

their report today saying that Congress is now less popular than telemarketers.

This is one of the most despised Congresses in American history, and it has been led by Republican leaders who, again, have shown that they are more interested in trying to weaken this President than in trying to strengthen our country. This is with regard to issue after issue, whether or not it's the farm bill, whether or not it's the postal reform—where we have a system that is literally now technically in bankruptcy—whether it's the Violence Against Women Act, whether it's getting budgets done in regular order, whether it's diffusing sequestration, whether it's averting the fiscal cliff.

We went home for 5 weeks without acting on any of these measures because of a recess motion that the Speaker put forward. The country is basically sitting there, waiting to see whether or not we have either a short-term future or a long-term future, which all of these issues are so critical to determining. We are going to be watching this agenda over the next few days. What we saw today from the majority leader's office indicated no farm bill, no postal reform bill, nothing related to any measures to try and deal with sequestration. We have seen a do-nothing agenda this week by the majority following 5 weeks of being back in the districts.

The American Farm Bureau was doing a cross-country barnstorm about the fact that we need to get that measure passed so we can create some certainty and horizon for the men and women who are getting up every morning and milking cows and planting crops and harvesting crops, those who desperately, particularly with the drought conditions in the Midwest, need to have some certainty that there is going to be crop insurance in place to make sure that they are not going to go bankrupt.

We have a measure which passed in the U.S. Senate—it's a bipartisan bill—which saves the taxpayer \$23 billion, and yet we have a leadership which won't even bring up a farm bill for consideration. The bill that came out of committee wasn't perfect, but it is a measure which we need to act on to send to conference so that the agriculture sector of this country can have some confidence about what kind of future they're going to have beyond the next few weeks or until September 30, which is when the law of this country reverts back to that of the 1949 farm bill.

So that's the message which I certainly heard on my break and that Mr. BRALEY heard on his break. I think we're going to hear it this week when representatives of commodity crop groups—the American Farm Bureau, the American Farmers Union—are going to be gathering in the U.S. Capitol and demanding action so that we can at least allow one sector the ability and the confidence to know that

they have some future, both short term and long term.

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

□ 2000

GOP FRESHMEN HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANDRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here this evening alongside some of my freshman colleagues.

We want to have a real frank discussion with the American people tonight about a milestone that we hit just last week. This is not a milestone of historic significance that we're proud of, and that is that our national debt has now hit \$16 trillion. This brings no pride or cause to celebrate to the American people, nor should it to any Member of this body or our friends in the Senate or in the White House. That is approximately \$51,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. It's unacceptable, and it doesn't, quite frankly, have to be this way.

I want to point you to a few of the President's own words that he said when he was campaigning to be the President of the United States:

We can't afford another 4 years of the kind of deficits we've seen during the last 8. We can't afford to mortgage our children's future on another mountain of debt.

Where are we today? Today we're at a place that is far worse than 4 years ago. With our debt now at \$16 trillion, we've not seen anything significant from this White House in an effort to reduce our debt. Instead, all we hear about is new programs that are going to require more taxpayer dollars and not an effort to rein in this out-of-control spending. I want to talk about that tonight.

Tonight we also want to focus on jobs. This is the number one issue facing the American people right now. We need to get America back to work. And this government, this body right here, we don't create the jobs, but we sure can help create an environment in which job creation is right. We have done a lot here in the House to do that. We've passed over 30 bills. They're sitting in the Senate awaiting action.

We are going to continue to highlight what we've learned, in this hour, over the course of our time back at home.

I have my friend from Colorado standing here. I would just say to you, Mr. GARDNER, that I'm sure you can say the same about what you learned over the district work period. From traveling from town to town, from county to county in Alabama's Second District over and over again, I have witnessed that the debt has stifled job creation because all it has done is create more uncertainty.

All of the regulation and red tape that has been passed in the previous Congress that this Congress has been unable to undue because of the lack of action in the Senate and ObamaCare, all of that has contributed to more and more uncertainty. People are hurting.

I've traveled around and looked into the eyes of folks, and they can't take any more. Their businesses are on the line, and that then, in turn, is a reflection of what's going to happen in their households.

Mr. GARDNER. The gentlelady from Alabama is exactly right.

Thank you for your leadership on the economy, on getting this country turned around, and getting our businesses back in shape to hire once again.

Over the past couple of years since being elected, I've traveled over 65,000 miles to be in every nook and cranny of the district of eastern Colorado and northern Colorado. We've held 74 town meetings to make sure that we are listening to everybody's voices, to make sure that people have an opportunity to address their concerns, their ideas to make our government better, to make our economy grow and healthy once again.

The points that you talk about, I don't know that anything is more relevant in the conversations that we have today than the point that was made at a town meeting just last week in Julesburg, Colorado, up in northeastern Colorado. It's just a hop, skip, and a jump from the panhandle of Nebraska. A young lady raised her hand and said:

I'm a single mom. I have three kids at home. I've had two jobs. Now I only have one. I'm looking for a second one. I can't make ends meet because my job doesn't pay enough, and energy prices continue to increase.

She's trying to find health care for her children. Talk about somebody who is the front lines of our economy who is suffering because of the past 3½ years of failed economic policies.

