out. The Senate did put a bill out; and I thank Senator BOXER from California, the lead author on that, and the minority leader, and in her committee the two of them came together with a bipartisan bill. It finally got done. We're thankful for it.

But the President wanted to go beyond that. He wanted to establish an infrastructure bank, one where we could literally invest some public money, some private money, and go about building projects that have a cash flow, like a toll road or a sanitation plant or a water system where people pay a fee and there's a cash flow so that we can really build the infrastructure of this Nation. But it didn't happen.

Mr. TONKO. Representative GARAMENDI, as you're speaking, I'm thinking of those "golden moments" in our history replete with those statements made by the Nation—this Nation—of investing, especially in tough times.

You know my district. I've described it several times. It's the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and the donor area to the eastern portions of the Erie Canal. In very tough times, Governor DeWitt Clinton proposed—

Mr. GARAMENDI. This was the Governor from New York, not from Arkansas.

Mr. TONKO. Right. He proposed a canal system, in tough times, saying we need to invest our way through this. There's a way to grow a port out of this town called New York. And there's a way perhaps that there will be a ripple effect, which there was, with the birthing of mill towns, a necklace of mill towns that became the epicenters of invention and innovation. And it drove a westward movement so that it headed toward California. It drove an industrial revolution, sparking all sorts of opportunity and activity, driven by a pioneer spirit that is unique to this Nation.

And our collection of stories of journeys to this Nation with people embracing nothing but this noble dream—an American Dream—that transitioned a rags-to-riches scenario, that's what it's all about. It's us in our finest moments. And why not today, as we have these inordinate needs to invest in the people, invest in jobs, understanding the dignity of work, underpinned by the effervescence of the pioneer spirit that is, I think, part and parcel of our DNA. It is within our fabric as a Nation to have that pioneer spirit. We're denying it. We're denying that spirit.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, you just talked about history here. Actually, your Governor, DeWitt Clinton, really did lead a major infrastructure project. Now, California was the Gold Rush. It's very interesting to go back through the old writings; and the folks from the East, New York and around, traveled up the Erie Canal to the Great Lakes to Chicago and then from there on. And they also left—and these are my relatives—the port of New York, which was built as part of the infrastructure, to travel to the Panama and then across the Isthmus of Panama and then up the coast of California. So my own relatives took advantage of those two infrastructure projects that you talked about.

However, your Governor was building off some of the work of the Founding Fathers. There's a lot of talk around here that there's no role for government in the economy. Well, George Washington disagreed. And his Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, disagreed. And they had a debate with Jefferson, who thought that we ought to be an agrarian State; and George Washington and Hamilton thought there was a role for industrial and for manufacturing. And so George Washington in his very first days as President told Alexander Hamilton to put together an industrial policy for America. And there were about, I think, nine points or maybe 12 points in that industrial policy. One of them was: build the infrastructure. It specifically said canals and harbors.

So this goes back to the very beginning of our country. What the President wanted to do and what we Democrats want to do is to build the infrastructure, the foundation upon which the economy grows. And we can do it. We can pay for it because every dollar we invest in the infrastructure immediately turns around and develops \$1.75 of growth in the economy. So it's not money down a rat hole. It is money that builds the foundation and then expands the economy immediately. It is the very best way to put people back to work immediately, together with education.

Mr. TONKO. The reach that we ought to make to our history, to let it to speak to us, the reach we ought to make to the boldness that we embraced in times that preceded us ought to speak to us, ought to feed our soul, ought to feed our mindset. The coura-

geous steps that we were asked to take that we took together as a Nation, committed to a cause, this is the sort of leadership that I think is required. The President is asking us to respond in very challenging times to these orders of investment.

