

Republicans to come to work, and for this Congress to go to work for the American people, not just the millionaires and billionaires.

MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION MORE AFFORDABLE

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, just recently President Obama offered a plan to reduce the high costs of higher education by putting pressure on colleges and universities to reduce tuition rates. Under the plan, colleges would be rewarded based on their ability to offer relatively lower tuition fees, provide value, and serve low-income students.

This plan also coincides with key proposals by President Obama to make higher education more affordable, including a strategy President Obama announced last fall to consolidate Federal student loans and lower interest rates to help college graduates pay off their debt.

The American Dream is all about providing Americans the opportunity to succeed if they work hard. Every American family should be able to afford higher education. Every young person should have a chance. I commend President Obama for his commitment to American families and for making higher education an economic imperative.

NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as the founding cochair of the Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus, I rise to recognize National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

While I believe every day should be HIV awareness day, February 7 is an important day to recognize the effect this epidemic has on African Americans. Although only 14 percent of the U.S. population, African Americans account for almost half of those living and dying with HIV and AIDS in this country.

This year's theme is "I am My Brother's Keeper, I am My Sister's Keeper." People of faith know it is unacceptable that a woman of color in the United States is 15 times more likely to be living with HIV than a white woman her age. People of faith know that it's unacceptable that our young men, particularly gay and bisexual men, are most affected in this country. We cannot allow this crisis to continue.

We have the tools we need to end the AIDS epidemic. I urge everyone to get tested and take steps to protect themselves from the virus.

I call on members of the faith community, the private sector, health or-

ganizations, community leaders, teachers, parents, and the media to come together like never before.

The story of African Americans is one of resilience. I have great hope and expectation that we can once again persevere and we can stamp HIV and AIDS from the face of the Earth.

□ 1240

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3581, BUDGET AND AC- COUNTING TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2012

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 539 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3581) to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to increase transparency in Federal budgeting, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Budget now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 112-13. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

House Resolution 539 provides a structured rule for the consideration of H.R. 3581, the Budget and Accounting Transparency Act. This is another bill in a series of 10 bills that the Budget Committee is sending forward, Mr. Speaker, to try to align the kind of accounting and budgeting that we do in Washington with the kind of accounting and budgeting that happens in the real world. We know transparency and sound accounting matter. We know that it matters on Wall Street; we know that it matters on Main Street; and it matters right here between Independence and Constitution Avenues, Mr. Speaker.

This bill has three primary provisions:

Number one, it provides transparency by bringing off-budget items on-budget. Now, for folks who don't follow this as closely as you and I do, Mr. Speaker, you know that when things are off-budget, their degree of scrutiny is changed. When things are off-budget, the impact they have on the American taxpayer is not always reflected. When we take those things from off-budget and bring them on-budget, we begin to show the American taxpayer the real cost of their risk and responsibility.

Number two, it reforms the accounting method that we use to calculate how at risk American taxpayers are under Federal credit programs, again, to bring us closer to private sector models. Mr. Speaker, as you well know, when a dollar goes out the door from this United States Capitol, when a dollar goes out the door from the United States Treasury, if it is a loan program, there is no guarantee that dollar comes back. Are most folks faithful payers? Yes, they are. But does every dollar come back? No, it doesn't. Do we need to look further than Fannie and Freddie to see that model? For the first time, we'll begin to account for that risk so that the American taxpayer understands when the their American government guarantees a loan what potential impact that has on their pocketbook at home.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it requires all Federal agencies to post their budget justifications online in a timely manner. Now, you saw last week, Mr. Speaker, we were able to pass the Baseline Reform Act, which said no longer will we just assume every agency is

going to spend more. For the first time, we say that every agency needs to justify any increases that they receive in their budget. What this provision does is go one step further to say, when you are producing that budget, post your justifications online. Let the American people in. Mr. Speaker, if we have nothing to hide in this institution, then continuing to publish more and more information so that the American people can come into this discussion process is only going to lead us in the right direction.

Taken together, these three reforms bring the kind of attention that we need to a budget process that has been long broken. We cannot make America's future brighter and more secure if we continue to escalate the debt that we pass on to our children and their grandchildren. Clearly, this body has struggled in years past to contain that debt on both sides of the aisle. Clearly, folks occupying 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue have struggled to contain that debt on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, the folks who see these issues with clarity live back home in my Seventh District of Georgia. They understand what it means to do budgeting around the family dinner table. I know my colleague from Massachusetts has those same folks living in his district facing those same challenges in his district; and if we can bring those people into the discussion, Mr. Speaker, if we can just be honest with our constituents back home about the magnitude of the problem, we will have their support and their involvement to turn this page for America's financial future.

Mr. Speaker, we can't stick our heads in the sand. Next week, we're expecting the budget from the White House to arrive here on Capitol Hill. We were expecting it this week, and they've delayed it to next week. I'm excited about it. I say to my colleague from Massachusetts, Mr. Speaker, I believe we're going to have a serious budget discussion with the White House for the first time in the 3 years of this administration. We're going to have a serious budget dropped on our doorstep, and then the Budget Committee is going to be involved in a serious discussion about how to bring the White House's priorities and the House's priorities in line with the American people's priorities. That process does not happen in a vacuum. That process happens in the sunshine, the bright daylight that is this U.S. House Chamber, Mr. Speaker. And with this reform combined with the other nine reforms coming out of the Budget Committee, we are taking steps forward to change forever the way this town does its budgeting business.