The Congressional Budget Office recently issued a review of what can happen at the end of this year if nothing is done to avoid the fiscal cliff to deal with sequestration and to deal with the looming tax increases. This is what the Congressional Budget Office has stated:

In particular, large budget deficits and growing debt would reduce national saving, leading to higher interest rates, more borrowing from abroad, and less domestic investment—which in turn would lower the growth of incomes in the United States.

While we talk about growing the economy, while we talk about economic growth and the need to get businesses and companies around this country hiring again, at the same time there's this negative pressure being placed on them because Congress can't do its job to control spending. We are \$16 trillion in debt. You mentioned it was nearly \$51,000 for every man, woman, and child. We've got a 10-month-old at home. Our 10-month-old

owes \$51,000 as his share of the Federal debt. That's \$51,000 apiece.

That negative pressure, that mounting debt, deficits that are over a trillion dollars every year, makes it more and more difficult for businesses to have access to the capital that they need to grow. It makes it more and more difficult for companies to operate, because all of a sudden they find themselves competing with the Federal Government for those scarce resources.

The next thing we know, government is going to have to look at tax increases to try to finance what's already over \$200 billion a year in interest payments. Our businesses are saying: Government, can you get out of the way so we can let America work, so that we can run our businesses the way that we want to, not the way Washington wants to?

At the same time, you've got a Congress, including the United States Senate, that hasn't passed a budget in the past 3½ years, hasn't done the fundamental duty that it's required to do, and that's to make sure that this government knows where it's going to spend its money, to make sure this government knows how much money it has coming in and how much money is going out. But they refuse to pass a budget.

They refuse it, make no mistake, not because they think they need more time or because they need to study it more or come up with a different bill, no. They refuse it because they think it would be bad politically for them to vote on a budget. That's why the President's own budget received zero votes. The President's own budget not only received zero Republican votes, but zero Democrat votes.

There are so many people across this country who are unemployed, who are looking for work. In fact, most of the universities around the country just went back in a couple of weeks ago. Those students are all looking for jobs and expecting jobs to deal with their student loans. I know we've talked about it many times.

Mrs. ROBY. If we could spend some time on our young people, because that really paints the picture better than anything.

The graduating class of 2012, when they were getting ready to face the real world in April of this year, the Associated Press reported that half of those college graduates were unemployed. That's half.

Just to show a little bit of a comparison, since President Obama has taken office, the unemployment rate for 20-year-olds to 24-year-olds has increased more than a point from 12.4 percent to 13.9 percent. The median income for those under the age of 35 dropped by 10.5 percent from 2007 to 2010. That's more than any other age group. More of today's 20-somethings to 30-somethings are living with their parents than any of the generations that have gone before them.

□ 2010

So by comparison—and here's what we really highlight—this President's failure and this Congress' failure to get out of the way of job creation. In 1980, 17 percent of adults, 20- to 34-year-olds, had to live with their parents, and today that number is 24 percent. At a time when these young people coming out of college face mountains of student loan debt, they can't find jobs.

Instead of looking and working to find ways to provide opportunities for these young people, President Obama and his policies are setting the stage for these young people to be more dependent on the government. Anyway, that's just to highlight your point exactly that that is the sector of our population that is the promise of tomorrow, and they are unemployed.

Mr. GARDNER. Then add the fact that this generation that's graduating from college today is going to be left with a \$16 trillion debt; and, by the way, that's just what it is today. It's growing each and every second. In just a few years, that number goes up dramatically to over \$20 trillion if nothing is done to stop the runaway debt crisis that we have right now.

You mentioned the Associated Press article that talks about one out of every two graduates from college today being unemployed or underemployed, but that same Associated Press report talks about this, taking unemployment into consideration, the job prospects for bachelor's degree holders fell last year to the lowest level in more than a decade.

So we've seen this conversation take place about, you know, are we better off today than we were 4 years ago. Well, here's a statement from the Associated Press, when it comes to people who are graduating from college, that says, "Taking underemployment into consideration, the jobs prospects for bachelor's degree holders fell last year to the lowest level in more than a decade."

How are these families going to make ends meet? How are recent college graduates, some who come out of college with a family, going to pay back their student loans? We have seen Federal student loans soar 275 percent over the past decade. Over the past decade student loans have increased over 275 percent; yet job prospects are as bleak as they have been for 10 years or more.

You know, I've got some great universities in my district, the University of Northern Colorado, Colorado State University. We just visited Northeastern Junior College. We have been all over the community college system in our district talking about the challenges that they face trying to make sure that their students have the jobs that they need when they come out of school because what's happening, you see the higher debt load. Then because the economy is so tough, people are taking jobs that are lower paying just to try to make ends meet.

This country has prided itself on always making sure that for generation

after generation we have greater opportunities, that we open more doors for our children. That's the same thing that ought to be, the same kind of idea that ought to be facing the recent graduates today.

This upcoming December, next May, they ought to be looking at job prospects that are even greater than their older brothers or sisters, even greater than their parents' generation. But the fact is those jobs don't exist because the policies of the last 4 years have made it more and more difficult for the country's businesses to grow and expand.

Mrs. ROBY. You mentioned your colleges in your district. Actually, there are some great colleges in or right nearby in Alabama's Second District: Alabama State University, Faulkner University, Troy University, and Huntingdon College. But let me just highlight real quickly Alabama's 2-year college system where we have incredible workforce development programs, honing skills in young people that can immediately go out into the workforce, and they deserve better than these lofty promises.

Did you know that since President Obama was inaugurated in January of 2009, the manufacturing sector has shed 590,000 jobs, 590,000 jobs?

Mr. GARDNER. When was that you said?

Mrs. ROBY. This was since President Obama was inaugurated in January of 2009.

The number of Americans receiving food stamps as of April 2012 was 46.1 million. I heard today one of our colleagues say one in seven, one out of every seven Americans is receiving some sort of nutritional assistance. That is astounding. That is astounding.

We've painted a picture here that is bleak, and we're telling the American people what they already know because so many of them are too aware of this because they're the ones that are suffering from this administration. I just want to say that we have solutions.

We have solutions where we can change things and the private sector can thrive, but that is going to mean getting the government out of the way. We need the leadership in the Senate to have the political courage to stand up and take up our jobs bills, our energy bills that reduce regulation and does just that, gets the government out of the way.

Mr. GARDNER. This past week I had an opportunity to visit a business in Colorado, a manufacturing business in Colorado. It's a multi-generation family business that was started by this gentleman's dad 50 years ago. He's actually retiring from the business, and his son is going to take over the business, third generation, a manufacturing business in Denver. They've got around 300 employees, spread out in the western United States region.

I asked him, I said, you know the past couple of years are you doing better now than you were then? His answer was no on any level. If you ask

him about what his bottom line is, his company's profits? No, they're not better off than they were. If you ask them about the number of employees he has? No, they're not better off. In fact, they've struggled to try to make sure that they are able to keep the employees that they have been able to keep.

This is something else that goes unreported, that work, that employee who is usually working a 40-hour work week or maybe a little bit more is now working a 30-hour work week or a 32-hour work week, because as an employer he feels the opportunity to try to do everything he can to keep these employees working, to keep their families with a job in the household. In order to do that, because their business is down, because their sales are down, they've actually now found themselves in situations where they are reducing hours, which means less take-home pay. In fact, if you look at the past 4 years, we've seen middle class pay, take-home pay, go down by about \$4,000.

If employment is decreasing and, again, if you look at those employment numbers that just came out this past week, for every one person who found a job, four people quit looking. So you can see that this business isn't alone in trying to make ends meet, to try to build a better tomorrow.

We talked about the regulations that they face, and I talked about some of the recent changes that have been made, whether it's financial services legislation. In fact, one of the interesting points that we were talking about regulations, and I am sure you have heard a great deal about businesses in your district that are facing challenges with regulations and the ever-increasing cost of regulations, but this particular business, they were talking about how, because of the tough times that have hit their contracts, the people they contract with, the people who buy the goods from them, they are now actually having to float the cost of that business on their own books a lot longer. Because of the difficulties with some of the financial legislation we've seen, they're finding it even more difficult to do that.

Here you have a company that's trying to make it work with their customers so that they can buy their goods by holding their receivables a little bit longer; but they're finding pressure now from financial legislation that makes it more difficult to do that. So the government is getting them both ways. The government has failed to come up with the policies to get government out of the way so that our businesses can grow. Yet when you have somebody coming up with a solution to try to grow their business, government policies there are affecting that and impeding their ability to do that.

Mrs. ROBY. Absolutely. You know, when you talk to business owners, or at least when I have, you'll hear them say, but there was a time when regu-

lators came into your business to try to make it more effective or a safer environment in which to work, but that time is long gone. Now the regulators are there to find problems and fine you.

I want to give you one example that was astounding to me. A fellow that's in the construction business was explaining to me that he had a friend that's a roofer that had a \$700 job, to make a \$700 profit on a roofing job. His crew was over there at this home all day long, had the ladder, they were going up and down.

After 5 o'clock, a regulator was driving down the road, pulled over and noticed that he was afraid the ladder didn't come over the eave of the roof just far enough to fit within the regulatory requirements.

□ 2020

He stopped and wrote that fellow up to the tune of \$8,000. A \$700 job and an \$8,000 fine. These guys had been going up and down that ladder all day.

We all agree that not every regulation is bad, but this is an environment that has gotten out of hand; people with too much time on their hands and not coming into businesses in the spirit of helping businesses thrive.

Mr. GARDNER. And I think that's why we have to start talking about solutions for this country. We all have examples of regulations that have gone amok.

I was dealing with a business in the district just the other day that talked about a product that they were trying to handle. It was a very environmentally sensitive product that they were trying to remove and actually do some environmental mitigation from a cleanup site that they were working on. And this particular company was required to keep this product both wet and dry at the same time; a regulation that said you had to keep it wet until you moved it or stored it, and then you had to keep it dry. Well, you've got to dry it down in order to move it, but yet they faced the possibility of being fined because of this particular action.

Again, the solutions we need. This Congress has passed solutions, and I'll mention the REINS Act.

The REINS Act was a bill that we passed several months ago with strong support from both sides of the aisle. This is one of the bills that has passed the House and has moved over to the Senate, where it just sits stacking up like cordwood. Once again, here we have an opportunity to do something, a proactive solution.

The REINS Act simply says we're going to take a look at the cost of a regulation. We're going to get an idea of how much some regulation costs, and if it exceeds a certain threshold, then we're going to let that come back to Congress for review before it can go into effect. It's saying, hey, let's take a look at this. Let's create some kind of an opportunity for Congress to review a regulation that has a tremendous impact on the economy, taking over a

hundred million dollars out of our economy to comply with the regulation. Let's take a look at it and make sure that the cost and benefits are in line to make sure that the benefits outweigh the cost, to make sure that doing it is actually worth it and it doesn't cost jobs that we so desperately need. And so the REINS Act passed and it's waiting over in the Senate.

Now, some people may say, well, that's just a partisan idea, that's just a Republican idea. Well, let's take a look at what some of the States do.

In my home State of Colorado, there's a process called the Rule Review Act, the Rule Review bill. This bill comes up every single year in the State legislature, and it's a chance for the State legislature to do exactly that, to review the rules that pass out of the executive branch agencies. Every year, the State legislature gives a thumbs up or a thumbs down to those regulations, because in Colorado we understand how important it is to make sure that government's not getting in the way, how important it is to make sure that we actually have responsible rules that move the ball down the field instead of creating penalties every time you turn around.

And so the Rules Review bill taken to the United States Congress becomes the REINS Act. And the REINS Act is a good way for us to check and provide that balance with the executive branch to make sure that we're not putting too much of a burden on our businesses.

Mrs. ROBY. Right. Let's just go back in time for a minute and talk about some of these other repeals.

We have the Boiler MACT provisions, the Cement MACT, net neutrality, the regulating farm jobs. We can go down the list one by one by one and talk about the efforts that we have taken here in the House. With the strength of the numbers here, some of these have been with bipartisan support that we've passed these measures. And yet again and again and again, it's just time after time after time it's sitting in the Senate without any action.

All you have to do is go look at the budget that the House has passed the past 2 years that Chairman RYAN put forth out of committee and came to the full floor. You mentioned the President's budget where there were zero votes—zero votes. We talk about offering solutions to the American people to look that small business owner in the eye and say, "Yes, I am working for you; yes, I have a solution for you; yes, I have a way to get out of your way," which is what we've done, and our budget outlines very, very specifically what these solutions are.

Our spending is out of control, which in turn, like you already mentioned, just takes it a whole other step that this Congress is not doing their job, and therefore the jobs are not being created by the private sector, period. It all comes down to that.

Mr. GARDNER. And I know you serve on the Agriculture Committee

here in the House of Representatives, and I'm sure that you're hearing from some of your interests in agriculture about uncertainty.

Mrs. ROBY. Absolutely.

Mr. GARDNER. And one of the things that I've heard over the past several months—and, in fact, I held a series of farm bill roundtables earlier this spring, where one of the things we heard about so much, and this is part of the fiscal cliff that we're facing, is the death tax, the death tax that this Nation faces going back into the lower exclusion rates as of January 1.

Let me give you an example. I'm sure you've heard this time and again from the people that you represent.

One of the farm roundtables that we held, a young man from Eaton, Colorado, stood up and said: With the estate tax coming back in at the end of this year, beginning of next year, we'll be forced to pay for our farm for a third time, and we simply can't afford it.

This is a young man who wants to go on into life in agriculture. This is somebody who wants to be the next generation standing up to grow our food and fiber that this Nation depends on. But yet you've got a government policy that's going to say: We know you've invested, we know you've grown your business, you've made investments into the land that you need to make your operation successful, but because somebody died, we're going to tax them. And that's part of the fiscal cliff that this country faces at the end of this year.

There are farmers and ranchers around the State of Colorado, around this country, who are not trying to figure out how they're going to pass on their operation to the next generation, pass on their operation to the next generation because of a government policy that says: You know what? You've been too successful, and we're artificially going to place this barrier so that it's going to hurt you.

It's not just farmers and ranchers that it affects.

Mrs. ROBY. It's all businesses.

Mr. GARDNER. It's all businesses. That's right.

Mrs. ROBY. But the problem with our farming communities is that they are, in a lot of instances, they own a lot of land. So they have wealth when it comes to land ownership, but they may not have the cash. And so when the government comes along to tax the farm upon the death of a parent that wants to pass it down, they've got to sell the farm to pay the tax, and that's where our farmers lose out every time.

And there are numerous other businesses throughout this country where they may be cash poor. They may have some assets but they may be cash poor, and so they end up having to sell it off in order to pay the government for that company's success.

Mr. GARDNER. And you mentioned it, too. It's not just about cash in the bank. It's not just about how much

money you have. It's about the assets that you have. And so your example where you may be cash poor but still hit this line, I think, is compelling to not only the farmers and ranchers, but you're right, to small businesses around the country who may own a restaurant, who may be trying to expand a sand and gravel operation, but they're going to be hit by this estate tax, which means they've got to sell, break it up, and not be able to pass it on.

Mrs. ROBY. You just add our lack of tax reform, which we so desperately need, and I know that we are committed to that here in the House majority. We do have a plan that we've set out as it relates to those reforms. We know that American businesses are faced with an unbelievably complicated and cumbersome Tax Code, combined, over 30 percent on businesses, not to mention the problems with the estate taxes. It makes the U.S. the second highest corporate tax rate among developed nations in the world. So the U.S. Federal rate is 35 percent. It's nearly 10 percentage points higher than our other competitors. That, on top of all of the other issues that we've highlighted.

I mentioned the manufacturing jobs. I don't know about you, but I get this question all the time: Where have all the manufacturing jobs gone? People always highlight that we just chase these jobs offshore. And it's because we have created this environment in which business owners don't have a choice. If they're going to turn a profit, they have to do what is the benefit for their family to make that hard-earned dollar.

I remember hearing a colleague give an example. He was sitting on an airplane next to a guy that made things. He made things, he produced a product, and he wanted to make them in the United States of America. But when it came down to it, the bottom line—he thought he was going to open his plant right here, but when it came down to it, they hadn't taken into account the corporate tax rate and the difference between that and the next country where they could manufacture his product.

□ 2030

That sealed the deal. They are not manufacturing in the United States because of the environment in which we have.

Mr. GARDNER. So you have got a government policy that actually is an impediment to job creation here. A company trying to bring jobs back in, but because of the cost of doing business here is so much higher than elsewhere, they had that unfair choice of how are they going to make things work, how are they going to be successful.

Mrs. ROBY. I was going to say in June for the first time in 44 months, small businesses cited taxes, taxes above poor sales as the single most im-

portant problem that they are facing today. Taxes.

Mr. GARDNER. We talked about solutions when it comes to regulations. We've talked about the REINS Act. But here again with taxes, we have come up with solutions. We have voted to make sure that the estate tax, the death tax, doesn't come back in at those lower exclusion numbers breaking small businesses around the country. We've made sure that we avoid the massive tax increases that loom, once again, at the end of this year on families, middle class families. Thousands of dollars for middle class families around this country increase in taxes if nothing is done, and that's why the House of Representatives has passed a measure to make sure that those taxes don't increase, to make sure that we are making it easier for people to keep more of their own money so they can invest it in their families, so they can invest it into job creation, in their businesses.

If this Congress adopts the President's plan, if this Congress does nothing, hundreds of thousands of small businesses around this country are going to see tax increases like we've never seen before. Tax increases will make it more difficult for them to make ends meet. And that's why the House has acted to make sure that we are dealing with the fiscal cliff to make sure that we are not making it more difficult in this country to succeed.

Mrs. ROBY. Absolutely. Again, by virtue of a comparison, with the President's proposed tax hike, deficits would still total 6.6 trillion over the next 10 years according to his own budget. But by comparison, our budget, the House Republican budget, would reduce deficits compared to his by 3.3 trillion while lowering taxes on small businesses and spurring economic growth. That's the difference.

Mr. GARDNER. Well, and I think that's the key, actually, as you mentioned, spurring economic growth. And we can talk about what happens to our economy with this policy or this legislation. But the bottom line is we've got to address that debt and deficit and only economic growth, long-term economic growth, is going to help us address our debt and deficit situation, but a high debt and deficit make it impossible for long-term economic growth.

So you have kind of got a circular problem here that for whatever reason the United States Senate, the President, hasn't taken seriously.

And just talk a little bit about the summer of recovery that was supposedly going to occur a couple of years ago after a trillion dollars was spent on the stimulus, money that went to companies like Solyndra that went bankrupt and the United States taxpayers are going to be out over half a billion dollars because they'll never get repaid.

You've got the stimulus bill that was supposed to lead to the summer of recovery, and yet here we are with 43 straight months of unemployment at or above 8 percent. Now, the American people know that even that number is not right because they know that maybe they have got a job that is only part time or maybe they are working full time but certainly not at the level that they know is to their full potential. It certainly makes it more difficult for them to meet the needs of their families. So that 8.3 percent number doesn't even count the people who've given up looking for work, doesn't even count the number of people who are underemployed.

So, the fiscal cliff, you've got millions and millions of Americans out there knowing what this Congress refuses to do, and that is if Congress will act to adopt these jobs bills that we've passed over to the Senate, if Congress will adopt the House budget that actually puts this country on a road and path to growing the economy, to preserving and protecting the promises that we have made to future generations, that number is going to come back down. It's not going to be 8.3, 8.1 percent. It's going to be lower. Millions of people will be back at work because of the bills and legislation that this body has passed, most with bipartisan support.

Mrs. ROBY. You know, to use the President's words again, because these are direct quotes, so let's look at a couple of things.

Last April, President Obama said, "We have to live within our means, we have to reduce our deficit, and we have to get back on a path that will allow us to pay down our debt." That was the President just last April.

But also I want to make sure that there is no misunderstanding. This is the President's own words in February of 2009: "I am pledging to cut the deficit by half by the end of my first term in office." And I know we are kind of circling back to how we began this hour tonight, but since the President has taken office, our national debt has increased by \$5.3 trillion.

Mr. GARDNER. And 5.3 trillion, now, I think there's a statistic out there that shows that that's more money than the amounts of money spent by or the deficits between George Washington and Bill Clinton combined—or maybe it's George H.W. Bush. The fact is, we've never seen a period in our Nation's history where unemployment has been matched by a failure to recognize the needs of the American people, where debts are allowed to skyrocket, where you can say on TV one thing, pledge to the American people that you will cut the deficit in half, and then the next thing you know it's up by \$5 trillion.

Maybe the question isn't are you better off today than you were 4 years ago, but maybe the question ought to be are you better off today than you were \$5.3 trillion ago?

Mrs. ROBY. Well, your son can attest to that because he's 10 months old and already owes, his share is, what, \$51,000 at 10 months old. You know, we both have young children and this is why we are here. We're here for them because we want this country to be as great for your children and mine and all America's children and grandchildren and generations to come. And quite frankly, it is horrendous that we would leave this situation on their backs.

We keep hearing about balancing the budget on the backs of the middle class. How about spending massive amounts of taxpayer dollars on the backs of my children and my children's children. This is where the future of this country is dependent, and if we don't get serious about this now, why wait? Why are we waiting until November? Why is the leadership in the Senate waiting until after the election to take on problems that are serious now?

As you said before, the clock keeps ticking up. The debt keeps accumulating between now and November. It's not like the 16 trillion is just some arbitrary number. I mean, it's a huge number, but it doesn't stand still. It's going to continue to increase.

As I explained when I am in town halls about the debt ceiling, the debt ceiling is like calling your credit card company and saying to your credit card company, "I need you to increase my credit limit because I don't have any cash to pay you the interest on what I already owe, on the debt I already owe." That's where we are. And that's on the back of Margaret and George and your children and all of those other children and grandchildren of Americans. As you can tell, as a mom it makes me upset, and that's why we're here.

Republicans in the House majority have taken action on a number of things that have already been mentioned tonight: we've repealed the government takeover of health care. Ride down the road in any district in this country and talk to a small business owner about that, and you will find out very quickly that they're either going to be close to being out of business or they're going to go out of business completely if this law is fully enacted.

□ 2040

We have stopped massive tax increases here in this House that one independent analysis said could destroy more than 700,000 jobs—you highlighted that earlier. We have replaced these indiscriminate spending cuts from sequestration with commonsense solutions by calling on, again, our friends in the Senate whose budget reconciliation—it's hard to do that if you don't have a budget—but through budget reconciliation, through commonsense cuts instead of just across the board, and rein in this wasteful government spending. And with the 30-plus bills that you and I have highlighted some portion thereof in this discussion tonight that are sitting collecting dust

in the Senate, all 30 of these jobs are job-creating, energy-producing bills that are sitting in the Senate collecting dust.

Mr. GARDNER. You talk about those bills, the regulations that we've passed. You talk about the things that we have done to avoid the fiscal cliff, the things that we have done to avoid sequestration. There's a word that's been missing that we haven't used tonight: leadership. It takes leadership to address these issues. That's what we have provided through so many of these bills that we have talked about—leadership to make sure that hundreds of thousands of small businesses don't have their taxes increased; leadership to make sure that farmers and ranchers can continue their operations without worrying about a death tax that will prevent them from passing on their land to the next generation; leadership to make sure that the sequestration is carried forward. Yes, we reduce spending, but we do so in a more responsible fashion, a way to make sure that we don't jeopardize the ability of our men and women in uniform to defend our country and to protect themselves.

I want to talk a little bit about the issue of sequestration because that's something that we haven't met. And the issue of leadership, once again, crops up. It just keeps coming forward where the House has led and we hear crickets from the other side of town.

The American people, I don't know if they were following what happened with the White House just this past Friday. Last week, the White House announced that it will miss the legal deadline for delivering a report to Congress on the spending cuts from sequestration that will take effect in January. Now, we hear a lot of complaints about, well, the Congress hasn't done this and the Congress hasn't done that, but here's a law that says you've got a deadline to present your ideas for leadership to the American people. And I guess it must have been too tough because they're not going to comply with it—they didn't comply with it.

Mrs. ROBY. Well, and you will see, again, further action from leadership here in the House on that, calling on the President to outline exactly what this is going to look like. And like you said, he hasn't. It's just one more on the list of uncertainties for job creators.

I see our colleague and our friend, the gentleman from Kansas, has joined us. Certainly feel free to jump in here.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. I appreciate the opportunity. Just like my colleagues, I've spent a little time in the real world. Some call it a recess; for many of us it was time to go back home. I admit in this job, I'll admit that I would much rather not be here and be at home. But what I heard at home is many of the same things that my colleagues are saying tonight: Washington, can you get your act together? In this Chamber, we passed many, many things that would hopefully improve the economy, but one thing that

seems to be on the mind of my colleagues is pretty clear.

Times have changed. I know some of my colleagues have been here a while, and they think that perhaps in the White House it's the same old, same old. But when we hit the \$16 trillion mark for debt, that raised another red flag about what's going on in Washington.

I am a Republican. My colleagues tonight here are Republicans as well. We're not going to say it's a Democrat problem; we're not going to say it's a Republican problem. At the end of the day it is a Washington problem: it's the fact that we can't get our act together here in Washington. We can vote in here to free up job creators. We can vote in here to roll back regulations. But at the end of the day, we have \$16 trillion of debt.

Like my colleagues, I have young children. I have four young kids. Each one of them, they've done nothing wrong yet—they do a few things wrong, I catch them every day at that—but through no fault of their own, they've got \$15,000 they're going to owe on some spending that's already happened before my freshman colleagues and I arrived at this place—\$15,000, and it is growing every day.

Under this President, trillion-dollar deficits have become the new norm. The last year of the previous administration, \$452 billion of deficits in 1 year, I think the President, then Senator, was bemoaning the fact of what a dastardly amount that was, and here we have doubled and tripled that amount, and each year for the last 4 years added over \$5 trillion of debt. You know, that adds up.

My constituents always keep saying, well, I can't quite understand what's a million, a billion, a trillion. It's pretty hard to explain to them—they don't understand a billion. But for the last 3½ years, this President, this town—Washington—has added \$3.5 billion of borrowing every single day, 3½ years for \$3.5 billion. That's unsustainable, and they want us to solve this problem.

But again, when folks like us gathered here see and hear the concerns of Americans that we have a spending problem—it's not a revenue problem. If it was a revenue problem, we simply would let off the gas pedal a little bit on regulations and we would take care of that. Everybody knows that. Every job creator comes to me and says, Tim, I'd like to invest more. I was visiting with a businessman who owns a packaging company—American Packaging in Hutchinson, Kansas. He said, TIM, I employ 43 employees—and by the way, he did build it—I employ 43 folks. When my father-in-law bought this business in 1987, there were five people employed here. And you know what, TIM, here's what I'd like to do: I'd like to hire two more people. Here in Washington, two more people doesn't add up to anything, but for two families in Hutchinson, Kansas, it would mean the difference between paying college tui-

tion for their kids, whether or not they are able to update their used car, or whether they would be able to make the mortgage or down payment on their house, or whether they might even go on a vacation. That's the difference here.

Today, we have 23 million Americans—just like the two in Hutchinson—that don't have a job or are looking for more work. And Tony at American Packaging says this, he says: Just give me some certainty. Tell me what the rules are going to be, whether it's the tax uncertainty that happens at the end of the year—I'm sure it's been described here. If nothing changes, if Washington doesn't get its act together, if the President doesn't step up to the plate and help us, we're going to have the single largest tax increase in American history—and I dare say in the world's history—happen at the end of the year if we don't get help from the administration, if the Senate Democrats are not willing to provide certainty on taxes.

In addition, we have the regulatory uncertainty that's been discussed. We'll have the health care uncertainty. The provisions of ObamaCare are rolling in. Small businesses like Tony's do not know, what do we have to cover? I don't want to hire two more people because I might be fined if I can't provide for them. It's that type of uncertainty that says, you know what? I can invest, I'd like to make some money—and the businesses are there not just to create jobs; they're actually there to make a profit for the owners and to perform a service for the public. They're not here to work for Washington. But that's actually what does happen if you let the free market and free enterprise system work.

I had a video where Tony spoke. And I must say what shamed me the most was the response from our local newspaper—that was actually, I believe, fronting for this administration. Because Tony talked about the fact that he and his father-in-law built this business, and the newspaper said: No, you didn't build that business; the Government played a key role in making that happen. You know, the government wasn't there with his father-in-law when he hired employee six, employee seven, employee eight. They weren't there. They didn't take the risk. Now we have this whole town wants to take credit, including this President, every time someone hires a new person. But they don't take credit or they don't take fault for the fact that millions of Americans have quit looking for work in the Obama economy.

And it won't be perfect under any President. It never is. Washington can't dictate how an economy ebbs and flows. What I trust in, though, is the American people and American businessmen like Tony that say, hey, I would like to invest, Tim; just give me the certainty to do so and hire two more folks. It doesn't mean anything, again, in Washington, but it means

something in the real world. So I appreciate my colleagues being here.

One of the things that the newspaper did mention—actually, it was a taxpayer-funded college professor—he said, you know, I just want to let you know that the free enterprise system is a charade. Of course, I guess if you work for a public university free enterprise might be a charade. But this is the type of thought that invades many in the White House. It certainly invades where this gentleman teaches. But the fact is free enterprise is not a charade. What it is about is individuals taking a risk, making decisions free from me, free from you, Cory, free from Martha's demands, free to make and take those risks. That's how the economy will continue to grow. That's how we will build the best economy in the world. And that's the economy that's being threatened with \$16 trillion in debt.

Again, this is not our problem, it's not their problem; it's America's problem to solve this. I think we're making progress in the House, and we're going to continue to move forward.

So that's a little bit of what I've heard in my district about their concerns about where we're going to head and where we need to head. I have had town hall after town hall—about 140 town halls. And usually at every town hall somebody comes up to me and says, Tim, I'm doing pretty well—and my district actually is doing fairly well, despite a massive drought which impacts Colorado as well.

□ 2050

And we could talk about water all night, but we probably better not. We're friends right now—just kidding.

But they come up to me and say, TIM, you know, I think I'm going to do fine. I'm ready for retirement. A guy, 62, about, told me this the last time, but I'm worried about what kind of America I hand on to my children and grandchildren. And this current state of affairs, this \$16 trillion, he says, I'm ready to do what it takes. I'm ready to keep working a little bit longer, do a little more, make a little more sacrifices, a little more investments, because I want a better country than I was given, because my parents gave me a better country than they had and my grandparents did the same.