Now, I can tell you in my district, the birthplace of the Erie Canal, mill towns that have achieved and changed the quality of life of peoples around the world, we're watching nanotechnology, semiconductor science, advanced battery manufacturing, chips manufacturing, a growth area happening within the capital region of New York, all built upon, I think, a public-private sector partnership, government inserted in a way that provides for the priming of the pump that goes where you absorb risk which, perhaps, the private sector won't take. And we're now seen as a global center of operations in certain areas. And it's growing and it's expanding. Now is not the time to walk away from that progress. Now is the time to invest in these dreams—these American dreams that people have always seen as the nobleness of the American saga.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I want to just pick this up. I do want to come back to our manufacturing policies before we wrap up here. But before we do, just to pull together the American Jobs Act that the President proposed back in September, A, folks, it did not increase the deficit.

□ 2030

The program was paid for, paid for by changes in the tax policy of the United States, policies that the President continues to talk about today that we eliminate the tax benefits that go unnecessarily to the oil company, the oil industry. Some \$5 billion to \$15 billion a year of subsidy is going to the wealthiest industry in the world. Pull those back. And the extraordinarily low taxes that have been available to the super rich, the top 1 percent, restore those to the Clinton era tax and other tax proposals that he had made so that the proposal was fully paid for—not decreasing the deficit but rather putting people back to work and creating the jobs that are necessary to move the economy and to get the American middle class back into the game so that they can prosper and so that we can rebuild those American manufacturing jobs, the 9 million jobs in manufacturing that were lost between 1990 and 2010.

Keep in mind that over the last 29 months, there has been private sector job growth every one of those 29 months. And so when people say, no, no, it's not good; say, it's not good enough, but at least it is happening. Men and women are going back to work in the private sector. The public sector continues to lose jobs and continues to shed jobs. But on the private sector job side, in part because of the policies we've been talking about here and the inherent strength of the Amer-

ican entrepreneurial and business spirit, people are coming back, not as strong as we want, but if the American Jobs Act were in place in its fullness, we would be moving towards a more balanced budget, reducing the deficit, and putting people back to work. We're not there yet, but we've not given up on this. And one of the major pieces in this is what we call Make it in America, because manufacturing matters.

I know in your district you've been talking a lot about this Mohawk Valley and about this great history. I'm not going to let you continue on without saying, hey, I'm from California. And we know entrepreneurship, and we know about the next generation of jobs and the next innovation. But New York still is there, and we'll vie with you for the best in the Nation.

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely. And I see the order of progress, Representative GARAMENDI, that we've achieved in that private sector that you just outlined. And it's regrettable that the solution for which the President is calling to provide for the public sector side, which would speak to greater numbers of employment, because we've taken that 4 million-plus in the private sector and reduced the overall results by losing some public sector opportunities which speak to soundness of community, public safety, educating the young, and providing for public protection out there. These are important aspects of quality of life. They ought to be embraced.

So we've denied part of the President's agenda. We've recognized the success and strength part of his plan, but there's been this partisan divide, there's been this holding back on progress because perish the thought if the White House should look good in this comeback from a recession.

Well, you need to place—we need to place the public good, the Nation's good, ahead of partisan divide. It is absolutely essential. And to then criticize the President by restraining some of the progress that he's been trying to cultivate and saying he's not cleaning up the mess quick enough, well, there was a huge mess delivered just before he assumed office—8.2 million jobs is a tough situation from which to walk forward from. And I think that there is a solution there, and we ought to work and put America first, the needs of this Nation first so as to be able to continue to walk forward and not negate any of the progress that we're achieving.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Let me pick up one of the issues the President has been talking about recently, and we actually worked on this more than a year and a half, almost 2 years ago, and that was the tax policy. At the outset, I talked about policies, tax policies being one of them. American tax policies until December of 2010 actually allowed and gave to American corporations a tax reduction, a tax break when they offshore jobs. Send a job overseas and reduce your taxes. Hello? How could that be?

I don't know where it came from, but that was the law of the land until the Democrats, then in control of Congress, pushed through a piece of legislation that ended \$12 billion a year of tax breaks for corporations that offshored, sent jobs overseas.

I will just note parenthetically that not one Republican voted to end that extraordinarily damaging tax proposal that rewarded companies with lower taxes when they offshored jobs. Not one Republican voted to repeal that law. However, the Democrats stood together, the President signed that, and it is now the law. There is still about another 4, 5, maybe \$6 billion of tax breaks that companies get when they offshore jobs. We've been working to eliminate those, and the President talks about it very often. He also talks about something that we should do, and that is to reward the onshoring of jobs.

