

price. So those are the stakes that we're dealing with on this issue.

I am hoping that House Republicans will join Democrats who have been pushing for comprehensive reform for quite some time now, join us in coming to a solution that does more than just incite fear or scare people, and actually tries to resolve this issue in a pragmatic way for the Nation.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Thank you very much, Congressman CASTRO.

I'd like to thank all of my colleagues who spoke here tonight.

And thank you, Madam Speaker, for affording us the opportunity to speak to the American public and to actually explain this very, very critical, important economic benefit to our great country.

I'd like to thank my colleagues, my fellow Americans, for speaking out tonight and explaining to every American of our great country that comprehensive immigration reform benefits you. Every single person born in this country will benefit tremendously from passage of comprehensive immigration reform.

I think it's important for us to understand that, to many of us American-born citizens, this is a very important issue. It's about economics, but it's also an emotional issue as well.

I'm very, very proud to say that I was born in this country, and I thank my parents for coming to California and for raising me in California as an American citizen, even though they were raised in Mexico.

I think it's important for us to understand that I'm proud of growing up in a family where my father owned a business, and he taught me and explained to me, with his first-grade education in Mexico, he told me time and time again, as well as telling my 10 brothers and sisters, you have an opportunity for an education. You need to take advantage of that opportunity, and we did.

I'm very proud to say that my mother had a second-grade education, my father had a first-grade education, but their children now have doctorate degrees, master's degrees, bachelor's degrees, engineers, teachers, psychologists, all raised in one humble home in Pacoima.

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That is the American experience, ladies and gentlemen. And one thing that I'm very proud to say as well about our 10 families, now that we're raising our own American families, every single one of our households pays more annually in taxes than my mother and father's home ever made in one given year. I'll say that again. From a humble home where a man and a woman together raised their children, their entire annual income did not equal the amount of taxes that each one of their sons and daughters now pay today.

To me, that's the exclamation point on everything we've talked about tonight. We've talked about how impor-

tant it is to the Social Security system. It will boost that. We talked about how it is to the deficit that we hear about on this floor so many times. It will actually erase \$850 billion from our U.S. deficit.

There are so many benefits that will benefit not only our coffers here in Washington, which benefits America, but will actually benefit hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of American-born citizens that will work in those industries that are created and spearheaded by immigrants to this country.

And I must say this. I would like to read a few of the names of immigrants born outside of this country who created businesses in this country that many of us use everyday and recognize:

Sergey Brin from Russia, cofounder of Google;

Pierre Omidyar, an Iranian immigrant from France, one of the cofounders of eBay, Inc.;

Jerry Yang from Taiwan, cofounder of Yahoo;

James L. Kraft, a Canadian, cofounder of Kraft Foods, Inc.;

Levi Strauss, a man from Germany, founder of Levi-Strauss in California;

Liz Claiborne from Belgium, founder of Liz Claiborne, Inc. If you think clothes don't mean much, that's a United States company worth \$5 billion;

Andrew Grove from Hungary, cofounder of Intel, a company worth \$112 billion;

Kevork S. Hovnanian from Iraq, founder of Hovnanian Enterprises, a homebuilder that in 2011 had revenues of \$1.1 billion.

And the list goes on and on and on. Every single one of those individuals made their second life here in our great country. And it's because there was a time that in this country we embraced everyone from around the world. And all we asked of them is that they just obey the laws once they are here and that they do well with the opportunities that our great country affords every human being when they are here.

We have one of the highest standards of living in the world. And there's a reason for that. Because there was a time for many, many years that we welcomed people to our shores. At this time where we just reopened the Statue of Liberty, it's time for us to embrace people from around the world and for us to recognize it's not just about doing the right thing for them. It is the right thing for every American citizen born in this country. The benefits economically are tremendous.

There are no losers, ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to the United States Congress doing the right thing. Let's put a comprehensive immigration bill through our process and on the desk of this President and let's watch this country thrive. Our great country deserves it.

Once again, I would like to thank everybody who participated, and I yield back the balance of my time.

TOTO, WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, my friends on the other side of the aisle speak to a great issue coming aboard, and we're going to, I know, have many great discussions about that as we go forward.

I'm grateful for the floor time tonight, which I'm pleased to share tonight with my good friend and one of the newest Members here in our House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH).

It's an incredible honor and privilege to serve in this House. And for me, the privilege of serving as the voice of northeast Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives now for what's going on 6 months. I'm deeply humbled and honored by the trust each of my constituents has placed in me. I wanted to take some time to share some of the lessons that I've learned and the progress we're making in achieving goals that I spent over a year talking about on the campaign trail to friends and family and the supporters and the constituents of our northeast Georgia community.