I'm very proud to sit on both the Rules Committee and the Budget Committee, to have had a hand both in the underlying legislation and this resolution today. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution, Mr. Speaker, so that we can bring up the underlying bill.

Yesterday, the Rules Committee filed House Report 112-388, a report to accompany House Resolution 539, a resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 3581, the Budget and Accounting Transparency Act of 2011. The report inadvertently excluded an explanation of the waiver of all points of order contained in the resolution against the amendments printed in the report. The Committee on Rules is not aware of any points of order against any of the amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. The waiver of all points of order against the amendments printed in the report is prophylactic in nature.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by urging a "no" vote on this rule, which is not open, and a "no" vote on the underlying bill. The bill before us does nothing to improve the quality of life for any American. It doesn't create a single job. Not one job is created by this bill we're talking about today. This bill is going nowhere in the United States Senate. I don't believe this is a serious effort and, in short, we're wasting our time.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress this enough. Congress must keep our focus on the most important priority facing the American people, and that is jobs—jobs, jobs, jobs. Democrats may sound like a broken record, but that's because we know that the core issue of our time is the economy and jobs. We need to do more to make sure that America's businesses get back on track and that the American people are in a position to succeed when these businesses start to hire.

Now, we had some good news last week. The unemployment rate decreased for the fifth month in a row, falling to 8.3 percent.

□ 1250

At the same time, we've had 5 straight months of job creation, and we're in the 23rd consecutive month of private sector growth.

The economy looks like it's rebounding; and if this trend holds, that's a good thing. But while private sector employers added 257,000 jobs in January, there was a loss of 14,000 government jobs, including 11,000 local government jobs. Now, the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, is because the Federal Government is cutting away and State governments are cutting away and these so-called "government jobs" are being eliminated—the jobs that my friends on the other side of the aisle like to demonize. But what are these local government jobs? Mr. Speaker, these are cops, firefighters, teachers, librarians, and trash collectors. They're not faceless bureaucrats. They are people who make our lives

safer, better, and cleaner every day. And they're our neighbors and our friends and our family members.

So despite the relatively good news about the improving economy, we are clearly not where we need to be. Payroll employment is still 5.6 million jobs short of where it was at the beginning of the Great Recession of December of 2007. There are four jobless workers for every job opening and long-term unemployment is still at historic high levels.

It is clear that this rebound, as slow and painstaking as it is, is taking place in spite of House Republicans and in spite of their policies, not because of them. In fact, I believe actions taken and policies voted on by this House have slowed down this economic recovery, have slowed down this economy, and have prevented a faster and more robust recovery.

For example, congressional Republicans should be doing all they can to prevent a tax increase on middle class Americans. Congressional Republicans should be doing all they can to extend unemployment insurance for people who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Yet, Mr. Speaker, they have continued to drag their feet on this legislation and, in fact, continue to bicker among themselves about the need to extend these programs. This should be a no-brainer. This should be something that both sides should come together and be able to improve immediately. Yet it has become this theater, this drama that plays out; and nobody quite knows how it's going to end.

Mr. Speaker, we're one week into February, more than 1 month into the new year, more than 13 months into this new Republican-controlled Congress; and we have yet to see one meaningful jobs bill. No wonder Congress' approval rating is at historic lows. And instead of bringing legislation to the floor that would help the economy—like a clean extension of the payroll tax and unemployment insurance—the GOP would rather bring up misguided budget bills that simply attempt to rig the budget rules so they can score cheap political points.

House Republicans are simply trying to change the rules of the game to benefit their own point of view. This bill today, the so-called Budget and Accounting Transparency Act, is another sham bill in the Republican leadership's quest to change the rules of budgeting. This may seem like inside baseball to some, but it really is something quite extraordinary.

Simply, the Republicans, with this bill, are attempting to artificially inflate the cost of Federal credit programs. They do so by changing the way government credit programs are calculated. The Federal budget is supposed to count the amount of money that is spent and the revenue received. If there is more money coming in than going out, it's a surplus. The opposite is a deficit. What the Republican leadership is trying to do with this bill is

to recalculate the way these credit programs are scored, or counted, in the budget process, automatically making them more expensive. They do so by treating government credit programs in a similar way to private credit programs, even though they are treated differently by the markets.

Now, on top of changing the way these credit programs are scored, it's important to point out that this bill doesn't apply to all Federal programs. In other words, we would have one set of scoring rules for one set of Federal programs and another one just for the Federal credit programs. That doesn't make any sense to me.

If some of these recent budget bills are any indication, the House Republican leadership cares more about rigging the budget process just to dismantle the Federal safety net instead of actually working to reduce the deficit and at the same time spur job creation.

Mr. Speaker, we should be talking about jobs. We should be acting on the President's jobs plan. Our committee work should be focused on how do we get this economy running again. What should be on the floor today is not a bill that's going nowhere, but a bill that will help put people back to work. You know, if we put more people back to work and this economy begins to recover more, then we can grow out of this deficit.

