

should move forward with real solutions that work for real people, not just for Washington bureaucrats.

The sad thing about our current dysfunction in this town is that people all across this country get harmed. It's not because of something that they did, but because of something that government did to them or forced them to do. It's time to let Americans be Americans, and in health care that means caring for each other and allowing patients and families and doctors to make medical decisions, not Washington.

IN RECOGNITION OF DEDICATED STAFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, on this last day of 2012, I want to take a moment to highlight the work of a number of hardworking Federal employees, people who serve with distinction, but often without the credit they deserve. All of us in the House have dedicated staff who, though unheralded, are committed to their country and the constituents they serve. Without them, we could never do our jobs, and I want to thank those who have worked for me over the past 6 years:

Susan and Ed Anfinson, Lin Banks, Mark Perkins, Noel Warren, and the great George Greenfield. They were all shared employees that we shared with other offices. Then we have our full-time employees: Ben Barasky, Olivia Benson, Evan Brennan, Mike Butler, Julie Cain, Richard Carbo, Jennifer Dale, Nick Demicheli, Michelle Dorothy, Serronn Emerson, Jim Ferruchie, Dori Friedberg, Jesse Haladay, Angela Hayden, Kathleen Janoski, Carolyn Kahler, Rachel Kaufman, Erik Komendant, Jennifer Kraus, Chris Lombardi, Cody Lundquist, Greg Malinak, Caitlin Mathis, Stephanie Bone, Tess Mullen, Beth Newman, Bennett Reed, Nathan Robinson, Emily Schmitt, Mariel Schwartz, Abby Silverman, Lee Slater, Shannon Smith, Christina Stacey, P.J. Tabit, Alexandra Taylor, Nikki Tesla, Randy Stapleford and John Galanski—the two best veteran constituent service reps you could ever want—Sharon Werner, Rachael Heisler, and Cara Toman.

Mr. Speaker, all of them were loyal to the district, and I read their names into the RECORD to thank them for their service and loyalty to me, but especially for their service to the district.

□ 0920

FISCAL CLIFF AND BUSH TAX CUT HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, the Bush tax cuts' history illuminates why

American families face huge tax increases on January 1. The Bush tax cuts had two purposes. First, stimulate the economy, create jobs, cut unemployment, and cut the deficit. Second, cut taxes to help American families take care of their own needs.

In just 3 years, thanks to the Bush tax cuts, unemployment dropped from a high of 6.3 percent in 2003 to a low of 4.4 percent in 2006; 7 million American jobs were created between 2003 and 2006.

Most importantly and paradoxically to those who do not understand economics, this robust economic growth cut America's deficit 60 percent—from \$413 billion in FY 2003–2004 to \$161 billion in FY 2006–2007. By every economic measure, the Bush tax cuts were a spectacular success.

The Bush tax cuts, part 1, became law in 2001. Republican Congressmen and Senators voted 258–2—99 percent—to cut taxes and protect family incomes. In contrast, Democrat Congressmen and Senators who now say they are for protecting family incomes voted 184–40—a whopping 81 percent—against American families and for higher taxes.

The Bush tax cuts, part 2, became law in 2003. Republican Congressmen and Senators voted 272–3—that's 99 percent—to cut taxes and protect family incomes. In contrast, Democrat Congressmen and Senators who now say they are for protecting family incomes voted 245–9—an eye-popping 96 percent—against American families and for higher taxes. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats had enough votes to prevent the Bush tax cuts from being permanent. But for these Senate Democrats, America would not be facing a fiscal cliff today.

President Obama and a radically different Congress, controlled by House Speaker NANCY PELOSI and Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID, revisited the Bush tax cuts. In two separate votes in February 2009 and December 2010, Democrats could have increased taxes on the wealthy if they'd really believed what they now say.

Did they raise taxes on the wealthy? No. Why not?

Democrats could have permanently protected lower- and middle-income families from higher taxes if Democrats had really believed what they now say.

Did they? No. Why not?

Mr. Speaker, why would a Democrat Congress and White House say they want to tax the wealthy but not do it?

