

Mr. TONKO, I think we have about 2 minutes left. Could you wrap it up for us?

Mr. TONKO. Sure. Absolutely. I think beyond the innovation and the ideas that translate into jobs, research equaling jobs, there are these benefits of connecting us as a Nation. We are a large Nation geographically, and the interconnecting that can be done through the investment in infrastructure is important.

Now, we know beyond the roads and bridges and the rail and the grid system for our energy supplies there's a telecommunications network; and that effort to create a national wireless initiative is very important. It will range from first responders with interoperable communications devices for first responders to a high-speed Internet system so that we're wiring in to remote areas and enabling this country to truly prosper.

So, tonight, we have heard such great comments about what we can do and what we must do about cutting where we can, by addressing inefficiency, waste, fraud and outmoded programs, but maintaining the vigilance about investing where we must. If we do not invest, we deny the American Dream. If we invest, we reignite that American Dream. We reignite the dream through the investment in a historic display of what America is at her greatest: when she invests in ideas, she invests in her workers, invests in infrastructure, in small business, entrepreneurs—those dreamers, shakers, movers and builders—and invests in a thriving middle class. It can be done, and it will be done if we put our minds to it. Mr. GARAMENDI, we have work to do.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We have work to do indeed.

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

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BENISHEK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, happy Valentine's Day to you. Thank you for this time.

There is so much going on. We have had in recent days the testimony of the director of CBO, Congressional Budget Office, making projections. We've had the White House dictating what religious beliefs people could observe and practice and which they could not, and then what was said to be a compromise so that individuals—actually institutions—could practice religious beliefs, the insurance companies that they utilize will have to provide the coverage that the President dictates even though it is against the religious beliefs, and then naturally the way things work, the insurance companies will spread out the costs, and they will pay for them anyway, which will be, once again, in breach of their religious beliefs.

It's quite interesting. I've been trying to take this all in, Mr. Speaker, as we have seen ObamaCare basically rammed down the throats of Americans with the vast majority not wanting that bill passed, with the vast majority in Congress not having read the bill, and with Speaker PELOSI at the time saying, we'll have to pass it so we can find out what's in it. Well, as people are finding out what's in it, they're not terribly happy.

And when you realize, as some of us did before it passed, as some of us were arguing here on the House floor before it passed, that if the President's health care bill passed, it would be such an intrusion into the rights of Americans that as I said here on the floor, it would be about the GRE, the government running everything, that means every aspect of people's lives. That includes setting aside people's religious beliefs when that came into conflict with the President's health care bill. We knew that it would run up tremendous debt. We knew that it would cut Medicare by \$500 billion—something our friends across the aisle don't like to talk about a whole lot.

Before the supercommittee fiasco ever occurred, the Democratic majority in the House and the Senate passed a bill a majority of Americans didn't want passed that would wrest control away from Americans in so many different areas and would take control and give it to the Federal Government in a way that was never anticipated in the Constitution.

□ 2120

So as we have seen this White House dictate to the Catholic Church, to Catholic hospitals, what they would be allowed to practice in the way of their religious beliefs, it's been quite interesting. We've heard many Catholic leaders who have said, you know, gee, we supported President Obama when he was Senator running for President. We thought he would do all these wonderful things. From conversations, as President Jenkins at Notre Dame had with President Obama, he just never anticipated that there would be this type of usurpation of religious practices and the ability to practice one's religious beliefs.

This isn't about contraception. Anybody in America that wants contraception can get it. That's not an issue. In fact, it's been interesting to hear people say people have a right to have contraception provided. When I look at the Second Amendment of the Constitution, there is a right to bear arms, but I don't remember anybody who was pushing for the government to basically provide whatever people want in the way of health care, paid for by somebody else. I don't remember them saying, well, the Constitution mentions the right to bear arms, so the Federal Government must provide everybody guns. There's all kinds of things that are ensured under the Constitution and under the Bill of Rights,

but it doesn't mean the government's supposed to buy them for everybody.

But in view of the White House's position, President Obama's position on what religious practices he would allow the Catholic Church to observe, Mr. Speaker, I figure we really need to make an addition to the Constitution. Since the President has already taken these actions, then I think maybe we need to just observe some language that we insert into the shadow of a penumbra. So where it says in amendment one to the Constitution of the United States, "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," I think in order to make the President's actions and the White House actions consistent, as those reflected by Secretary Sebelius, we need to insert there a line that comes up and says, But only if you are a religious institution and your beliefs agree with the President of the United States. Because if your religious beliefs come into conflict with Secretary Sebelius or the White House, unless the White House is willing to make some insurance company deal with your practice, then you're just going to have to set aside your religious beliefs.

So apparently the parenthetical has been inserted into the Constitution. I'm hopeful that on this issue the Supreme Court will strike down ObamaCare, say there are so many aspects of this bill that are unconstitutional—the mandate to buy a product for the first time in American history is only one of them. But that mandate, of course, is central to the bill itself.

But then the way it supercedes the religious institution's beliefs, why we would say "religious institutions" is because the President and Secretary Sebelius in their so-called "compromise" had not been willing to recognize an individual's beliefs, which I've always understood the Constitution was talking about.

No, they say it is confined to the religious beliefs and practices of a religious institution. Because under this White House's interpretation of the Constitution, if you're an individual and you are Baptist, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, whatever it is—although the FBI has apparently been meeting with named coconspirators for funding terrorism and trying to eliminate any kind of language that might in any way offend people that have supported terrorism, we don't want to offend those who want to kill us, of course.

But other than that, this White House sees it that if you're an individual and not a religious institution, then you have no right under the First Amendment to practice your religious beliefs if they're in conflict with what President Obama or Kathleen Sebelius want to do. You'll have to set them aside. It's only under their interpretation of the Constitution—and of course we know the President was an instructor—not a professor, but an instructor—at a law school at one time, so I'm

sure he understands the Constitution—but under their beliefs, you've just got to set them aside. If you're not a religious institution, you have no right to demand to put your practices into use. So apparently the First Amendment, according to them, only applies to religious institutions.

I never learned that in law school, because we were taught that if you read the Declaration of Independence and how that ended up by the end of the Revolution opening the door—of course first for the Articles of Confederation, then 4 years later for the Constitution—that all this worked together. There was a belief at that time in the rights of an individual—not of a religious institution—the rights of an individual. That's why one of the statues here in the Capitol, one of the two from Pennsylvania, is for a Reverend named Muhlenberg. The statue is of him taking off his ministerial robe because he believed, as the Declaration of Independence said, that we were endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, and there comes a time when people have to stand up for those rights.

So Reverend Muhlenberg was preaching from Ecclesiastes and he was talking—I believe it's chapter 3—that there is a time for every purpose under heaven. When he got to the verse—I believe it's verse 8—"there is a time for war and a time for peace," he took off his ministerial robe, and there he was in an officer's uniform and in essence said, ladies and gentlemen, now is the time for war. He recruited people from his church to join him in the fight in the Revolution, they recruited people from the town, and by the end of the war, Muhlenberg was a general.

His brother was also a reverend. There's a story told that his brother did not agree with him recruiting from the pulpit; but after his church was burned down, he got active and ended up being quite a participant in the Revolution and actually ended up being the first Speaker of the House of Representatives. Those who know where the term "separation of church and state" came from know that it came—not in the Constitution, it's nowhere in here, not at all. Nowhere before the end of the Constitution do you find the words "separation of church and state," nor do you find the words "wall of separation." Those are both contained in a letter that Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists.

So in the Constitution, you don't see any prohibition against them dating the Constitution itself with these words: "Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the states present the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven."

□ 2130

They apparently did not think it offended the Constitution to date it as being done in the year 1787, that being

in the year of our Lord, 1787. So imagine the Founders' surprise to learn that the Bill of Rights that they put together, when it said the government would never prohibit the free exercise of religion, would somehow base beliefs on something unwritten in the Constitution as giving the President of the United States and his appointed representative, Kathleen Sebelius at Health and Human Services, the power to order people to disregard the religious beliefs, set them aside and do what the President ordered. For people, as Dennis Miller said, that were willing to go to war over a tax on their breakfast drink, they would probably have been even more riled up if King George had taken this kind of action.

So, we're told that everyone in America must pay their fair share; yet we're told by the President he does not mean to divide America. And yet I would hope that by the end of this year, before the election, he would put the law where his mouth is and say, You know what? I've been saying for so long now that everybody should pay their fair share. I am finally going to go along with the Republicans who say we ought to have a flat tax. It doesn't matter who you are, Warren Buffett or whom-ever, we're going to have a flat tax.

Steve Forbes said it could be done with a 17 percent flat tax, even allowing for a mortgage interest deduction, even allowing for charitable deduction. And that way, if you've got a flat tax, then Warren Buffett would not have to sue, or his company would not have to sue, as it is now, to avoid paying the millions or billions in taxes that are alleged to be owed. He wouldn't have to fight the IRS so hard at the same time he's saying he doesn't mind paying more. There wouldn't be any question.

It's a flat tax. Just take your income, multiply it by the flat tax—no matter who you are, how much you make—and that will be your tax. Because with 53 percent of Americans being the only ones that are paying more in income tax than they get back, we'd better act in a hurry; because once we cross that line where people who are voting get more from the government than they pay in, we're not coming back, absent a miracle of God.

So I'm hopeful that the President's going to realize that all the speeches he's been giving about paying fair share really lead you to one, unavoidable conclusion. It's time to quit saying some don't have to pay any tax. It's time to say, look, everybody pay their fair share. Everybody has a percent of their income.

Now, of course, Steve Forbes proposed, under his flat tax, that in order to shield the poor, and of course we could debate on what poor is, but in the United States, his proposal was that if you're a family of four, I believe it was \$46,000 and less, you wouldn't pay any tax. How could anybody argue with that? A flat tax could do that.

In the meantime, we have a proposal from the President for a budget for this

year, and it's quite interesting. There's a Wall Street Journal article, and I'll quote from this. It's entitled, "The Amazing Obama Budget," and it's dated today, Valentine's Day 2012. It says:

Federal budgets are by definition political documents, but even by that standard, yesterday's White House proposal for fiscal year 2013 is a brilliant bit of misdirection. With the abracadabra of a tax increase on the wealthy and defense spending cuts that will never materialize, the White House asserts that in President Obama's second term, revenues will soar, outlays will fall, and \$1.3 trillion in annual deficits will be cut in half like the lady in the box on stage.

All voters need to do is suspend disbelief for another 9 months. And ignore this first 3 years.

It says "4," but it's the first 3 years of his administration.

The real news in Mr. Obama's budget proposal is the story of those years. What a tale they'll tell.

It says down further:

All of this has added an astonishing \$5 trillion in debt in a single Presidential term. National debt held by the public, the kind you have to pay back, will hit 74.2 percent this year and keep rising to 77.4 percent next year.

Economists believe that when debt to GDP reaches 90 percent or so, the economic damage begins to rise, and this doesn't include the debt that future taxpayers owe current and future retirees through the IOUs and the Social Security "trust fund."

Anyway, it goes on to say:

Mr. Obama's chief economic adviser, Gene Sperling, reported that the President wants a new "global minimum tax."

Talking about a new tax that's a global minimum tax. Wouldn't it be easier just to say, You know what? We're just going to have a flat tax. Everybody needs to pay their fair share.

I don't have this in a blowup, but the debt boom, according to the Office of Management and Budget of this White House shows that for 2012 and 2013 we go from a Federal debt held by the public as a share of GDP, around 35 percent, just spiking up, as The Wall Street Journal points out, to between 75 and 80 percent. Pretty dramatic.

There's an article from Jeffrey Anderson today that said:

According to the White House's own figures, the actual or projected deficit tallies for the 4 years in which Obama has submitted budgets are as follows: \$1.293 trillion in 2010, \$1.3 trillion in 2011, \$1.327 trillion in 2012, and \$900 billion in 2013.

That's because that's the year that hadn't happened yet.

Further down it says:

To help put that colossal sum of money into perspective, if you take our deficit spending under Obama and divide it evenly among the roughly 300 million American citizens, that works out to just over \$17,000 per person—or about \$70,000 for a family of four.

That's just the debt that has accrued with President Obama at the helm.

I think it's also important to note that, under the bill that I was against but it got passed anyway, the debt ceiling extension back last summer to give

the President all the debt ceiling authority he would want, that should carry him clear through the election, it's already appearing that that wasn't near enough.

And of course we had the supercommittee that was going to protect us and take care of us and make the cuts that were necessary. And now that those haven't happened, we're gutting our own defense, gutting our own defense.

Anybody that studies history knows you never put your national security on the table for negotiation, and we've done that.

Now, this chart is pretty telling, and it's based on the testimony of the CBO Director before the Senate Budget Committee. It makes it pretty basic. The Director of CBO in the projections for this year has projected the U.S. tax revenue will be \$2.523 trillion.

□ 2150

The head of CBO in his February 2, 2012, testimony projects the Federal budget this year will be \$3.61 trillion, approximately. That is a deficit for 1 year of \$1.079 trillion. Our national debt currently appears to be \$15.348 trillion. According to the director of CBO, our budget cuts from 2010, when coupled with the ones projected for 2011, actually amounted to around \$41 billion.

So that's kind of hard for some of us to understand when you're talking about numbers with so many zeroes. So it may be far more effective—and my staff has done a great job of putting this together for me—by removing eight zeroes from all of those trillion dollar numbers. It makes it more easily discernible if you say, All right, let's look at it as a family budget.

A family budget. They're bringing in \$25,230 for 1 year, but they're going to spend \$36,010 in that same year. That's going to increase their debt that they're going to owe by \$10,780. So \$10,780 on the new credit card.

Well, we already have a credit card balance of \$153,480. That should put it in perspective.

As a country, it's basically like being a family making \$25,000, spending \$36,000, not once, but 4 years in a row under this President. And we already had \$153,000 in debt, and we're only bringing in \$25,000. This is like credit card debt. It's not secured by a home—except for America.

We have put our future, America's future, our children, grandchildren's future all in hock for this much, and we can proudly say—those that don't understand, I get sarcastic from time to time—we can proudly say that since 2010, 2011, if you take away the eight zeroes, we have cut \$410 of our spending.

We've got a lot of work to do. We owe the American public better than we've done. It's time to take a stand.

We've been told, of course, whether you're a Republican or Democrat, that when you're elected as a freshman,

your odds of being defeated in the first election you stand for as an incumbent, are 10 to 20 percent. That means there were some fantastic freshman Republicans that were elected in this last election. Ten to 20 percent of them may get defeated in the next election. What will they have to show unless we stand up and say enough is enough?

Mr. President, Senator REID, we're standing on our principles so that we can leave the next generation as good or better a country than we inherited. But we're going to have start moving and we're going to have to start standing on principle very quickly. Easy to do.

Some say, Oh, it will be so hard making all of these cuts. No, it won't. We can go back to the 2008 budget that the most liberal Congress in history had passed. Didn't hear a lot of complaints about not enough spending that year. Go to that budget. That knocks out a trillion right there.

Enough of the games. It's time to stand up for America, stand up for a responsible budget, cut the wasteful spending, stop the crony capitalism for groups like Solyndra, and let's get this economy going back again—strong, stronger, strongest ever.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2317

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. Foxx) at 11 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3408, PROTECTING INVESTMENT IN OIL SHALE THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL, ENERGY, AND RESOURCE SECURITY ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3813, SECURING ANNUITIES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ACT OF 2012; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 7, AMERICAN ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE JOBS ACT OF 2012

Mr. WEBSTER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-398) on the resolution (H. Res. 547) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3408) to set clear rules for the development of United States oil shale resources, to promote shale technology research and development, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3813) to

amend title 5, United States Code, to secure the annuities of Federal civilian employees, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 7) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highway, public transportation, and highway and motor carrier safety programs, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. HEINRICH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. CAMPBELL (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and February 15 on account of illness.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of illness in the family.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 15, 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:

4985. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Cyazofamid; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions [EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0697; FRL-9332-5] received January 24, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4986. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Etoxazole; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0968; FRL-9334-9] received January 24, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4987. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Rimsulfuron; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-1017; FRL-9332-1] received January 24, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4988. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Equipment Delivery Report for fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4989. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of Captain Christopher W. Grady, United States Navy, to wear the authorized insignia of the grade of rear admiral (lower half); to the Committee on Armed Services.

4990. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the annual report on the operations of the Exchange Stabilization Fund (ESF) for fiscal