I would just, again, urge the Republican leadership to stop bringing stuff to the floor that really, I believe, is a waste of our time. Bring things to the floor that are meaningful, that will make a difference in the lives of the American people, that will improve the quality of lives for people in this country.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this rule and on the underlying bill and to put our focus back where it belongs, creating a stronger economy for the American people.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say to my colleague from Massachusetts, I always look for those areas of agreement because I know that we have some. I had a tough time finding those areas of agreement in that particular presentation, but when you got to your discussion about the theater that takes place on this House floor, I began to feel that personal bond, Mr. Speaker, because this feels like theater to me.

This is a rule that my friend is urging a "no" vote on that does one thing and one thing only: it brings to the floor a budget-changing provision that will shine more of a spotlight on what it is this Congress does when it comes to spending the American people's money. It does one thing and one thing only, and that is to give the American taxpayer more insight into what it is that my colleagues and I are doing with the money that we have taken from them.

Now, you might say, Mr. Speaker, well, what if I oppose that sunshine? What if I don't want daylight in the process? What if I have some things up here that I don't want folks to know I'm doing with their money? Fair enough. You can vote "no" on the underlying bill. But this rule, Mr. Speaker, this rule, which governs the debate on the House floor, has made in order every single Democratic amendment that was germane to the underlying legislation. Hear that. Hear that.

For folks who don't like the way the bill was crafted—of course we had a full hearing and markup in the Budget Committee—but for folks who don't like the way that bill came out, sometimes Congresses in the past would just shove a bill to the floor and say take it or leave it. But this bill, Mr. Speaker, is coming to the floor with a rule that said, tell me, colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, tell me how it is that we can make this bill better, and every single idea and suggestion that was germane to the underlying bill this rule makes in order.

So I ask you, Mr. Speaker, why vote "no" on this rule? If you don't like the underlying legislation, vote "no" on the underlying legislation. But this rule is a rule that this entire House can be proud of, and I'm proud to be able to carry it for the Rules Committee today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The reason why people should vote "no" on this rule is because it's not an open rule, number one. The other reason why people should vote "no" on this rule is because it enables bad behavior, and the bad behavior is bringing up bills that are going nowhere that aren't very serious.

What we should be bringing to the floor right now is a clean extension of the payroll tax cut for middle class Americans and the extension of unemployment insurance. That's what we should be talking about. That's what should be on the floor right now. Instead, that measure, which would actually help people, is bogged down in conference because of ideological battles that my right-wing friends choose to wage. What we should be doing on this floor is putting the American people back to work and helping grow this economy through creating more jobs.

The bill before us does nothing to address the critical challenges facing America's families. It doesn't create a single job. It does nothing to address our serious budgetary challenges. This bill does not increase revenues or reduce spending. It does nothing to cut this deficit. We are sitting here talking about something that really, again, is going nowhere and that really doesn't matter in the scheme of things. We should be talking about jobs and how we get this economy moving again.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank my friend for yielding the time.

The month the President took office, the U.S. economy was in the midst of a horrible collapse into oblivion for a lot of American families. The economy lost 700,000 jobs the month the President took office.

Last Friday, we had the news that the economy gained over a quarter of a million private sector jobs. This is welcome news, but we have a lot of work to do. This is not nearly sufficient to restore the American Dream to America's middle class and really fuel the kind of recovery that we need.

□ 1300

Now, the President came to this floor 152 days ago with specific ideas that both parties had agreed to over the years, to try to fuel the small businesses and entrepreneurs who are the fuel of the American economy. And he came to the floor with four ideas. The first was to cut taxes for small businesses that hire people, something people on both sides say they're for. We've never taken a vote on that idea, never since then.

Second, he came to the floor with an idea that, as teachers are being laid off from the classroom, and firefighters are being laid off from our first responders, and police officers are being taken off the street, why don't we help the cities and towns and States to keep some of those people on the job, not only so they can do their job, but so they can spend money in the stores and the restaurants and help small businesses. We have never taken a vote on that idea in those 152 days.

The third thing the President said is, let's put construction workers back to work building libraries of the future for our schools, repairing the crumbling roads and bridges of the country, making sure rural America's wired for the Internet. And those construction workers would then become the customers of the small stores and the restaurants, the appliance stores that make America go. We have never taken a vote on that idea in the last 152 days.

And finally, the President said, let's avoid a massive tax increase on the middle class people of this country that was scheduled to go into effect on January 1 of this year. Well, we sort of took a vote on that and were able to dredge out of that process a 2-month extension to avoid that massive tax increase. That extension ends 22 days from today. In the 2 months since then, there's not been one proposal on the floor to fix that problem.

What we have on the floor today is a very interesting bill, and I, frankly, commend the seriousness of it. The bill essentially says we should re-examine the method by which we value guarantees issued by the Federal Government when we account for them in our budgets. In other words, if you cosign a note

for someone, how should that show up on your balance sheet? That's essentially what this bill is about.

Now, this is a serious question. But I think the unemployed carpenter and the small business owner about to close her store and the police officer who got his pink slip last week thinks it's a pretty irrelevant question. And what they would rather have us do is vote "yes" or "no" on cutting taxes for small businesses that create jobs. We vote "yes."

"Yes" or "no" on putting police officers, firefighters, teachers back to work. We vote "yes."

"Yes" or "no" on helping the middle class by avoiding a massive tax increase on the American people. "Yes" or "no."