Why would a Democrat Congress and White House say they want permanent tax relief for lower- and middle-income taxpayers yet not give it?

The answer is simple: Washington Democrats voted twice against tax increases on the wealthy and twice voted against giving permanent tax relief to lower- and middle-income families so that they could run campaigns on base human emotions like greed, envy, and class warfare, and campaign against

the very tax policies Democrats kept in place, thus deflecting attention from the Democrats' abysmal record on the economy—trillion-dollar deficits and a \$16 trillion national debt.

To their credit, in 2012, their strategy worked. Democrats won the White House and the Senate. Ultimately, however, American voters will learn from history and truth will prevail. Ultimately, the American people will look at their property taxes, income taxes, estate taxes, sales taxes, and every other tax that they are being forced to pay, and they will ask: Who taxes and undermines my ability to take care of my family?

History proves Democrats raise taxes whenever they believe they can get away with it. Conversely, history proves that Republicans protect as many American families as possible from Democrat tax increases.

Mr. Speaker, that is the fight the Republican House fights today. Republicans will fight today and Republicans will fight tomorrow to protect as many American families as possible from the tax increases Democrats passed when they controlled Congress and the White House, and it is that difference, Mr. Speaker, that caused American voters to give Republicans in the 2010 and 2012 elections their largest number of House of Representative victories in more than six decades.

Fighting Democrat tax increases: now that's a mandate.

A TIME OF PERSONAL REFLECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARNAHAN. On this last day of the year and on one of the last days of this 112th Congress, we are awaiting a fiscal deal that will strengthen the fiscal health of this country. I want to take a few moments to reflect on my service here in the House of Representatives and to personally thank many who helped me get here and to do the work of the people whom I represent and love in the State of Missouri.

First, Mr. Speaker, Debra Carnahan, my wife but also an accomplished attorney, a former State and Federal prosecutor. She's really been the rock of our family and has been with me through the great highs and tough lows of this job. So I want to thank her.

Also, our two great sons—Austin and Andrew—who have shared me with thousands of constituents for several years. They have grown into amazing young men, young men who I think will, in their own rights, make a difference as they work their way through their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank some of my amazing staff who are too numerous to name—dozens over many years—but there are four in particular who worked with me through the entire 8 years that I served in this Congress: Jeremy Haldeman, who has

staffed the Foreign Affairs Committee for me and the Oversight Subcommittee, and who has also been my chief of staff in the Washington office; Jim McHugh, who has been my district director and longtime friend and colleague in St. Louis; Suzanne Archer, who has been my deputy director; and Kathy Waltz from Sainte Genevieve, Missouri, a former mayor there but an invaluable part of our constituent outreach team. There are many other staff members, but I thank those in particular for their long and loyal service and for the difference they make in so many people's lives.

To the Missourians whom I've had the great honor to represent, I am gratified and humbled beyond belief to have been able to represent them in this U.S. House of Representatives for 8 years and to also have represented many in the State house of representatives for 4 years prior to that. In working with them and for them we've been able to get some great things done on big national issues but also on important local issues back home.

From ribbon cuttings and orange cones and construction signs all across the St. Louis region to investments in our infrastructure, which have created real jobs at home and have helped rebuild our region's roads, bridges, ports, locks, dams, levees, flood walls, airports, high-speed rail, light rail, and our bus systems, those have made a real difference in people's lives. It was the reason I got on the Transportation Committee in the first place. We had two of the most deadly roads in America in Jefferson County, Missouri, and we got special funding to help rebuild those roads—to not only help their economy but to save lives. Recently, our firefighters were able to obtain a Federal grant for special patrol boats—rescue boats on the Mississippi River, which will serve the region for years to come.

These kinds of investments are important, and I want to urge this new Congress that will be taking over in just a few days to pass a major transportation bill. It's one of the best investments we can make in this country in order to continue to grow this economy.

We've seen after growing out of this Great Recession over the last few years the Recovery Act passed, the auto industry saved, major Wall Street reforms passed, health care reform passed, and stem cell research measures adopted in unprecedented bipartisan ways. I'll never forget the mothers with their young children who were sitting in my office the day that the health care bill was approved. There was not a dry eye in the room because all of their kids had preexisting conditions. Because of the new health care law, that cannot be the case anymore. I was also proud to serve on our House Foreign Affairs Committee and to chair the international organization's committee, so I just want to urge this Congress to take on the needed reforms

to make this Congress work better for the American people.

In closing, we recently greeted World War II veterans here at the monument built in their honor. They said that this Congress needed to take on the spirit they had in World War II—to put the country first and to put our differences aside—and that we could achieve great things.

□ 0930

FISCAL CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I want to first start off by thanking my friend from Missouri for his service and working with him on legislation in the past.

Just to pick up on what he said about our World War II heroes, we do need to put the country first. I think that certainly we're here on New Year's Eve and we're upon the fiscal cliff. What we do need to focus on is how do we find that common ground, because what we do know is I believe Democrats and Republicans alike want to put our country on a course to some fiscal discipline—we hope. Is there a course where we can find enough common ground to move it forward so that we don't have a downgrade, so that we don't spike unemployment, so that the markets don't go down.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a small business owner. I employ 100 people. For me, it's 100 families. I meet a budget and a payroll. What they're looking for when I talk to people back home, they're looking for some stability, they're looking for certainty, and what we're doing here is not providing any of those things. And yet I do believe that there is a spirit of comity that we want to find that common ground and move forward.

I'm sorry that we're here on New Year's Eve and that we haven't solved this problem long ago. I will say, Mr. Speaker, that the House did send a bill in August over to the United States Senate. Going back to my time as a small business owner, I can just tell you, if I'd given something to one of the people that I work with, marked it "urgent" and put it on their desk months ago and it sat for month after month after month, something would be wrong. Well, in essence, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we've done. We sent something over to the United States Senate months ago, marked it "urgent" because this is talking about the direction, the fiscal direction of our Nation, and yet nothing is coming back.

Unfortunately, Washington works on brinksmanship. We don't want brinksmanship; we want stability. The world is watching, and we need to focus on the common ground to move things forward. We want to make sure that we can keep tax rates low. We want to make sure that we can bring additional

revenue into the Federal Government. I believe that's going to be through growth. That's going to be sparking the American spirit, that entrepreneurial spirit across our country to bring more dollars into the Federal Treasury, to get more people back to work.

The thing that's amazing, Mr. Speaker, is there's a lack of leadership, a lack of leadership here in Washington, D.C., that's palpable. We need to move forward.

During the budget season, those on the other side of the aisle, myself, some of my colleagues on my side of the aisle, put forth a budget, the first bipartisan budget in a generation, based upon the Simpson-Bowles plan, talking about the need to bring additional revenue in, talking about the need to put spending cuts out there because Washington has this sense of spending, Mr. Speaker. Republicans have overspent; Democrats have overspent. I'm not here to point the finger. What I am looking for is a solution to the problems we face. My hope is that we can get those done today. The American people demand it, the American people need it, and the world is looking to America for leadership.

Mr. Speaker, on a different note, I want to rise today to recognize an extraordinary lady, a great American, one who raised four children and instilled in them a love of family and country, taught those around her the idea that your integrity determines your identity. In fact, she gave me that plaque, and it hangs in my room today.

I want to say it again, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is so very, very important: Your integrity determines your identity.

She also instilled a fantastic work ethic in those around her. A teacher, first of special needs children, then in English as a high school English teacher for a number of years, she left the teaching profession to have a family and then became an entrepreneur. She went into the private sector, helped people get jobs, put food on the table for families, and helped those families get an education.

Mr. Speaker, this great American lady celebrates a birthday today. I'm sorry that I'm not with her, but I am in spirit. Happy birthday, Mom.

BELARUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it's good to come down for morning-hour, especially today, to hear my colleagues come down and thank staff and people who've been important in their lives, especially in their careers. JASON ALTMIRE, what a great job he did thanking his staff. My friend, RUSS CARNAHAN from across the Mississippi River, thanking family, wife, sons, and staff. For the work we do here, too frequently, many go unappreciated.