Twenty counties make up northeast Georgia and the Ninth Congressional District. It's a very diverse area. It's an area in which we have what we call from the highlands to the islands. We have lakes, we have lowlands, we have the start of the Appalachian Trail. We have a place where movies are created. We have a place where I really believe dreams are fostered.

For me, it started back a long time ago. My father was a Georgia State trooper. We moved to Gainesville. That's where I was raised and spent my life. I went to high school there while I was with my mom and dad, along with my brother. That's what grounded me in family.

As I stand here on this floor and as I look around, as I listen, as I had just the great honor just a little bit ago to sit in that chair and preside over an earnest debate on what I really feel is a very important topic right now, one in which we had disagreement, one in which we look forward in one side presenting one issue and one presenting another. From my perspective, we voted to delay a bill that, in my personal opinion, is damaging to America. But we had that debate here.

And by standing in that chair and working there, it reminded me when I used to watch this floor from my home when I was in high school, and as I came up through college and as I was starting a young family with my wonderful bride, Lisa. We have three children. I would watch this floor on C-SPAN and I would see many of the same folks who actually even spoke today. And now to be a part of this

body, there's a sense of history. And if I could encourage any of my fellow colleagues, whether they be Democrat or Republican, new, old, been here a little over a month or been here 50-something years, it is to remember when we walk on the floor of this House, it means something special. It means something to be a part of an institution that makes a difference in people's lives. And I believe from my perspective as a Republican and as a conservative that we can make a difference on the floor of this House and in Washington, D.C., when we remember why we are here. And for me, that's very easy. It's the people of the Ninth District. It's my family.

Everywhere I would speak, people would ask me, Doug, why do you want to be a Member of the House of Representatives? I said I had three reasons. They were Jordon, Copeland, and Cameron. They're my three children. Because I believe that what goes on on this House floor and across the way in the Senate, what happens on this Capitol ground, is something that can make a difference because all across the world, ladies and gentlemen, people still look to us. They still look to America because we're the freest country in the world. We're a country that provides opportunity. But we have to be guarded and we have to watch and we have to stay vigilant. And in doing so, I believe that that is what makes this place special.

I've learned a lot in the first half of 2013. The need to vigilantly protect the noble heritage of our Founding Fathers that they gave us here as a heritage of liberty, responsibility, and limited government. And this has been impressed upon me in the last little bit as never before.

Over the last 6 months, our Nation and this distinguished body have faced issues and challenges that no one could have anticipated even 6 months ago, let alone a year ago. In my short time here, we have experienced the tragedy and horror of domestic terrorism in the Boston bombing. I can remember that day and hearing about that and just thinking what was going on and seeing the faces of those affected by that. And it highlighted our need for security and our well-being here and how some within our country want to tear down the very freedoms we have. And they'll do so by any means.

But I also look in a lighthearted way at the last couple of months. When I was younger, I used to like those little Pez dispensers. I used to like, Madam Speaker, those Pez dispensers that had the little head and the characters. But when you pushed the top, something would pop out. It would be candy.

Unfortunately, for the last month or two, all we've had is a Pez dispenser of scandal. All we've had is a Pez dispenser of problems with the IRS and the Department of Justice and with NSA and things that really come to a point that really elaborate, I believe, on belief on the issue of trust in this

town. It goes back to the towns in northeast Georgia, for me personally, like Homer, Gainesville, Clermont, Ellijay, Cumming, and Elberton, and these kind of places where they look to us and say, What are you doing up there? Why is it so hard to not do it right?

And I've been a part of committees like Judiciary and the Oversight and Government Reform and Foreign Affairs Committees in which we've investigated and we've held hearings. Because I believe we've got to hold ourselves accountable, and we've got to hold the administration accountable because we are sent up here with a word that is very often overlooked—and it's called "stewardship." We're stewards of what we've been given. And the "given" for us is an elected office to come and represent 700,000 or more people—and to do so with the resources that we've been given. And when they look around and they see that Pez dispenser and it pops out another issue or another scandal, then their trust is diminished. And when their trust is diminished, ladies and gentlemen, we have a lot harder job to do.

So these are trying times for our Nation and the commonsense conservative values that I believe I bring from northeast Georgia's Ninth Congressional District. These values are rooted in the principles of our Founders, and they give me guidance for why I want to be here and for what I want to accomplish and be a part of.