What we ought to be doing is bringing those questions to the floor, those questions to the floor, and having a debate. Instead, we're having a debate that's serious, but it really belongs at the American Society of CPAs, not the House of Representatives.

Let's get to work on the questions we're hearing at home, "yes" or "no." We say "yes" to fueling the middle class job creators, the small businesses of this country. The majority responds with silence.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say I agree with the gentleman. I agree with the gentleman that we must move jobs legislation out of this U.S. House of Representatives, on to the United States Senate and on to the White House.

This is a budget reform bill that, as the gentleman accurately stated, is a serious bill to address a serious problem. We didn't do this in January of last year, our very first term in office. Then we were working on repealing the President's health care bill, which remains a national priority.

We didn't do this last April when we were focused on presenting the first serious budget that dealt seriously with the underlying debt drivers, those entitlement programs, for the first time since 1965. We didn't deal with these issues while we were trying to continue to fund this government through a regular appropriations process, a process that hadn't taken place in over three years.

We have brought this bill to the floor today. What were we doing in the intervening time, Mr. Speaker? We were working on jobs. We were working on jobs, because I agree with the gentleman, that is something we must focus on.

Reducing regulatory burdens sits with the Senate. Energy Tax Prevention Act sits with the Senate. Consumer Financial Protection and Soundness Improvement Act sits with the Senate. Small Company Capital Formation Act sits with the Senate. I could go on and on and on consuming all of our, time because the gentleman is right. Jobs are the priority. And this House and this leadership and this Con-

gress has made it a priority. But to what end, Mr. Speaker? To what end?

Will we stop focusing on this national priority? Absolutely not. Will we continue bringing bill after bill after bill to this floor that speaks to the needs of American families? You'd better believe it.

But will we abdicate our responsibility? Mr. Speaker, I've got cards aplenty in my pocket. One of them's the United States Constitution. Do you know where the responsibility to budget comes from, Mr. Speaker?

This wasn't a power grab, like so many things that go on in this House where we're removing power from the American people. This is a constitutionally delineated responsibility of this House. And I will not apologize for being down here focusing on those things that the Constitution requires us to focus on.

Now, that said, it's a fair question to say, but ROB, this is a small bill. This is a small bill. You know what? A lot of folks might take that as an insult, Mr. Speaker. I'm flattered by it because, as I have watched this process, we have seen too many giant resolutions, 1,000-, 2,000-, 3,000-, 4,000-page resolutions come to this floor.

Is that practice gone forever? I suspect we'll see another monstrosity come our way. I hope not, but I suspect we will. But in the interim, we can do better.

On the Budget Committee, Mr. Speaker, we actually had that discussion. This is 10 separate pieces of legislation. My colleague from New Jersey earlier was saying we want up-or-down votes on this floor. We want yes-or-no votes on this floor. I share his passion, and that's what we've done.

Instead of bringing a giant, omnibus budget reform bill that had lots of different things tied into it, Mr. Speaker, we've decided to bring one idea at a time, just one, one idea at a time, and allow this House, the people's House, to have that yes-or-no vote on whether or not this is an idea that has merit.

I appreciate my colleague's statement that this is a serious bill to confront a serious issue. And I will tell you, and it has developed more meaning to me, Mr. Speaker, since I have been a Member in this House for the last 12 months—it was Edmund Burke, he was a colleague of ours on the other side of the pond in the House of Commons, and a huge supporter of the American Revolution. And he said this: No one made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little. No one made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.

I confess, Mr. Speaker, I was a little naive when I showed up here as a freshman last January. I thought I was going to be able to fix it. I thought my colleagues and I, you and I, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and I, working together, I thought we were going to be able to fix it. It's taken a little longer than I thought.

Those big bites at the apple have not been as successful as I hoped.

Have we passed them here? Yes. Has the Senate moved on them and sent them to the President? No.

So we changed gears, bringing the little ideas to the floor, those little ideas that, as my colleague from New Jersey mentioned, are serious reform proposals.

I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud of these underlying proposals, and I'm proud of this rule that makes them in order. To be clear, it's a little unheard of in this House, and it's happened on both sides of the aisle. Republicans and Democrats alike have used this floor for their own devices.

This rule makes in order every single idea and suggestion that's germane to the underlying bill that was brought by either Republicans or Democrats. What's better than that? What's fairer than that? What is more American than that?

I understand, I know the Rules Committee has some tough decisions to make up there, and occasionally a closed rule comes to this floor. I'm generally grimacing as much as anybody when that happens. I believe in the openness of this process.

But to say, send me all of your ideas and suggestions, Mr. Speaker, send them all to the Rules Committee, and for the Rules Committee to say, anything that's germane, we've made in order today, Mr. Speaker—this is not a resolution to vote "no" on. This is the rule, not just a rule, this is the rule to come to the House floor and cast a proud "yes" vote for today.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. May I inquire of the gentleman how many more speakers he has?

Mr. WOODALL. We have no speakers remaining.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Then I will close for our side.

□ 1310

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

I will agree with my colleague on the Rules Committee that what is before us today is a small idea. The fact is that we have some big problems in this country and they require big and bold solutions, like extending the payroll tax cut for middle class Americans.

Mark Zandi, a Republican economist who worked for JOHN MCCAIN, said that if we don't extend the payroll tax cut it might cost as many as 500,000 jobs in this country.