When companies bring the jobs back home, they should receive a tax break. When you want to send jobs offshore, you should receive a penalty and certainly ought not receive a tax reduction. Now, that's good public policy. It hasn't happened. We don't control the House of Representatives, and all tax bills have to start in the House of Representatives. So we keep pleading with our Republican colleagues, please, please, give American corporations a tax break when they onshore jobs, and end the remaining tax breaks for offshoring jobs.

Mr. TONKO. Let me tell you, that is welcome news to my manufacturing base. I hear it all the time. They support the efforts of the President to reward those who produce jobs here in the U.S. and where we provide benefits for returning jobs, onshoring them as you suggest. That is welcome news. That is welcome news to the manufacturing base, as is the call for action by the President for investments in advance manufacturing. And I know that's compete and compete effectively, and to allow for job growth to come via the private sector base.

We need to invest in that new day of manufacturing. It is not dead. I refuse to submit to this notion that manufacturing is dead in this country. It is alive, it is well, and it needs to be retrofitted so as to be advanced in nature and in character. Let's get moving forward, and let's, again, reward those job creators, not paying people to offshore or send out of this Nation. Our hugest export was jobs in the decade preceding this administration.

Mr. GARAMENDI. You talk about reward and about tax policy, as was I. And let me give you another one, and I know that you and I are working on this together: tax policy. Right now we

provide, we Americans provide a tax credit, a tax reduction, for those who put up solar programs or wind turbines. The thing is, that's our tax money. The question is, where is it being spent? Is it being spent on American-made equipment, or is it being spent on foreign made equipment? All too often, those tax subsidies are used to purchase foreign equipment.

This piece of legislation which I'm working on together with Mr. TONKO, H.R. 613, basically says that if you're using our tax money, for example, the Highway Trust Fund tax money, for buses, trains, or building roads, then you must spend that money on American-made equipment. Similarly, with solar and wind, if you're going to get a tax credit, if you're going to use American taxpayers' money to build something, then it's going to be made in America. We're going to return the American manufacturing by using our tax money on American-made goods and services.

Mr. TONKO, we're nearing the end of our time. Why don't you take a run at wrapping? I get the last 30 seconds. You take the next 90 seconds.

Mr. TONKO. Let me do this quickly, Representative GARAMENDI. We're the greatest nation in the world. I believe our greatest days lie ahead of us. Let us take our golden moments in history when we were faced with heavy challenges, where we responded accordingly with the belief in the worker, belief in the American way, the pioneer spirit, and did it in an order of investment.

Let those solutions-oriented moments speak to us today. We need the soundest of solutions, we need the respect for the American worker, and our greatest days lie ahead. It's a spirit of optimism that we should embrace, a history that ought to challenge, feed us, and inspire us. With that, I thank you for yielding this evening.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, Mr. TONKO, thank you for joining us this evening. I thank our two gentlemen from the armed services who were here earlier. And, yes, our best days do lie ahead. It's about public policies, it's about the entrepreneurial spirit, and it's about America's desire to be the best. We're going to make it in America. We're going to make it in America because we will, once again, make things in America. We will rebuild the American middle class.

It's about policy, it's about the spirit of America. It can be done and it will be done, and we're here to see that it does get done.

Mr. TONKO, thank you for this evening.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members that it is not in order to bring to the attention of the House an occupant in the gallery.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PLATTS (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. STIVERS (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today through July 27 on account of military service in the Ohio Army National Guard.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and for the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker pro Tempore, Mr. LEWIS of California, on Friday, July 13, 2012.

H.R. 3902. An act to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to revise the timing of special elections for local office in the District of Columbia.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on July 2, 2012, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 4348. To provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a multiyear law reauthorizing such programs, and for other purposes.

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, further reported that on July 16, 2012, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 3902. To amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to revise the timing of special elections for local office in the District of Columbia.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, July 18, 2012, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the second quarter of 2012 pursuant to Public Law 95-384 are as follows: