citizens of Greater Des Moines, the State of Iowa, and United States of America.

First and foremost, thank you for the 20 years of service to our country as a member of the United States Army. And, thank you for your excellent work in representing Central Iowa in the United States House of Representatives over the many years. You and your dedicated staff have been a tremendous asset to our community.

Your leadership and efforts in securing federal funding for transportation projects, quality of life priorities, and other economic development initiatives have played a critical role in the rapid growth and prosperity of the Greater Des Moines Region. We cannot thank you enough for being such an important partner in these efforts.

And thank you for helping accommodate our group and taking the time to address our participants during our annual visits to Washington, D.C. We appreciate the great work in helping set up meetings, coordinating schedules, lining up speakers, and advising and meeting with trip participants.

Again, thank you for your efforts on behalf of the Greater Des Moines Partnership in our nation's capital. We truly appreciate your leadership and all the work you have done on issues important to Central Iowa's business community. We hope for, and wish you, the best in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

—Jay Byers, Chief Executive Officer of Greater Des Moines Partnership

—Eugene Meyer, President of Greater Des Moines Partnership

We residents of your hometown—Lamoni, Decatur County, Iowa—are privileged to join in paying tribute to you for your years of service to our community, our state, and our country. We can't list all of your achievements, but can mention a few:

Active sports player in High School
Farmer
Pilot in the skies of Vietnam
Senate President—Iowa Legislature
Father and Grandfather
President of Farmers' Coop
Member of U. S. House of Representatives
Problem solver for people immersed in ''Red Tape''
Pastor of Lamoni Community of Christ
Devoted Husband

Thank you for your many years of selfless service.

—Lamoni Lions Club and the Town of Lamoni

Leonard Boswell has worked for his country, his state, and his community throughout a lifetime of public service. Lieutenant Colonel Boswell had a distinguished 20-year career in the United States Army. His service in the Iowa Senate, as President of that body from 1993 to 1996, was where he first took the lessons he brought from his military life, and brought them to bear in the political arena. Those lessons included focus on the mission at hand, and get the job done. Trust your team, and let them know they can trust you. And perhaps most importantly, leave no comrade behind. In 1997, Leonard brought those values to work for Iowans, and their neighbors across the country, in the United States House of Representatives. His work on transportation issues has changed the face of Iowa. But it has been his advocacy for his fellow veterans and their families, that has changed the heart of Iowa.

We are grateful to his wife, Dody, and his family, for sharing him with us these many years. We are proud of the work he has done, and we welcome him home with open arms.

—Sue Dvorsky, Chair of the Iowa Democratic Party

CONGRESSMAN BOSWELL: All Iowans stop from what they are doing today to say thank you to Representative Leonard Boswell who has represented us well during his tenure as U.S. House Representative. We thank him for his leadership and courage dealing with issues of importance to the people of Iowa.

—Mary L. Madison

LEONARD: It is with gratitude that we thank you for being our Congressional Representative in the 90's and good friend in support of the issues that matter in middle Iowa. You always treated us with respect and desire to make things better for Iowans.

Thank you for your support of the Affordable Care Act. And we also thank you for always meeting with our delegation of Orthopedic Surgeons when we came to visit you each spring when Bob was on the Academy's Board of Councilors. We also appreciate your strong support for Israel, and your personal stories of facing the tragedies after the Holocaust. And thank you for serving in the US Army for many years. And also thank you for your support for women's reproductive rights and health care issues. I knew that you would always listen to us at Planned Parenthood and would do as much as you could to support us in Congress. And that was not an easy task these past few years.

All the best to you and Dody. We know that you will always be there for a good chat on issues and will always stand up for Iowans no matter what!!

—Debbie and Bob Gitchell, Ames

CONGRESSMAN BOSWELL: Your campaign this fall was full of energy, which is representative of your years of support. It is a privilege to honor your many years of serving Iowans both locally and in Washington, DC.

As advocates for working on behalf of vulnerable Iowans, we have found you to be loyal to these issues. I am appreciative of your willingness to listen to concerns from constituents and advocacy groups. I was especially delighted when you provided your support and signed on to the Social Work Reinvestment Act upon listening to our issues.

You have dedicated your time to working on behalf of Iowans and assuring policies were in place to support your constituents. Thank you Congressman Boswell for your years of service!

—Kelli Soyer, National Association of Social Workers, Iowa Chapter

REMEMBERING AN AMERICAN HERO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) is recognized for 19 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOSAR. Today, I'm here to remember the sacrifice of an American hero and the bravery of those who served with him.