But I have to say one of the best things that I've had is looking around and making new friends on both sides of the aisle, and looking at that as we go forward. But for me, being one of the newest members of the Georgia delegation, it's looking around and when I have someone come in and I make a new friend who is our youngest and newest Member from the House on the Republican side, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH), who took the responsibility from his work in the legislature in Missouri, who's taken his fight of regulatory reform and taken his fight and conviction with his family and now stepped into the pit, so to speak, stepped into the fire.

I'm glad to have you here and to serve with you on Judiciary and getting to know you over the last few weeks. I see why the people of Missouri sent you here. And that's a great thing. So I would just be honored to yield time to you tonight just to sort of share what's in your heart, what brought you here, and some things that you've seen even in your short time here.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman tonight.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. I appreciate it. I want to thank my good friend from Georgia. It's a great honor being in this Chamber for 42 days. I definitely have some issues that are quite important to me.

Madam Speaker, one issue that I would like to highlight tonight is an

issue that threatens my district. It's the National Blueways System. It was conceived on May 24, 2012, by Interior Department Secretary Salazar. The National Blueways System is described as "a headwaters to mouth approach to rivers management" and "a mechanism to encourage stakeholders to integrate their land and water stewardship efforts by adopting a watershed approach." Importantly, a river is supposed to be nominated for a Blueways designation by local stakeholders.

Though no local stakeholders from my district were included in the nomination process, the White River Watershed, of which 14 counties are in my district, was named as the Nation's second National Blueways in January of this year. Who nominated the White River to become a Blueways? The National Wildlife Refuge Association, an organization based in Washington, D.C. A quick trip to their Web site reveals that in addition to being based in Washington, D.C., around a thousand miles away from the White River Watershed, not a single member of their board of directors is from Arkansas or Missouri. Where's the local knowledge? How is this organization a stakeholder?

Local stakeholders eventually found out about the designation and they were furious, as you can imagine. And when I use the term local stakeholders, I mean groups and individuals living in the watershed, including public officials elected to represent those individuals. Why were they furious? Typically, Federal designations bring along with them rules and regulations that affect the landowners. These rules and regulations might restrict access to the rivers in my district that are used for recreational purposes and fuel our tourist economy. These rules and regulations might also restrict farmers and ranchers from being able to access the water they need for their crops and livestock.

I'm pleased to note that the White River National Blueways nomination was recently withdrawn, due in large part to significant outcry from Missourians let out of the process. We were also informed today that the entire National Blueways System has been paused and put under review.

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But I want to make something very clear here tonight: simply pausing the program until the folks back home forget about it and then trying to restart these designations is deplorable. I urge the Interior Department to quickly complete its review and define that the entire Blueways System needs to be scrapped.

Madam Speaker, we also discussed the National Blueways System further today in two hearings. In the first, Secretary Jewell, Secretary Salazar's newly appointed successor, noted that "she did not know very much about the Blueways System." When I asked her today who the relevant authority on the Blueways System was, she said

that it was “Rebecca Wodder.” Unfortunately, for those of us who would have liked to ask the Interior Department questions about the Blueways today, Rebecca Wodder refused to come to our subcommittee hearing.

As we noted in our hearings today, the process for designating these “National Blueways” has not always been voluntary, open, or public. It is disturbing that Ms. Wodder continues to refuse to testify about this program before our committee. Though the program is often trumpeted as voluntary, open, and public, Ms. Wodder has never been interested in making her comments voluntary, open, or public about the designations.

Madam Speaker, let me provide you with a little more background about the district that I proudly represent, Missouri’s Eighth Congressional District. It contains 30 counties in southeastern and southern Missouri. We range from 40 miles south of the city of St. Louis, down the mighty Mississippi River, the entire Bootheel region, all the way west to about 40 miles east of Springfield, and in the northwest corner, the Phelps County, Rolla area.

My district is agriculturally diverse. We grow everything from citrus to sugar. Fourteen of the 30 counties in my district contain land that would have been within the “White River National Blueways” designation. In addition, my district includes the Ozark National Scenic Riverway, a National Park Service entity that spans through five counties on the western side, including my home county near my home of Salem.

The parts of our local economy that are not driven by agriculture rely heavily on tourism and natural resources. Folks come from all over the State and all around the country to be guided on float trips on the rivers and streams contained in my district. We have a thriving timber industry that produces lumber, charcoal, and finished wood products, and some of the district’s largest employers mine lead and smelt aluminum.

What is the common thread that ties together the components of agriculture, tourism, and natural resources in my district? It is property rights, and our ability to use the land and its bounty to make a living.

All too often, the Federal Government tugs at this thread, threatening to unwind the fabric of our economy. Whether it is new regulations restricting farm labor, new EPA carbon emission rules that would shutter our largest employers, or shutting down access and restricting the use of our rivers and streams in my district, my district is under attack.

My constituents and I are tired of unelected Washington, D.C., bureaucrats creating new programs out of thin air and having the ability to end our way of life and the way that we make a living. While the White River National Blueways has been withdrawn, it is only the latest symptom of

a disease that has embedded itself into the very core of this administration. They think that they know better than locals, and they think that they can act on their own without congressional approval or oversight.

Where does it stop?

Madam Speaker, today, I challenge the Members of this body to make it our goal not only to stop the National Blueways System all over this country but also to fight the disease that spawned it. Local groups and individuals are best situated to manage their lands and resources. We don’t need bureaucratic mandates sent from on high in Washington, D.C., that may have drastic repercussions for our local economies.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman from Missouri.

One of the things that I just want to ask you, as we just take a moment here, one of the things you brought up is something that I have discovered, and I just actually discovered it when I was on the State legislature as well, but up here it is even more prevalent: Have you already gotten the sense of “Washington Knows Best?” There used to be a TV show called “Father Knows Best.” I think up here we live “Washington Knows Best.” Is that what you are seeing?

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Clearly, the few square miles that hover around the District of Columbia, it seems like they know how to better manage our forest or our rivers or our lives or our kids working on the farms, you name it. They believe that that’s the process that you should manage from up above and push down.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I think one of the things, in my district and the district you serve—you have 30 counties, I have 20 counties—very agriculturally diverse, we are more with livestock but also poultry, also what we call the “agrarian tourism” with the wineries and other things that are growing, and what we are finding is just simply let us do what we need to do. I think that is one of the reasons that from our conservative perspective, working with the farm bill and the issues that we have had with that, is let’s deal with agriculture, let’s deal with the SNAP programs and others separately, and that was something that I believe was a good thing.

But I want to go back to one thing. Coming and testifying in committees—and you and I sit next to each other on a couple of committees—and now you’ve seen this today, that if you work, in my personal opinion, you work for the government, Congress is your oversight agency. That is the constitutional role of what we have. It is disturbing to me, not only in what you and I have heard today about someone not wanting to come and testify, but I have seen it in other committees as well where they just simply don’t show up. We’ve got a disconnect.

Do you think this person actually gets your district and the impact that

that would have by not coming to testify? Does that just show maybe that they don’t get it?

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. It is extremely disappointing that any Federal employee that is asked by Congress to come and testify and to give information in a broader sense and they refuse to testify or refuse to be present, that’s unacceptable. They shouldn’t be a Federal employee if they are not willing to stand up and justify what they do in their position. Constantly you see the buck just continue to be passed on, and never does it stop with a lot of folks in the bureaucracy in the Federal Government.

I think that’s our responsibility, that’s our responsibility as Members of Congress, is to go after these bureaucrats who try to never allow the truth to always be seen immediately.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I agree.

I think one of the things that we look at is we have literally thousands upon thousands of workers in our Federal Governments and our State Governments who are good people doing an honest day’s work who want to make a difference, and they believe that it is their calling to do that.

I think, unfortunately, it is those individuals sometimes that won’t believe what I and you believe in stewardship and interacting with the Congress and interacting with the agency and interacting with locals that really has cast aspersion on a large net of workers who are trying to do it right, who do get in there and go to work every day and do good work for the government that they work for.

I just believe that it goes back to stewardship. I am just raised on that stewardship issue. I’m going to talk a little bit more about it later. But I think if you have a job, that is something you need to look at.

I appreciate so much what you meant to this body in 42 days and look forward to us working together as we share some more tonight. I thank you for that.

The principles that I want to talk about here for just a little while tonight are what I call “commonsense conservative values.” They are things like individual freedom, fiscal responsibility, and a constitutionally limited government.

When I came to Washington and I began to look, I took these as my core values, if you will. I took them seriously when I crafted not only the legislative agenda that I wanted to work on, but also when it came down to working on other pieces of legislation and signing on to other people’s legislation and also working with our conservative Members, our Republican Party, and those across the aisle who would join us.

Here is where I believe we miss it, and my colleague from Missouri brought this out. It is easy for many times that we can always say what we do. We can always say this is what we do, and there’s many times that we will be able to say this is how we do it.

However, I believe that we, and especially from my party, and as a conservative who stands in this well and speaks tonight, is we've got to get better at not only saying this is what we are doing, this is how we are doing it, but we've got to reconnect, I believe, with the American people in this body and in this city with why we do what we do. That is going to matter when we look at people looking up here and they look on the TV or they read their newspapers and they see the problems that we've talked about earlier, they see the disconnect with a top-down style that is really just growing in our country, whether it be the river systems or it be in our farms or it be in our factories or it be in our workplaces.

What we've really got to understand is we've got to now say, these are these beliefs that I just laid out: individual freedom, fiscal responsibility, and constitutionally limited government. What I want to do is begin a conversation that may carry over many weeks and say, this is why I believe this is what is good for America, this is why I believe, as I did this afternoon, that if it was good enough for businesses, that it is good enough for individuals.

We've got to be fair with the American people. They understand when we are not being fair. They look at us and they believe things that are said and they say, we don't trust our government anymore, we don't trust them not to listen into our phone conversations or tap into our Internet email, they don't trust us anymore to believe us when we say that we have their best interest at heart, because frankly over the past number of years in this city we have failed them.

We, I believe, from a conservative perspective, have to get back to saying why it matters once again to have a balanced budget. Now, I know that sounds like just comic relief up here in this city. But for me and in my family—and I always take it back to my home and my wife—when we sit down and we look at our budget and we say this is how much we have coming in, believe me, I am blessed. I have said before that I believe if I could just get my wife, if she were to control the budget, we would be balanced in a very short time and have a surplus. Because we've had to do it many times when we have cut back and we have said, this is what matters to us. It is called "priorities" and it is called "stewardship." It goes back to individual freedom, it goes back to fiscal responsibility, and it goes back to constitutionally limited government.

I believe that conservative values and conservative principles and conservative ideas that we are trying to promote right now from my perspective in my district, in my service here in Washington, is what will matter to this country and restore the shining light that I believe America is. When we understand that, then Joe and Sally, whether they are in south Flor-

ida or in Washington State or in Alaska or in northeast Georgia or in the beautiful scenery of Missouri, they all understand that at the end of the day they have paychecks, they have school bills, they have reports, they have families, they have responsibilities, and they want to be a part, but they have to look at it from a perspective of what do I have and how can I do it.

It goes back to that common theme of stewardship—stewardship—and understanding we've been given a set amount of resources and a set amount of time. The question is what do we do with it? I believe that is what will change and put us back on a course of being able to work together and moving forward with ideas that matter.

For people that now say we cannot continue the path we are on, when they have such a low opinion of this body, when they look at their country and they say it is on a wrong direction, well, I believe it is on a wrong direction because we've left the fundamental flooring of our Founding Fathers who said that we should be promoting individual freedom, fiscally responsibility, and constitutionally limited government.

In January, I joined my colleagues in the reading of the United States Constitution right here on this House floor. In fact, I came right here to this podium, as my recollection comes about after six months, a lot of things going on. But it was right here where we began with reading the Constitution again at the start of this Congress. I believe that each public servant should constantly refer to this vital document when performing his or her duties, and also the things that have come through our courts and others that have formed the foundation of our constitutional framework.

I'm pleased that this body began its session by reminding ourselves of the responsibilities we have to the American people, as well as the liberties we are sworn to protect. I am a chaplain in the United States Air Force Reserve, and recently I have been monitoring very carefully the development that has surrounded our servicemembers' rights of free speech and freedom of religious exercise and making sure that they are protected. Our men and women in uniform bled and bleed daily and die for these precious liberties.

I had the opportunity to serve in Iraq in 2008. I had the ability, and I was a nighttime flight line chaplain, and I would go around at night and it was great, because I was the only chaplain on duty so I would spend time with our flying squadrons and spend time with our maintenance operators and our food service folks and our security forces and would get to know them on a very real and personal basis.

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I did so in a role which did not matter if they had faith or no faith. It was my job to protect their right to have a faith and to practice it or to not have

a faith and choose not to practice any kind of faith, but it was protected under what chaplains do.

Lately, efforts through the DOD and outside organizations and this administration seem to want to take that privilege and that right that we have in our Constitution and denigrate that right and take it away. I am very troubled by efforts that would curb chaplains' abilities to perform their duties and prevent servicemembers from honestly sharing their faiths or a Scripture with other servicemembers.

Now, before anyone jumps up and says, Proselytizing, we don't need that in the military or workplaces, there are already rules for that, there are already things that would keep out of bounds the inappropriate workings of someone's sharing or putting someone in a position of uncomfortableness with their faith. But when it comes to chaplains, our very experience is to share from what we believe and what we have in our hearts, and for me, being a Southern Baptist chaplain, it comes from a faith that I believe is deeply welled within me. To say that that cannot be a part of who I am is something that is simply wrong.

Now, we have ideas of bringing into the Chaplain Corps, among different services, an atheist chaplain. Now, when I first heard this, I said, This must be a joke. You're kidding me. An atheist chaplain? Now, if you choose to not believe in God, that is your right. You're in America, and that is your belief, and that is something that you can have. You can be agnostic—believe there's a God but not personal—or you can have a personal faith of another variety or you can be Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist or whatever you want to do and whatever you want to believe.

There are standards that we have as chaplains: we have to have a master's degree; we have to be endorsed by our religious affiliation endorser to be a part of the Chaplain Corps. We serve sort of two halves: we serve the military by maintaining our military bearing and our physical fitness and our military qualifications; and at the same time, I also have to maintain my qualifications as a Southern Baptist ordained minister. In doing so, I can't have one without the other. It goes back to a theme that I've talked about tonight of responsibility. No matter the household, no matter the political persuasion, people get responsibility, and they get stewardship; but as chaplains, we have to measure both sides.

So, when it becomes a game, in my mind, to take away or to denigrate what the chaplain's role is—to protect the religious freedom and expression of all servicemembers whether they have faith or not—then we're missing it, and, frankly, those on Main Street don't get it. They don't understand it in their churches and in their synagogues and in their mosques. They don't get it.

Then there's Washington, D.C. When we have job issues in our country and

when we have financial issues in our country, we are finding out from our agencies—from the Department of Defense—and an administration that is pushing an agenda that goes to the very heart of our constitutional freedom, they don't get it. Frankly, I don't either. I'm going to be watching this over the next few weeks and few months, and I will continue to speak out.

There are many ways for us to be there, but I believe, as a chaplain, I have stood beside the bed of those who've believed as I and of those who have never had a faith or who have wanted a faith, but they wanted to talk to someone who was not in the chain of command who they could share in and confide in. Back home, their wives were struggling and their kids were suffering, and they just wanted to be a part, and they knew they were separated. They wanted to talk about their work environments. They wanted to talk about their jobs. They wanted to talk about their dreams and aspirations—and yes, for some, they needed protection. They wanted their meals because they needed Kosher requirements. Even in one case, we had a situation in which a Wiccan wanted to have a place in which he could perform his services, and we provided that for him. That's not the faith that I subscribe to, but it is my job as a chaplain—it is my role—to provide that for them so that they can.

We've got to quit playing games, and we definitely have to quit playing games with our fundamental freedoms. You see, we can talk about what we want to do and how we want to do it, but I believe many people are just wanting to know why this matters. Why is DOUG COLLINS talking about this on the floor tonight? Why is he talking about these issues of individual freedom, of fiscal responsibility and constitutionally limited government?

Why? Because it matters and because they are the things that make us free.

I've also taken seriously our Second Amendment rights in seeing what has happened up here in not taking into account or in discounting the needs that we have in our society for responsible firearm ownership, but we cannot take away the rights of those gun owners in our country and of those who want to own guns simply on a whim or a political agenda. We don't need to do that.

Why? Because it matters.

When we look at this, one of the issues that I've had over my last few months is: I was driving home one night, and in the midst of all this debate in Washington about Should we curb gun rights? Should we do background checks? Should we do a lot of different things, I thought to myself, I had a father-in-law who grew up shooting, and he talks about the way he would target shoot as he was growing up, shooting squirrels and other things. What I found was—whether it was my father-in-law, T.J., or my daddy, Leonard Collins—they had a commonality.

What the commonality was is that they understood that gun ownership also meant gun responsibility.

So, as I was driving home one night, I said, What can we do in the Ninth Congressional District of Georgia to promote responsible gun ownership? Here is that word “responsible” again. We've got to be responsible with what we have.

What we did is we said we're going to have gun safety events. We put on several gun safety events, and well over 300 people attended these events. They were put on by the local sheriff's department for those because what I was also hearing was that many people were going out and buying guns for the first time because they didn't think that guns were going to be around. So, in my district, gun shops were overflowing, and people were buying guns.

I said, What can we do to make sure that gun rights and ownership and our Second Amendment principles are balanced with the responsibility that is given? These people showed up, and they learned. They learned how to store their weapons. They learned how to take care of their weapons. They learned what they should do and shouldn't do.

That is responsible government. That is taking what we do here and making it matter to the folks on Main Street—in the high schools and the stores and the shops that we go into every day. That's what's going to put conservative ideas back on the map—by attaching them to what matters and by attaching them to who and what we are because when we attach it to the dinner table, when we get to the point when we say, This is why it matters, instead of the vast rhetoric of this world, then we will be able to say and people can look at us and say, That's why they think that a balanced budget is necessary, and that's why they believe that the ObamaCare legislation is so bad, not because we're fighting against a President we don't like, but because it doesn't make sense—and it costs us jobs; it costs us money; it costs our people trust in the government that I hold so dear.

You see, when you understand this, you move to fiscal responsibility or, like I say here, fiscal irresponsibility. Only up here can you talk about it. I was in the State government, and I dealt in similar terms; but I remember in the first 2 weeks I was in this Chamber—and you can debate the good or the bad—we spent \$60 billion. That's three Georgia budgets in 2 weeks. It wasn't that I was not in Georgia anymore. I wasn't in Kansas anymore either, Toto. I wasn't there. Something wasn't making sense. We've got to get back to a fiscal responsibility approach; \$17 trillion in debt is a national disgrace, and it's a national disgrace because you can't go into anyone's household and knock off the zeros—knock off whatever you want to do—and then apply it to your family budget.

If you happen to be watching tonight or if you happen to see this later, I want you to do something. Just apply the same concept to your home budget; and whether you're Democrat or Republican, we can come to the understanding that numbers don't lie and that, when you've got \$17 trillion in debt and when you're taking in this amount of money and when you're spending this amount of money and when you can't reconcile the two, it's not because we're making a better country. It's because we're not making the hard choices that you have to make every day in your homes and in your businesses.

That's what we've got to get back to. That's what this country needs to get back to. It's not about the vast rhetoric. We can debate the big things all we want; but what we've got to understand is when we debate the big things and when we miss the small things, people lose trust in us, and we've got to stop that.

That's why I believe that the Republican budget presents a smart, fiscally sound policy. It balances our Federal budget, and it allows hardworking Georgians and Missourians and North Carolinians and others to actually keep more of their own money. That's a novel concept.

As much as I like this city—and I love to go at night and see Lincoln, and I love to go see the Jefferson Memorial, and I love to look around at the museums and see the history that just oozes from this place—I'll tell you what: I want to come here and spend my money, and I want folks from Georgia to come up here to spend their hard-earned money, their tourist dollars, but I don't want Georgians or anybody else in this country to have to look to the government to be sending money. I want us to be able to earn that money and to have a free enterprise system that works again and is not crippled by a government that is too big and too large.

In addition to the Federal budget that we passed and balancing it in 10 years, which, again, is a novel concept because, undoubtedly, on the other side of the building here and in other places, they don't ever seem to think a balanced budget is necessary. Explain that to your banker the next time you go in. The House budget cuts \$4.6 trillion over the next decade; it simplifies the Tax Code; it repeals ObamaCare, protects Medicare and increases energy exploration.

Again, we can tell you the “how,” and we can tell you the “what,” but what about “why”? Why does this matter? Why do these things that I just talked about matter? Because they end up putting more responsibility in individual households; they end up putting more money in individual billfolds; and they end up getting the government back in the proportion it has been.

It has been said many times that fire is a great thing. I love fire. I love a fire outside, and I love a pit outside, but do

you know something? That fire is wonderful as long as it's inside and constrained. When it's inside the fire pit, then you cook with it, and you warm yourself with it, and you can make sure that it doesn't burn down the whole forest. But once it gets outside that fire ring, then it can burn down the whole forest. I live up in an area which is inhabited with a lot of forest. We've seen a lot of forest fires, and we've seen a lot of mistakes when using fire.

So I'm just going to say the same thing is true with our budget. What matters in our budget and why it matters, I believe, to most Americans is that we can't allow the debt—the crushing debt—to begin to get outside of that ring, as it has already, and start taking everything else with it.

I wish that the administration felt the same as I did, but they don't. In fact, what happens in their budget, as opposed to balancing, actually, is that it has more taxes, more spending, more borrowing—the same thing that we've gotten into.

I heard a friend across the aisle today talk about the issue of if you do the same thing over and over and expect a different result, it's the definition of "insanity." Well, we're doing the same things over and over again, and we're expecting different results. We actually have to cut spending to get a balanced budget. You actually have to do things in a budget that is so overgrown. The first thing we need to do is to begin cutting. For those of you who say "no"—you're looking at the screen right now and you're saying, No, we've got to raise taxes—remember, we did that at the end of the year. It's now time for some cutting.

When we looked ahead, I also looked at fiscal responsibility, and that's why I was pleased that this House adopted unanimously an amendment that I had for Camp Merrill, which is where our rangers are trained. What it will do is transfer the land from Forestry to the DOD, which will ensure we save millions of dollars in taxpayer money at Camp Merrill while at the same time providing them with an increased amount of security. In doing so, I believe this just makes common sense.