It is a little bit puzzling to me—and I think to the American people who are observing this—that rather than bringing that bill to the floor or rather than bringing bills to the floor that will help enact the President's jobs program or any kind of bill that will help put people back to work, we are dealing with this, which my friend on the other side of the aisle said is a small thing, a small idea.

I think we can do better. I think the American people are expecting us to do much better. We should be having a debate on our manufacturing agenda. We need to get a tax structure in place that encourages manufacturing investment here in this country. We should be eliminating tax incentives and loopholes that encourage financial speculation—rather than investment—and outsourcing and offshoring their production and enact tax incentives for companies that produce domestically. That is the kind of bill we should be having on the floor right now, a recommitment to investing in our infrastructure.

I was hoping that we would have a transportation bill that would be worth supporting; but by all accounts, the transportation bill has become such a monstrosity that people on both sides of the aisle are opposed to it.

The LA Times did an editorial saying that the House Republican leadership unveiled its version of the 5-year transportation bill. It isn't just that this bill is so thoroughly partisan that it has no chance of being approved by the Democrat controlled Senate; it is that it is less a serious policy document than a wish list for oil lobbyists, and its funding proposals are so radical that they have been decried even by such conservative watchdogs as the Reason Foundation, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and the Taxpayers for Common Sense. I guess next week and the week after we're going to be bringing that bill to the floor.

Again, I don't think anybody here thinks that that is going to see the light of day, which means that it's not going to create jobs; it's not going to put people back to work.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert in the RECORD the LA Times editorial and two editorials from The New York Times.

[From the Los Angeles Times, Feb. 3, 2012]
IN THE HOUSE, A TRANSPORTATION TRAIN
WRECK

After Congress pushed the nation to the verge of catastrophe last year by delaying a deal to raise the debt ceiling until the eleventh hour, our capacity to be surprised by that body's irresponsible gamesmanship was somewhat diminished. And yet, we still can't help but be awe-struck by the mess the House of Representatives is preparing to make of the federal transportation bill, a key legislative priority for both parties.

On Tuesday, the House Republican leadership unveiled its version of the five-year bill. It isn't just that this bill is so thoroughly partisan that it has no chance of being approved by the Democratic-controlled Senate; it's that it is less a serious policy document than a wish list for oil lobbyists, and its funding proposals are so radical that they have been decried even by such conservative watchdogs as the Reason Foundation, the Competitive Enterprise Institute and Taxpayers for Common Sense.

What's so bad about it? The bill slashes funding for inexpensive but worthwhile programs to improve biking and walking safety, cuts funding for Amtrak by 25% and runs roughshod over federal regulations aimed at protecting communities and the environment from the negative effects of transpor-

tation projects. But what's far worse is the GOP scheme for helping to fund the bill's \$260 billion worth of infrastructure improvements over the next five years: opening up vast swaths of currently protected land to oil drilling.

Logically and politically, this makes no sense. On the logic front, it can't work. Three bills under consideration in the House that are intended to fund the transportation bill would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling, mandate oil shale leasing on federal lands and expand offshore drilling in sensitive areas. Yet even if drilling were allowed in these places, it would be many years before significant revenues started rolling in to the government, and it's difficult to predict how much money would be generated, making advance construction planning impossible. Moreover, oil shale development is an unproven technology that may never generate a dime. And politically, drilling in such places as the Alaskan refuge is rightly a nonstarter.

If it weren't already abundantly clear that this bill is intended simply to pander to the GOP base during an election year, Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) seasoned the red meat by promising to attach a rider mandating approval of the controversial Keystone XL pipeline, the biggest political football this side of the Super Bowl and an issue utterly unrelated to the purposes of the transportation bill.

If this is how congressional Republicans think they're going to win the November elections, they might want to check their approval ratings. Americans are thoroughly sick of a Congress that would rather play political games than solve our country's problems.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 6, 2012]
THE PAYROLL TAX FIGHT

Republicans in Congress seem to have forgotten the embarrassment they suffered late last year for trying to block a payroll tax cut for millions of wage-earners. The two-month extension they reluctantly approved will run out in three weeks, yet, again, they are stalling a full-year's tax cut with extraneous issues and political ploys.

The need for the 2-percentage-point payroll tax break is as great now as it was in December. Without it, 160 million people who get paychecks would have to pay the government nearly \$1,000 more. The increase would severely reduce growth and derail the slow-moving economic recovery. Failure to agree on a tax cut would also cut off unemployment benefits for tens of thousands of workers in many of the hardest-hit states.

Politically, however, extending the tax break would represent a victory for President Obama, who has been championing it. That remains intolerable to many Republicans, particularly in the House. So they are insisting on several extraneous provisions that have nothing to do with a tax cut for the middle class, hoping either to achieve a few ideological victories for themselves or force negotiations with Democrats to a standstill.

At the behest of the manufacturing lobby, for example, Republican negotiators still want to delay an environmental regulation that would require industrial boilers and incinerators to release less mercury, lead and soot. What does that have to do with the payroll tax cut? Nothing, of course; Republicans are simply trying to get Democrats to pay a price for something they want.

They also want to require the jobless to be in G.E.D. programs and to undergo drug testing to get benefits, two punitive measures designed to stigmatize the desperate. And they still want a provision reviving the Key-

stone XL oil pipeline, hoping to fool voters into believing that Democrats who oppose it are somehow against jobs—even though the pipeline will create a very small number of long-term jobs. (The two sides have also failed to agree on how to prevent a cut in Medicare payments to doctors, which could drive many of them from the program.)

The biggest outstanding question, as it was last year, is how to pay for the tax cut for the next 10 months, which would cost about \$90 billion. The best idea was still the original Democratic proposal, rejected by Republicans, to impose a surcharge on taxpayers who make more than \$1 million a year. Democrats are now considering cutting corporate loopholes and using some savings from winding down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is no pressing need to offset the jobless benefits, which Republicans did not do when they held power in previous decades.

Republicans, on the other hand, are only interested in extending the tax benefits for working Americans if they can punish other groups. They want to extend the freeze on wages for federal workers to a third consecutive year, and appeal to their base by barring the use of welfare debit cards at casinos and strip clubs. This is hardly a national problem; a few states have allowed that, but most have cracked down on it.

Republicans seem no more serious about cutting the tax and stimulating the economy than they were in December. They may be furious that President Obama is campaigning against a do-nothing Congress, but they don't seem as if they're planning to actually do something.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 3, 2012]
JOB GAINS REFLECT HOPE A RECOVERY IS
BLOOMING
(By Motoko Rich)

The front wheels have lifted off the runway. Now, Americans are waiting to see if the economy can truly get aloft.

With the government reporting that the unemployment rate and the number of jobless fell in January to the lowest levels since early 2009, the recovery seems finally to be reaching American workers.

The Labor Department's latest snapshot of the job market, released on Friday, makes clear that employers have been hiring more in recent months, with 243,000 net new jobs in January. The unemployment rate now stands at 8.3 percent, down from 8.5 percent a month earlier and from 9.1 percent as recently as last August.

Economists were encouraged, though they expect some fits and starts along the road to recovery.

"I do think we're at the point where we're in a self-sustaining, positive reinforcing picture," said Stuart G. Hoffman, chief economist for the PNC Financial Services Group.

Stocks rallied on the brightening outlook, reaching multiyear highs.

The report revealed job gains not just for the last month but for previous months. December job growth was revised to 203,000, from the original 200,000. The job gains for November, originally 100,000 jobs, were revised upward to 157,000, creating a picture of a job market that has been gathering steam.

The private sector remained the engine of growth. While federal agencies and local governments continued to lay off workers, businesses added 257,000 net new jobs in January. The biggest gains were in manufacturing, professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality.

Despite the promising numbers, various indicators create an ambiguous picture of the overall economic recovery.

Layoffs appear to be slowing as fewer people are filing claims for unemployment benefits, and factory orders have picked up.

Small businesses, though, are still not hiring much. And while sales of existing homes have started to rise, home prices continue to fall. Incomes are not growing and consumer spending is still restrained, and could come under further pressure with gas prices edging higher in recent months and as consumers revert to building up savings.

Seasonal factors may have inflated January hiring numbers in some industries, like restaurants or construction.

Steve Blitz, senior economist for ITG Investment Research, said the report nevertheless revealed strong increases in manufacturing and related job categories, like transportation and warehousing and wholesale trade. "You've got to give credit when things are moving in the right direction," said Mr. Blitz, who has been cautious in heralding a recovery. "This is not a process that is going to be done in a month or two months or a year. It could take five or 10 years to get there."

Others were unconvinced that the recent pace of job growth would be sustained, pointing to moderate consumer spending and mild economic growth, 1.7 percent last year.

"The problem is that there is this bifurcation here in the numbers," said Bernard Baumohl, chief global economist at the Economic Outlook Group. "On the one hand we see rather impressive job growth, but on the other hand we're also seeing other economic indicators that are telling us that the economy is fundamentally weak."

Mr. Baumohl added, "We're going to have to really very carefully dig deep below the surface for these and a lot of other economic statistics to find a consistency of what is happening in the U.S. economy."

The unemployment rate appeared to be falling because people were genuinely securing jobs rather than merely leaving the work force. The Labor Department adjusted its data to account for new population estimates from the 2010 Census.

Accounting for those adjustments, the labor force had a net gain of 250,000 people in January from a month earlier. Although the pool of unemployed people has been shrinking, the number remains high—12.8 million—about equal to the population of Pennsylvania, and long-term unemployment is one of the most crushing legacies of this recent recession. For January, the Labor Department reported that 5.5 million people had been out of work for six months or more, about 43 percent of the jobless.

And according to an analysis of December's job numbers released this week by the Pew Fiscal Analysis Initiative, nearly a third of the jobless have been unemployed for a year or more.

Underemployment is another stubborn problem. The number of people working part time because they cannot find full-time work was 8.2 million in January. Including that group and the 1.1 million who stopped looking for work altogether, and the broader measure of unemployment was 15.1 percent.

"You have an interesting situation where you have some permanent part-time workers," said John Silvia, chief economist at Wells Fargo. "These people are in jobs and the jobs are not likely to become full time."

Sandy Pochapin, a 54-year-old former marketing manager, was laid off for the second time last May from a small business in Newton, Mass. Just before the start of the year she picked up a part-time job as a media consultant at an advertising agency. Her husband, a real estate lawyer, has also experienced severe cutbacks in his income.