Two years ago this Saturday, our Nation lost one of our own who was serving to protect our country by securing the Arizona-Mexico border. On December 14, Border Agents Brian Terry, William Castano, Gabriel Fragoza, and Timothy Keller began patrolling an area west of the town of Rio Rico, Arizona, tasked with interdicting violent criminals sneaking into the United States.

At 11 p.m. on the following day, December 15, the team was alerted to five suspects in their interdiction zone. After identifying themselves, they were fired upon and Agent Terry was struck and killed. The men who fought beside him that night were heroic in their efforts to provide aid and to protect Agent Brian Terry.

After the dust settled, that horrific night's details were brought to light about our government's role in supplying weapons found at the scene of the crime. Through Operation Fast and Furious—a fundamentally flawed gunrunning operation ran by the U.S. Department of Justice—weapons like those found at the scene nearly 2 years ago were allowed to be purchased by middlemen and passed along to some of the most dangerous cartels in Mexico without proper law enforcement interdiction and justice.

Subsequently, numerous hearings have been held to demand answers as to how this program came to be, who authorized it, and who knew about it. My goals are simple: justice and accountability, not just for Brian Terry, who lost his life, and the brave men serving him that night, but also justice for the hundreds of Mexicans who also lost their lives from the weapons from the Fast and Furious scheme.

As I close, please join me in a moment of silence for those lives who have been lost and the loved ones that they leave behind.

For my part, I will continue to demand answers from the Department of Justice. I will continue to stress the need for bipartisan support for getting those answers. I look to leadership not to relent. I also look to the Hispanic Caucus to break their silence and to take up this issue affecting everyone in Mexico.

Finally, I will not rest until we are certain that justice is served and that this atrocity can never happen again.

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

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be here representing the Progressive Caucus and talking about our fiscal situation now that I think a lot of people out there are worrying about, confused about, don't know how it's really going to affect them, wondering what the heck we're doing. Sometimes Members of Congress who aren't part of the negotiations are wondering what's going on too. But what I want to talk about today are the things that are at stake for ordinary people in our country, the things that are on people's minds as we deal with these economic issues that face our country.

I am Congresswoman JANICE SCHAKOWSKY, and I represent a district, a

very diverse district, in Illinois, diverse in every way—economically, certainly by race and ethnicity—and I think in many ways a microcosm of the country. I know that we're getting a lot of calls from our constituents. The calls that I'm getting were reaffirmed by a poll that I saw on Tuesday in our National Journal Daily on page six that says: ''Poll: Entitlement cuts feared most in cliff talks.'' It goes like this:

As President Obama and congressional leaders race to avert the fiscal cliff, Americans remain concerned that whatever budget deal they strike will cut too much from Medicare and Social Security, according to the poll. More of the Americans surveyed are worried about such cutbacks than seeing their tax bills rise, the latest United Technologies/National Journal Connection poll has found.

I was looking at who was involved in the poll. In total, 35 percent of Americans are worried it will cut too much from government programs like Medicare and Social Security; 27 percent—that's eight points less—that it will raise taxes on people like you; 15 percent, it won't meet its target for reducing the Federal deficit and debt; 13 percent, it will allow for too much Federal spending. Only 13 percent were worried it will allow for too much Federal spending in the next 2 years.

But when I looked at, for example, women, 40 percent of women are most worried about those cuts in Social Security and Medicare and other government programs. Forty-six percent of people whose income is $30,000 or less, that's what they're really, really worried about; that's the thing they're worried about most.

So most Americans, that is their top concern—not really so much that their taxes are going to go up and not really so much about the deficit. They're worried about the cuts in the programs that mean so much to their lives.

So that's really what I wanted to talk about today. If any Members are listening in their offices and they want to come down and talk about the fiscal cliff, as it's called—many of us don't see it as a cliff, nor as a slope, that we actually have time to set the problem straight. That's what most economists are saying, that if we go a few weeks into January, it's not the worst thing so that Americans shouldn't panic about this. But if you want to come down and talk about that, I am really happy to do that.

I wanted to welcome one of my colleagues, HANK JOHNSON, here to the floor today to add his thoughts. I know he had another something he wanted to talk about this afternoon, and I welcome you. Thanks for coming down, Congressman JOHNSON.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Always my pleasure, Representative SCHAKOWSKY, to be with you. You are such a staunch advocate for the middle class, the working poor, the poor. You are a champion for the people, so I'm happy to be here with you and happy to share some time with you.

But first I wanted to express the fact that last night I came in to do a Special Order on the situation happening in Michigan where a surprise attack, a sneak attack, by the right-wingers resulted in the passage of legislation which I won't refer to as right-to-work legislation, it's more appropriately named crush-the-union legislation. I came up last night to the floor to speak on that issue.

□ 1330

As I am prone to do, I use a lot of analogies, and so last night I used an analogy that some find offensive. And I certainly was not meaning to be offensive or use a derogatory term. Everybody knows what the N word is. The N word, Mr. Speaker, is used to describe a group of people. And the N word used to be fashionable, or it used to be socially acceptable to use the N word. But, now, we don't say the N word. We refer to that word as ''the N word.''

I had never heard of the M word, Representative SCHAKOWSKY. The M word is a word also that describes a group of people. It, at one time, had been commonly used as a descriptive term. It was, at one time, socially acceptable. But to my discovery, just within the last 12 hours or so, I have found that the use of the M word is no longer socially acceptable.

Now, the M word refers to a group of people, the little people. But when we say ''little people'' I'm not talking about the Leona Helmsley little people. I'm not talking about the 47 percent. I'm not talking about the takers instead of the makers, as some would describe them. I'm not talking about the middle class, working people, poor people, working poor people. That's not what is meant by the ''little people'' term. It really refers to a medical condition. ''Dwarfism'' is the name of that medical condition. And sometimes I guess one can even say ''abnormally small people.'' I like that term better than ''dwarfism.''

So, I wanted to say to all of those who may have been offended by my use of the ''M word,'' I want you to know that it was out of ignorance and not spite or hatred that I used that term. And please know that I will never use that term again. I will never use that term again.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I think, actually, you have done a service to make people understand that there are those who are deeply offended by it and that we should all learn what to say so as not to offend people.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. That's correct. It is a learning moment for me and perhaps many others out there.

But I'll tell you, if you want to find out more about little people or abnormally small people or unusually small people, there is a Web site, there is a group actually called the Little People of America, and their Web site is at lpaonline.org. I went to that Web site this morning and looked through it, and I have been awakened to the sensitivities involved. And so anyone who I offended has my deepest apology.

But, the analogy that I used, even though it used the wrong wording, was a great analogy in my personal opinion. And it is understood that when you put a big fish, a predatory fish, into a bowl with a small fish, that small fish has to learn how to get along with that big fish or else they'll get eaten.

That's what the organization known as ALEC is all about, because it puts the legislators, individual legislators, in a group setting with the corporations, the big fish. And those legislators who are members of ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, they get together, and they do the work of the corporate big fish who are members of that organization.

So last night, that's what we were talking about, and I'm going to yield back to Representative SCHAKOWSKY to resume this discussion, and I will participate as I can.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you very much. I appreciate both—you know, sometimes as legislators we like to think we're always right, and sometimes we make mistakes, inadvertent mistakes. And coming to the floor to actually clear the air I think is really commendable, and I appreciate that.

And also, your talk about the decisions that were made in Wisconsin—you know, government is to serve the people, the best interests of the American people. And right now, we're trying to figure out how are we going to, in a fair way, ask Americans to be able to fund the programs that we need, to fund the services that we need as a country, to make sure that our roads are there and drivable, to fund our military so that we can be safe and strong, to help States to fund their law enforcement, et cetera, all those things that are important to Americans, and as I mentioned earlier, including things like Medicare and make Medicaid.

Budgets aren't just a bunch of numbers on a piece of paper, and government policies aren't just documents. But, in many ways these are moral statements about who we are as a country. I think we have to ask, are we really a poorer country today than we were 70 years ago when Social Security went into effect, when Social Security went into effect to say that we're not going to let older people end up in the poorhouse or out on the street, that we're going to have an insurance policy that they pay into, that everyone pays into during your working life, so that we can ensure that when people reach the age of 62, 65, 67, that they're going to be able to retire with some level of dignity?

At the time that Social Security was passed 70 years ago, there was a three-legged stool. One was this new program, Social Security, to provide retirement benefits that you paid for; two, private pensions, that was kind of

the common normal then. Many of those private pensions were won because workers were able to collectively bargain and get pensions for their family. The third were savings, savings for people.

So between all of that, we thought we'd be able to see a country now where the elderly were lifted out of poverty and they had some semblance of security.

Well, are we really poorer today than when we made that decision that we're not going to let old people end up in the poorhouse? That was a decision on how to fund a program that has never once missed a monthly check ever. In the 70 years plus, never ever has Social Security missed a monthly check. So it's been a program that works really, really well.

□ 1340

And I just want to point out that Social Security helps middle class families, not just older people. I have two grandchildren who get a Social Security benefit. Why? Because, tragically, their mother died. So it is an insurance policy for all families.

The other great thing about Social Security is that unlike many pension programs, there's actually a cost-of-living adjustment. You don't get it every year, as seniors know. There really hasn't been an increase in the economy so much in certain years, but it has been a success, a treasure to our country.

Some people want to put Social Security on the table as part of this discussion to reduce the deficit that we face.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Social Security is one of the hallmarks of American civilization. It civilizes us where we can have a mechanism where we all come together to contribute our money into a pool as we work; and when we retire, we have a way of avoiding the poorhouse; we have a way of living out our lives with dignity and with comfort. You've paid your dues, you deserve to live out your retirement in a comfortable way. You put the money in, and you will get the money out. And as you say, we've never missed a payment and never will.

It being a hallmark of our civilization, it is something that many other countries have yet to put in place for their people. They have yet to see the wisdom, as our past leaders have seen, that you lose and your society weakens in accordance with how you treat your elderly and how you treat your children and how you treat the disabled. They also are able to get Social Security benefits. So it helps people. It's our social safety net. This is a collective. It's a mechanism whereby the whole supports each other, the weakest of these, if you will.

Social Security is not broke, nor is the Federal Government. The Federal Government is not broke. It has had to borrow money. And when we say borrow money, we really mean we offer Treasurys out to the public to purchase, and we pay interest on those instruments. When an investor feels good about how solid the American system is, they want to put money into it. They want to put money into it because they know that this is the safest place to invest money. They know that they'll be able to get their money out when they want to take it out. They know that they will get their money back with the interest that has been promised to them.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Let me just say that right now we're paying very low interest because people do have confidence in our American economy and in those Treasury notes and it is a good, safe, and solid investment.

And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. People have confidence in America. It's because of our civilization, and it's because of the forward thinking of our past leaders. It is our responsibility to continue that sense of responsibility to the people—not to the leaders, not to the chosen few, but to the people. We the people established this government, and it's ironic that people have now been turned against government as an institution. They believe that government is the problem. They've been led to believe that government is the problem. Sometimes government does have problems or causes problems; but I can tell you that in the history of this country, the American Government has been phenomenal. That is why we're the greatest country in the world. That is why we are the freest country in the world and we are the most prosperous Nation in the world.

We are not broke. Our Social Security trust fund is not broke. It's solvent. And the bills that we have to pay, we will definitely pay as we always have. It makes sense to borrow money now, by the way, if you can get it for 1 percent or 2 percent, and you can then use those funds to put people back to work in this economy, which is in need of a shot in the arm. I might point out, though, that unemployment is down to 7.7 percent, the first time since between 2007 or 2008 and despite the vigor that has been used in trying to suppress it by politicians in this body, despite their efforts to keep the economy from moving forward so that they could elect a President that they wanted to elect. They wanted to make our current President look bad, so they did everything they could to thwart action to make the economy better, but it has gotten better despite their efforts.

I was really hoping that post-election we would see a change in the direction of my friends on the other side of the aisle in terms of being responsible about government and our responsibility to make sure that government works of, by, and for the people. I was hoping that we would see a difference. We still have time, Representative SCHAKOWSKY. We still have time. It's not the end of the year. I, myself, I would like to be home for Christmas like everyone else, but my highest duty and responsibility is to be here and to help this Nation move away from this dangerous fiscal cliff that is coming up.

The fiscal cliff is actually here, and there is a lot that we agree on in terms of avoiding that fiscal cliff. But it seems like the thing that is holding it up is the top 2 percent, just wanting to preserve the expiring tax cuts for those top 2 percent. They would do that at the expense of the 98 percent that we all agree that we need to extend the tax cuts for. I just don't understand why it's going to take so long for us to——

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Let's talk about that for a minute.

It seems that there are those on the Republican side of the aisle who are willing to go to the mat to protect tax cuts for the very wealthiest Americans, people who make $250,000 and more. Of course, our proposal is to say that the first $250,000 of income for everyone, even if you make $500,000 a year, on the first $250,000—I think we all agree that we should extend those tax cuts. It's for the dollars above $250,000 that some of our colleagues are saying, no, we are not going to ask those people even to pay a penny more than they were.

□ 1350

Yet they're saying the only way that we will consider that, the only way that we will consider taking a little bit more from the wealthiest, is to go to the poorest.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Into that Social Security.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I'm not talking about children. The poorest adults are people over 65 years of age and persons with disabilities. Their median income is $22,000 a year. The median income for older Americans is $22,000 a year. Really? Somehow this is a fair balance to ask the wealthiest Americans—the top 2 percent—to pay a little bit more, but darn it, we're not going to do it unless we get those poorest people through their Social Security, through their Medicaid, through their Medicare to pay a bit more? It doesn't seem right to me.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Representative SCHAKOWSKY, I think it's wrong that we would tell people who have paid into the Social Security system throughout their lives that now you're going to move the goalpost and put a couple of years more on there before eligibility, that you're going to up the age of eligibility.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Especially for Medicare. They're talking about that.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. They want to do that for Medicare as well. That PAUL RYAN budget would actually decimate the Medicaid system. They just want to whack off a third of the Federal funding and then turn it into a block grant program.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I think it's something like $850 billion that would come out of the Medicaid fund. I know.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Then as to Medicare, they want to turn that into a voucher program and put a 1 percent cap, I think, on the cost-of-living increase and then give that in the form of a voucher to people so that they can go out and purchase insurance on the open market.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Yes, and go to private insurance companies.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Yes. It seems to be a concerted attack on that social safety net that has made us such a great civilization, which is that we take care of each other. It's an attack on that. It's in accordance with a philosophy of laissez-faire economics.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Let me just say one area in which I disagree a bit with you. Most Americans support these programs. I'm talking about huge percentages of Americans—Republicans, Democrats, Independents—who say, no, we don't think that Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid ought to be cut. We don't think so.

So I think, in terms of the role of government, most Americans see that it's important that when it comes to education, when it comes to infrastructure, when it comes to public safety, when it comes to health care, government cannot do it all. Americans aren't saying, just take care of me. From cradle to grave, I want you to take care of me. No. Americans are willing to work hard and play by the rules, but they see an important role for government. If we cut government too much, in some ways, we kill the goose that laid the golden egg. Here is what I mean:

It is true that the Internet really did come from research that was done by government. Look at the billions and billions—I don't know—maybe trillions of dollars, and then look at the advance of the Internet and everything that led from that—bio research, talking about curing diseases. Then, of course, the money that comes from that for the pharmaceutical industry, et cetera, mostly comes from the National Institutes of Health, the Cancer Institute, et cetera, in coming up with the cures and the medications. That's government research. I mean, look at NASA and the space research. It was really the Federal Government, in many ways, that developed the aviation industry. So we'd better be careful about cutting government too much.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. We definitely do. I think we've spent about 1½ percent per year of the Federal budget on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration from 1958 up until a few years ago.

Can you imagine if the United States Government had left it up to private industry to achieve what happened in 1969, which was that we landed a spaceship, with men inside, and stepped foot on the Moon? Now, some who are not particularly scientifically astute will say, Well, what do we get out of going to the Moon?

I, not being the most astute scientist myself, wouldn't be able to explain all of the benefits that society has enjoyed as a result of that victory and as a result of the space program that has continued, but I will tell you that, at this point after 50 years of investment, we've now entrusted the private sector to continue the exploration of outer space, and private industry is going to take us further than we have been.

So that is the role of government. It's a support structure. It's an investment in the lives of the people.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Think about the potential in the energy industry if we just help to promote some of these clean, renewable energy technologies.

One of the things on this cliff is the end of the wind energy production tax, which has been so incredibly successful in helping build this wind industry that is ready to take off but still needs a bit more support. This means clean energy to my State, Illinois, and the Middle West, where we've got lots of wind—it's free. And investing in wind energy—if that expires, we're going to lose 7,000 jobs in Illinois alone because of the failure to help invest in the wind energy industry.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. It's not profitable at this time for private industry to invest in such a new way of producing energy. There's no profit in it, so they won't do it. Government has the leadership and the vision to understand where we need to go, how we need to take our people into the future. We—the public policy apparatus, the government, we the people, the government being of us—have a responsibility not just to enhance short-term profits; we have a responsibility as a government to plan and prepare for the future of this great Nation.

We also have an inherent responsibility to lead the world. We're all in this world together. We all are going to breathe the same air. We're all going to drink from the same pool of water that exists on this planet. So we being the greatest Nation in the world are really shirking our responsibility by reducing government down to the size where you can drown it in a bathtub. I think that's the analogy that Grover Norquist used.

□ 1400

If you did that, where would America be? How would we have built the Interstate Highway System?

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. That was Eisenhower; wasn't it?

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Yes. A Republican, by the way, 1958, I believe it was, decided that this country needed an interstate highway system. Where would we be if we had not committed the dollars to get that done?

When we did that, it was an investment in the future prosperity of this Nation to link cities, towns, and States with a way, a mode of transportation. They did that in the 1800s with the railroad system, another situation where the Federal Government supplied the seed money and gave away the land to help it become a profitable industry.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Along rail lines, along highways, of course, that's the engine of commerce that keeps not only our wheels turning, but the stores—everything going, all of the infrastructure.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. That's what it's all about. Government is the entity which primes the economic pump through which prosperity then flows.

So we're now at a point, though, where: Are we going to turn everything over to the big businesses, and are we going to reduce the ability of people to be able to come together in a workplace and bargain collectively? Are we going to take steps to eliminate people from voting so that those who are the chosen ones can elect the people of their choice, and all of the rest of the people are just supposed to expect to be treated benevolently by those who are seeking to exploit the capital, the human capital, and make as much money as they can? At whose expense is that?

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. You were talking about how government helps to prime the pump. So government spends money, and it spins out and often becomes commercialized. There are three ways that we can really deal with our economy right now to make it stronger: We can raise revenue, that's raising taxes; we can cut spending; and the third—that's not talked about enough—is the issue of growth in the economy, jobs. Jobs, jobs, jobs. That's what grows the economy.

I am so proud that our President, as part of this overall deficit reduction plan, has recommended spending about $50 billion on jobs. They would spend money on infrastructure, infrastructure spending that's supported by both business and labor because it is so important. And it's kind of a no-brainer. If you spend money that will create jobs, you now have people, one, who are not having to get unemployment insurance or food stamps. They are working and can support their families, so we get them off public support. And, two, now they're paying taxes. They're going out and they're buying stuff, and businesses are going to have to hire more people because they're buying holiday presents for their kids. They're buying winter coats now. So there is an economy through growth. That is an underrated portion when we talk about how do we save our economy.

I have been circulating a letter among our colleagues, Representative JOHNSON, saying we ought to encourage investment, that we ought to encourage spending on jobs in this deficit reduction, this economic growth package.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. We have to stimulate, as government does, economic vitality. We can do that. It has been done repeatedly throughout the history of this country. A great example is the recent $787 billion stimulus that was passed back in, I think, 2007.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Some people say it didn't create any jobs. Well, I think

the testimony is that many of our colleagues, almost all of our colleagues, showed up at the ribbon cuttings.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Yes, with the big checks. And they were actually clamoring for that Federal money, and it made an important difference. It allowed States and local governments to retain teachers and firefighters, police officers, construction workers. You know, the whole nine. That's, in part, the reason why we have such an uptick in our economy, however modest it might be right now. That $787 billion stimulus has made a difference, and I'm glad.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. It actually created millions of jobs.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Yes, it sure did.

And so I readily signed on your letter that you're circulating, your ''Dear Colleague'' letter. And I'm glad to know, as well, that the President has included a modest $50 billion stimulus aspect in his proposal to strike a grand bargain and avoid the fiscal cliff. So all of these things are a part of what is hopefully being negotiated now.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. You were talking about a difference in philosophy and even economic philosophy. There are those who call that top 2 percent the job creators. Well, if that's true, then where are the jobs? Because most of the growth, almost all of the growth in income over the last many years has gone to the wealthiest Americans where, for ordinary Americans, their income has remained flat.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Actually, since 1979, the income, or the after-tax income, of the top 2 percent has increased by about 372 percent, if I recall the correct number, 372 to 378, while, as you say, regular working people, the middle class, their incomes have remained flat. It's actually a redistribution of the wealth of the country.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. When we have a situation in this country where the top 1 percent of Americans, 1 percent, control as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, that's not a healthy situation. I don't want to moralize about it. It's just not a healthy situation.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. No, it's not healthy. And it's amoral. Greed, when you've got to get more, more, more and you're not willing to share, you're not willing for everyone to prosper; and when you think that a person is poor because they don't want to get out and work, they have bad habits, they didn't do this, they didn't do that and, therefore, they deserve to be where they are now. But me, I did it the old-fashioned way, I inherited my money. And so don't blame me. I'm going to make more money and I don't care about you, I'm going to make money off of you, that is rather immoral, rather shortsighted.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I have to tell you, I introduced legislation that actually would increase the taxes on people starting at a million going up, ratcheting up, different tax brackets up to a billion dollars.

□ 1410

And I've got a lot of very rich people who say, yeah, that's fair. That's right.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. It's only a few, like Sheldon Adelson, the Koch brothers, who want to control the public policy apparatus. They want to control government so that they can have government to make them more money. That's all they're interested in is themselves, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. But let me just say this: the other philosophy, though, is that if you have a robust middle class of consumers who will actually have enough money in their pockets, middle class people, hopefully even including those who aspire to the middle class have more money in their pockets, that that is what's going to drive the economy. They're going to go out, and they're going to spend the money, and that's going to spread throughout the economy.

Whereas, the wealthiest Americans may buy another yacht, but probably are just going to accumulate that kind of money and really don't do nearly what the middle class does to make a robust economy for everyone. When we all do better, we all do better.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. We all do better when the money is circulating. Those on the top end, they're going to continue to make money; but those who are just working people, regular working people, and those who aspire to the middle class, when that money is circulating, then we can all, collectively, become more wealthy, and we will all spend more dollars, and that means more goods and services have to be produced, and that means you have to have people employed to service the needs of those with the money.

So it's just really common sense. Instead of trying to break the unions, we should be trying to solidify the relationships that the unions have established with their employers.

Detroit is a fine example of how the greatest, richest union, the Auto Workers Union, came to the table with the corporate bosses, after the corporate bosses had run the business into the ground, and needed a bailout from government, and President Obama made a determination that we're going to invest money in GM and in Chrysler, and we're going to not let those companies go bankrupt.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. That was a lot of jobs that would have gone down.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. And so we spent $700 billion. And it was the United Auto Workers union that sat down at the negotiating table with Big Business, worked out what some may call give-backs. It actually gave up some of the benefits that it had signed contracts for with the employer.

These are things that actually created the middle class, things like working days, working hours, wages, benefits, retirement, those kinds of things that people would not have had unless they had been represented by a union and we had strong unions.

So those things workers gave back in part to make sure that the corporations could maintain or regain stability. And so now, just a short, 3, 4, 5 years later, GM is back to being the number one car maker in the world.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. And all the money's been paid back to the United States Treasury.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I think they still owe us a little bit. We still have some GM stock. The Federal Government still owns some GM stock, which they're going to have to repurchase those shares from us. So we are still involved, but that's another example of the role of government.

And I, myself, I'll never be one to hate government. And I try to explain to people why government is not the problem. Government is a part of the solution.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Part of the solution.

Can I just ask, Mr. Speaker, how much time we have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM). The gentlewoman from Illinois has 5 minutes remaining.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I want to say a few things about organized labor.

I'm old enough, Congressman JOHNSON, when I was growing up, one person could work in the steel mills on the south side of Chicago, tough job, but you could not only make a decent wage that put you in the middle class; you could buy a car, you could have a little house, modest house, and you could even afford to send your kids to college. You had health care benefits. You had a pension, a private pension. And that was the normal. That was the normal in the United States. You worked hard, often really hard, but you could, you know, make a wage that would afford you a good, middle class life.

I think there's a lot of people who think that, well, unions, that is so 20th century. You know, that was yesterday. We don't need them anymore today. But I want to say that if we have a low-wage economy—you know, some of the companies that are coming back to the United States, you know what they're saying, that the differential in wages between the United States and Bangladesh is insignificant enough that they might as well come back and make their products in the United States.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. You've got an educated work force, relatively speaking. You've got enhanced transportation abilities here to get your goods and services to market quickly, as opposed to the expense and the security of coming across the water. And I'm happy that businesses are looking to re-establish their production facilities inside of America. That's good corporate consciousness.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Let me end with this since we just have a couple of minutes. As we face all these negotiations that are going on, I think there's a couple of bottom lines. One—and the President has been very clear—we are

going to have to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a bit more.

And, number two, I think we ought to say that those programs that help people have a decent retirement—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, as well—that that is the wrong place to go in order to balance our budget. We don't have to go to the poorest people. We can make those programs more efficient. We can cut the costs of those programs, but we don't have to reduce the benefits and further impoverish people who aren't making a lot of money right now.

For me, those are sort of bottom lines for the deal that we want to make. All of us are in this together. We should all see each other as our brother's and sister's keepers. With that kind of philosophy in mind, I think we can come up with some sort of an agreement that serves our country, that serves its people, that is just and fair and helps us go forward.

Do you have a final word?

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. No, that's enough said. Let me say how much I enjoyed our colloquy today, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that America remains the great Nation that it has always been.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you. I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1420

TAX BURDEN IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. I appreciate my colleagues for their take on where we are, and I wanted to offer kind of an alternative view on that. And it's not an alternative view in that it is one that's not commonly shared. It's a bipartisan view. But we hadn't heard it much in this particular debate.

I want to take you back, Mr. Speaker, to John F. Kennedy. He's a revered President for a whole variety of reasons. I come from a rock-solid, hardcore conservative district in the State of Georgia, but I absolutely see the wisdom of so much of what President Kennedy was trying to do for the country. He said this:

> It's a paradoxical truth that tax rates are too high and tax revenues are too low, and the soundest way to raise the revenues in the long run is to cut the rates now. The purpose of cutting taxes now is not to incur a budget deficit but to achieve the more prosperous, expanding economy which can bring a budget surplus.

John F. Kennedy, November 20, 1962.

Those words are as true today as they were then, Mr. Speaker. But we have a different kind of budget challenge today than we had then. The largest budget deficits in your and my lifetime, Mr. Speaker, were run up during the George W. Bush administration. Again, I come from a hard-core red State, Republican through and through in our part of the world, and I can tell you the largest budget deficits in the history of this country were run up during a Republican Presidential administration. And those record-setting deficits have now been surpassed.

We're not running 100 percent of those deficits today. We're not running 200 percent of those deficits today. We're not running 300 percent of those deficits today. Mr. Speaker, the deficits today are almost four times larger than what was formerly the largest budget deficit in American history. We've got to get a handle on that.

There are revenue components, there are spending components, but it seems like this town is obsessed with the tax side of that ledger. I want to talk about that because, for Pete's sake, I didn't come to Congress to be a Congressman; I came to Congress to make America better. I came to Congress to solve the problems that plague my family and my neighbor's family and the families surrounding us in the community. I came to Congress to make a difference.

So it's whatever we need to do here, Mr. Speaker, to make a difference. And I don't mean just to change things. Change for change's sake has no constituency with me. I mean to make a difference so that our children's lives and our grandchildren's lives are better than they would be otherwise.

Let me go again to John F. Kennedy and how he was trying to make a difference. He said this:

> Lower rates of taxation will stimulate economic activity and so raise the levels of personal and corporate income as to yield, within a few years, an increased—not a reduced—flow of revenues to the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, he was right. He was right then. Ronald Regan was right when he said it. President Clinton was right in the tax cuts that he presided over, as was President Bush. It's absolutely true. I'll say it again:

> Lower rates of taxation will stimulate economic activity and so raise the levels of personal and corporate income as to yield, within a few years, an increased—not a reduced—flow of revenues to the Federal Government.
>
> It is a paradoxical truth that tax rates are too high and tax revenues are too low, and the soundest way to raise revenues in the long run is to cut the rates now.

Why do I bring this up? Is there anybody in Washington, D.C., who's talking about cutting tax rates? And the answer is no. There's really not. There's not one person in this Chamber who comes to the floor and talks about cutting tax rates. We might like to, but we're in a tough economic crisis right now and folks are concerned about the revenue side of the equation. What folks are talking about, though, is not raising tax rates. And for some reason, for reasons that I can't understand, Mr. Speaker, the President has gotten wrapped around the axle on an insistence that actual rates go up. Speaker JOHN BOEHNER offered him revenue. He said, If you just want the money, we'll find a way to get the money through taxes. It doesn't have to be through higher rates. We can do it by broadening the base, by reducing exceptions and exemptions, by eliminating loopholes and deductions. The President said, No, I want actual higher rates.

President Kennedy talked about the damage of those higher rates, Mr. Speaker. It's as true today as it was then. When we're not talking about higher rates from the White House, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about fairness.

And I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, you and I are freshmen in this body. We came with the largest freshman class in modern times. And we came not from folks who had dreams of being a Congressman one day, but folks who were from families back home that were struggling and people were running for Congress then because they wanted to find a better way. Folks did not come to be Congressmen; they came to be agents of change, to make a difference for America, to make sure the promise of America continues for another generation. And yet we find ourselves in this debate about whether now is the right time to raise taxes on family-owned businesses, whether now is the right time to raise taxes on American job creators.

Milton Friedman is one of my favorite economists. He's a Nobel Prize-winning economist. He passed on from this Earth, but his words remain with us today. He said this about taxes, and I think it's profound. He said:

> There is all the difference in the world, however, between two kinds of assistance through government that seem superficially similar.

Two kinds, superficially similar.

> The first, when 90 percent of us agree to impose taxes on ourselves in order to help the bottom 10 percent.

That happens all the time. It happens all the time. I love the generous spirit of the United States of America. And I've got to tell you I know, Mr. Speaker, folks are from all parts of the world—I'm from Georgia and you're from California—but the people in Georgia, their generosity is second to none, and I love being part of that community. And Milton Friedman says it's one thing when 90 percent of us in America agree to tax ourselves, agree to bear the burden ourselves in order to help 10 percent who are struggling, that's one thing. Or, second, he says:

> The other thing is when 80 percent vote to impose taxes on the top 10 percent to help the bottom 10 percent.

Hear that. It's one thing when 90 percent of us agree that we need to bear the burden such that the least fortunate among us can prosper—that's the American way, and I love that about this Nation—but it's something else altogether, Milton Freidman says, when 80 percent decide they want to tax the top 10 percent so that they can help the bottom 10 percent. That is not who we are in America. That is not who we have ever been in America, where we let someone else carry the burden.