That's the type of promise. That's why I get optimistic. That's why I like to go home, because that's what you guys hear at home as well as I do. They're optimistic. They're hopeful about the future, despite what's going on here in Washington, D.C.

Mr. GARDNER. And the gentleman from Kansas and I share a common, we share the border, eastern Colorado, western Kansas. And so many of the challenges that my farmers are facing your farmers are facing. And you're right, we won't get into water tonight. We'll save that for another day, another time. But the fact is we could both use more of it. And the way we

can use more of it is we store more water. Yet we have policies that are keeping us from storing more water, adding yet to the uncertainty of our farmers and ranchers who desperately need it.

And so whether it's the tax increases that we see at the end of this year, if nothing is done, the estate tax, income tax rates, capital gains rates, and you mentioned that this isn't just a big tax increase. This isn't just a large one for the United States. This is the largest we've ever seen, not only in the United States, but around the globe.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Fifty-five percent death tax. I mean, that's the one that hits the heart of my small businessmen and -women. And they're trying to hand on their business to their children or their grandchildren or someone else they choose, and government's going to come in and grab up to 55 percent of that estate, and that impacts farmers and ranchers in particular, and many other small businesses.

The very heart of economic recoveries in this country have always been driven by small business. It isn't the folks that hire a thousand people at a time. It's the ones that take—add one person, or take a part-time person to full time. And that's what I'm hearing at home, and they're frustrated. But they're ready to roll up their sleeves and go to work, and they expect Congress and Washington to do the same.

Mr. GARDNER. You mentioned optimism for the country, and I carry the same optimism, too, because the people that we work for believe that this continues to be the greatest Nation on the face of this Earth. If we have Congress, if we have Washington that's actually getting its job done, that will pass the regulations to make it easier to do business—excuse me, to repeal the regulations in this country to make it easier to do business, to make sure that we don't increase taxes to hurt their small businesses, better days are still ahead of us.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Oh, tremendous days are ahead of us. They say, hey, just stop doing a little of what you're doing. I'll even admit it. Some of them even say, you know what, what's there right now, as much as I don't like it, if you could just keep it the same. Two years. Give us a breather. Give us a moratorium. We'd like to roll them back, but give us a moratorium, some certainty on taxes, on regulations, on health care, and, TIM, we'll take care of your revenue problems. We'll do it for you.

Mrs. ROBY. The only thing that we all can agree on is that the only thing that is certain is that uncertainty; and to hear the consistency in all of our experiences back home, it's astounding to me why we cannot—why the President and the leadership in the Senate cannot see this, because if they're really listening to the same Americans that you and I are listening to, they would hear the same message that we've brought to the floor tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the choice for the President and the Senate is very, very clear. It's either political paralysis that leads to certain economic catastrophe, or bipartisan leadership that puts us on a path towards prosperity.

And I would just ask that they keep in mind a few people. Remember who this economy has hit the hardest. You've heard stories tonight in this hour of those business owners that have said just that.

Remember the moms at the grocery store that are trying to put food on the table for their family or gas in the car to get to their one or maybe two jobs.

Remember the young people, the recent graduates that we've talked about that can't find a job; and half of them in the class of 2012 are unemployed and they are drowning in debt.

All of these groups, all of these groups, they deserve leadership out of Washington, not lip service.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on August 7, 2012, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 4240. To reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1402. To authorize the Architect of the Capitol to establish battery recharging stations for privately owned vehicles in parking areas under the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives at no net cost to the Federal Government.

H.R. 3670. To require the Transportation Security Administration to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, September 11, 2012, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

7439. A letter from the Branch Chief, Planning and Regulatory Affairs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Disqualified Recipient Reporting and Computer Matching Require-

ments received August 28, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7440. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — *Bacillus thuringiensis* eCry3.1Ab Protein in Corn; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0109; FRL-9357-4] received August 7, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7441. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Flutriafol; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0875; FRL-9348-8] received August 7, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7442. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Paraquat Dichloride; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0637; FRL-9357-1] received August 7, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7443. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Residues of Didecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0139; FRL-9356-6] received August 7, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7444. A letter from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Farm Credit Administration Board Meetings; Organization; Standards of Conduct and Referral of Suspected or Known Criminal Violations; Definitions; Disclosure to Shareholders; Accounting and Reporting Requirements; Rules of Practice and Procedure; Practice Before the Farm Credit Administration; and Disclosure to Investors in System-wide and Consolidated Bank Debt Obligations of the Farm Credit System; Unincorporated Business Entities (RIN: 3052-AC65) received August 28, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7445. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act, Air Force Case Number 10-04; to the Committee on Appropriations.

7446. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the activities of the Defense Industrial Base Capabilities Fund during FY 2011, pursuant to Public Law 108-136, section 814(f)(2) (117 Stat. 1545); to the Committee on Armed Services.

7447. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Dirk J. Debbink, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7448. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Admiral John C. Harvey, Jr., United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7449. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Frank A. Panter Jr., United States Marine Corps, and his advancement to the retired list in the grade of lieutenant general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7450. A letter from the Principal Deputy, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of five officers to wear the authorized