The couple, who are now paying three times what they were paying for health care before Ms. Pochapin lost her job, have cut back on dinners out, and she said that replacing her eight-year-old Toyota High-

lander was "not in the cards." More painfully, the couple have dipped into their college-age son's educational fund to keep up with mortgage payments and other expenses.

Ms. Pochapin, a member of several networking groups, compiles job leads and recently sent out a list with more openings than she had ever seen. "I would say things are picking up," she said. "But where they're picking up is not where people who have been unemployed long term have skills." She noted many openings for jobs in mobile marketing and for digital media specialists.

Indeed, one of the perennial complaints of employers is that they cannot find qualified workers. Ancestry.com, a genealogy Web site in Provo, Utah, has openings for 150 engineers, data mining specialists and developers of mobile apps. "While we find a lot of people who are unemployed," said Eric Shoup, a senior vice president, "they are not the people who bring the skill sets we need for our business."

He said the company did virtually all its hiring away from other companies.

Economists are beginning to worry about the self-fulfilling nature of long-term unemployment. "It's almost starting to look like there are two job markets," said Cliff Waldman, the economist at the Manufacturers Alliance, a trade group. "Long-term unemployment is very sticky."

Mr. Speaker, we are beginning to see signs of hope in our economy. What we should be is the wind at the backs of businesses and workers in this country to try to enact policies that will help get this economy stronger, that will help create more jobs, that will help put people back to work. We're not doing that today.

I'm saying vote against the rule because it is not an open rule. I'm also saying vote against the rule to send a signal to the Republican leadership: Enough. Let's start bringing serious things to this floor, for example, the extension of the payroll tax cut for middle class families and the unemployment extension for those who are unemployed through no fault of their own. That's what we should be doing here, and we're not, so it's frustrating.

I guess we will waste the day doing this on a bill that goes nowhere, but I hope sooner rather than later that the Republican leadership will finally understand the American people want us to focus on jobs.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to end where I began, and that is in agreement with my colleague. He says we should be the wind at the back of small business. Nothing could be truer. Nothing could be more true.

I don't believe that presiding over the largest regulatory expansion in the history of America is fulfilling the promise of being the wind at the back. That is wind in the face of American small businesses.

I don't believe that presiding over the largest tax increase in American history counts as being the wind at the back of U.S. small business. I think that's a wind in the face of those small businesses.

I do not believe that a new health care mandate is the wind at the back of

small businesses. I believe that's a wind in the face of small businesses.

But I take great comfort in knowing that while there may be all of those issues that divide us, there are principles that unite us. We should, in fact, be the wind at the back of small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this rule that makes in order every single idea to improve the underlying legislation, this budget reform rule is honest with the American people for the first time in my lifetime.

You know, we hear so much talk about the payroll tax, Mr. Speaker. I know you're familiar with the way that accounting works. When folks pay—and for those of us in Congress, for everybody back home, it's 15.3 percent of your paycheck. 15.3 percent out of every paycheck-receiving American's pocket goes to the payroll tax, which goes to fund Social Security and Medicare.

Under the clever accounting rules that the Congress and the President have so eloquently crafted, when I pay my 15.3 percent out of my paycheck every month, when every American worker, Mr. Speaker, pays their 15.3 percent, with the expectation that Medicare will be there for them when they retire, with the expectation that Social Security will be there for them when they retire, when we all contribute, the clever accounting rules here on Capitol Hill call that a credit. That's a credit to the United States Government's Treasury. It does not account for it as a debit because now folks have promised to have Social Security and Medicare there for me when I turn 67. It counts as a credit, Mr. Speaker.

When we hire a new Federal employee, every new Federal employee we hire, Mr. Speaker, when they pay out of their monthly check to the Federal Employees Retirement System, that pension that's available to every Federal Government employee, that payment that they make into the pension program is counted as a credit. It's as if the more Federal employees we hire, the more money we'll make for America. No, because with every year of payment into that system, they get something very large out.

This is not news to any business owner in America, Mr. Speaker. This is not news to any business owner in America. They have to do this accounting every day. You want to talk about the crooks on Wall Street; if Wall Street accounted the way the Federal Government does its accounting, they would in fact be crooks and they would in fact all be in jail. It's unconscionable.

The wool that we pull—and we're all complicit in it, have been for years. The wool that we pull over the eyes of the American taxpayer—and kudos to this Budget Committee and, candidly, to this budget chairman. Chairman PAUL RYAN and the chairman of the Rules Committee, Chairman DAVID DREIER, have been working on fundamental budget reform for a decade. And

why it is that neither party has had the courage to bring this forward until now I do not know, but I stand here with pride to be associated with it today.

Mr. Speaker, if you want to create jobs, call your Senator. Call your Senator from your home State, Mr. Speaker, and share with them the importance of moving the pro jobs agenda that is sitting on their doorstep. I understand, Mr. Speaker, and I wouldn't hold it against you if you can't remember all of the jobs bills we've passed, there have been so many, but you can see them. It's on the Web, jobs.gop.gov. You can see it there, every single one, and you can see their status. Now, in fairness to the Senate, of the more than 30 bills we've passed, they've done a handful, and I mean literally a handful, but dozens more sit there waiting.

I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, if the pitch from my colleague that we are abdicating our responsibility to focus on jobs took any root with you at all, let me say emphatically: Not true, not true. Our focus has always been on jobs. Our focus will continue to be on jobs. Our focus has always been the economy. Our focus will continue to be the economy.

□ 1320

But there is a trust deficit in this town. Everyone hears it when they head home. Everybody hears it from their constituencies: I don't believe you when you say it out of Washington, D.C.

I get it. I come up here. I read these budgets, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are hard to understand. We've got a whole team of staff here to help us sort through those numbers. I rely on that staff. I'll go and talk to them, and we'll go through it all line by line. It's hard to understand, and it doesn't need to be. It doesn't need to be D.C. doublespeak. It can be Georgia common sense that we bring to the budgeting process, and that is what the underlying resolution does today.

In 2001, when President Bush took office, the CBO projected a surplus of \$889 billion by 2011. That turned into a \$1.3 trillion deficit under two Presidents—from \$889 billion in surplus to \$1.3 trillion in deficits. I'll tell you that every single spending bill that left this body over those years—and I was not in this body, serving, but I saw it day in and day out—was done with the very best of intentions. Yet where does that leave our children and our grandchildren? It leaves them \$15 trillion in debt.

You talk about being the wind at the backs of small businesses, Mr. Speaker. I tried to get my mind around what \$15 trillion—on its way to \$16 trillion—in debt means. Do you know, if you're a small business owner in America and if you'd started a business on the day that Jesus Christ was born and if you'd been so bad at it that you'd lost \$1 million a day, every day, 7 days a week, Mr. Speaker, from the day Jesus was

born until today, you would have to continue to lose \$1 million a day every day, 7 days a week, for another 700 years to lose your first \$1 trillion?

As stewards of the American people's money, we've lost \$15 trillion, much of that just in the last 4 years. Anything that we can do—no matter how big or small—that incorporates the American people into this budget discussion, that gives them the best information that they can have, that provides to us the best information that we can have and that does away with the funny math that has almost become a punch line across this country is a step in the right direction. There is a trust deficit in this country, and the underlying legislation today takes a very strong step towards correcting it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say again how much I appreciate Chairman PAUL RYAN and his work in leading the Budget Committee as well as how much I appreciate Chairman DAVID DREIER and his work in leading the Rules Committee. These two gentlemen have been champions of honesty in the budget process. What we have today, both in the rule and in the underlying bill, is the realization of their tireless efforts.

I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on this rule. Vote "yes" on this rule that allows every single idea to improve the underlying legislation, and that's germane, to come to this House floor, and then vote your consciences. Vote your consciences on those amendments, and vote your consciences on the underlying bill. I wager, if this body votes its conscience on this underlying bill, it's going to pass this body and head to the United States Senate.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CIVILIAN PROPERTY REALIGNMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 537 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1734.

□ 1325

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the

further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1734) to decrease the deficit by realigning, consolidating, selling, disposing, and improving the efficiency of federal buildings and other civilian real property, and for other purposes, with Mr. WOMACK (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Monday, February 6, 2012, amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 112-385 offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. CONNOLLY OF VIRGINIA

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, the unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 191, noes 230, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 36]

AYES—191

Ackerman	Deutch	Langevin
Altmire	Dicks	Larsen (WA)
Andrews	Dingell	Larson (CT)
Baca	Doggett	Lee (CA)
Baldwin	Dold	Levin
Barrow	Doyle	Lewis (GA)
Bass (CA)	Edwards	Loebsack
Bass (NH)	Engel	Lofgren, Zoe
Becerra	Eshoo	Lowey
Berkley	Farr	Luján
Berman	Fattah	Lynch
Bishop (GA)	Filner	Maloney
Bishop (NY)	Fitzpatrick	Marchant
Blumenauer	Frank (MA)	Markey
Boren	Fudge	Matsui
Boswell	Garamendi	McCarthy (NY)
Brady (PA)	Gerlach	McCollum
Braley (IA)	Gonzalez	McDermott
Brown (FL)	Green, Al	McGovern
Butterfield	Green, Gene	McIntyre
Capps	Grijalva	McMorris
Capuano	Gutierrez	Rodgers
Cardoza	Hahn	Meeks
Carney	Hanabusa	Michaud
Carson (IN)	Hastings (FL)	Miller (NC)
Castor (FL)	Heinrich	Miller, George
Chaffetz	Higgins	Moore
Chandler	Himes	Moran
Chu	Hinchee	Murphy (CT)
Cicilline	Hinojosa	Nadler
Clarke (MI)	Hirono	Napolitano
Clarke (NY)	Hochul	Olver
Clay	Holden	Owens
Cleaver	Holt	Pallone
Clyburn	Honda	Pascrell
Cohen	Hoyer	Pastor (AZ)
Connolly (VA)	Insliee	Pelosi
Conyers	Israel	Perlmutter
Cooper	Issa	Peters
Costa	Jackson (IL)	Pingree (ME)
Costello	Jackson Lee	Platts
Courtney	(TX)	Polis
Critz	Johnson (GA)	Price (NC)
Crowley	Johnson, E. B.	Quigley
Cuellar	Jones	Rahall
Cummings	Kaptur	Rangel
Davis (CA)	Keating	Reyes
Davis (IL)	Kildee	Richardson
DeFazio	Kind	Richmond
DeGette	Kissell	Ross (AR)
DeLauro	Kucinich	Rothman (NJ)