For some who will say, What does that matter to me? well, it matters when I looked at this situation—and this is inside my district—and they told me that two government agencies—the DOD and Forestry—had been negotiating for 20 years. An agency of the government and an agency of the government, both paid by my and your tax dollars and both serving us as Americans individually and collectively—two agencies—took 20 years and could not come to a resolution. In fact, they almost came to a resolution, and then one government agency wanted \$10 million more at the end.

That is wrong. That is why people look at government and why they look at our government processes and say that it doesn't work, because you can't

get away with that in the business world. I've been in the business world as a pastor of a church. If it takes you 20 years to negotiate a simple business proposition, you're going to be bankrupt before you can ever get there. That's why this matters.

We also have to look at a constitutionally limited government. Our Founders envisioned a Federal Government that was strong enough to hold the States together and to protect our Nation but that was limited in its authority in citizens' lives. Unfortunately, many in the current administration—and in the culture in Washington—refuse to accept the limitations placed on them by the Constitution. As Congress, we also have to take back our role.

□ 2100

When we take back our role, then we'll be able to have oversight and control of the purse string, and then we'll be able to do what we do.

Limiting the firepower of Federal bureaucrats and those who work to make de facto law, as my friend from Missouri talked about, through regulation is one of my highest priorities. In fact, when we looked at this, I started with Congressman TED YOHO out of Florida. We started a Freshman Regulatory Reform Working Group. I've introduced H.R. 1493, the Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act, which has been marked up recently in subcommittee and hopefully will come to the full committee and to the floor of this House very soon, because I believe regulations are the beginning of the end.

I want to just show you here what I mean by this. The amount of red tape that continues to grow in this administration and, in all fairness, previous administrations is way too much. When we start back at 2000 and we look at the increasing number of regulations, then we see what is happening. We went from the 170,000 to 180,000 up to a quarter of a million. And this is just in this timeframe. Look at the number in the last 5 to 6 years how regulation has just expanded. We cannot continue this path.

Why does this matter to you? Some of you are sitting here saying, Oh, here is just another Republican. Here is just another Republican talking about—he just wants to make dirty water, dirty air, and do all those things. I've heard those arguments, but I, frankly, tired of those arguments because I live here, too. Remember, I said the three reasons I wanted to be here were Jordan, Copelan, and Cameron. I don't want my children and my grandchildren that I have not seen to have dirty water and dirty air and unsafe workplaces, but there is a limit to what government can do. And we have done a lot.

So I want to say this is why—and then you say, If that's just you talking, why does it matter to me? I'm going to tell you why it matters. And it should matter to every tax-paying family in

this country, every American, everybody. I don't single out any groups. I take us all as a whole. We're Americans.

How do we know that this affects you? Look right here. What do regulations cost us? The average American family pays \$14,678 in hidden annual regulatory taxes. That's a lot of money. I know in Washington this is just a drop in the bucket, and when we put it out to American families it's just one at a time and people don't care.

I'm going to tell you, from northeast Georgia, \$15,000 will do a lot. For my family—I have a senior and a freshman in high school now, actually the high school I went to. It's amazing that it hasn't changed a whole lot in the only 3 or 4 years since I was last there. Unfortunately, it's almost 30 years now. But what has happened is that amount of money, that \$15,000—if DOUG COLLINS' family, if Lisa and DOUG sat down and said, "What can we do with that \$15,000?" or what could Jim and Sally do in south Florida, or over in California or in Arizona or North Carolina when you have families sitting down and talking about their budgets and talking about what they want, here's what they could do. They could buy a new car, a 2013 Ford Fiesta, \$13,200; 2013 Chevrolet Sonic, \$14,185. Or better yet—and I heard it from this well, passionately explained by one of my friends from across the aisle in talking about education and the importance of education. I believe that as well. What it could do in Georgia is this: it could send their kids to college. One year of tuition and fees at the University of Georgia is \$10,262.

We can talk about these big things all we want. We can talk about \$17 trillion debt. We can talk about budgets that don't balance. We can talk about scandals that are coming out like PEZ dispensers. We can talk about all these things. But in the end it starts back to what I talked about earlier, that it goes back to it doesn't matter what the big picture is and what it is to people if they don't understand why it matters to them.

I'm standing here tonight as a proud member of the Republican Conference, as a conservative. If you don't believe me, just look at my voting record, because I believe conservative principles matter.

Why do they matter? Because I believe they're the very things that we can explain why they matter by looking at things like this and showing where regulations are hurting our businesses and hurting our jobs, and I can explain to you why a \$17 trillion debt hurts us. It takes us away from buying cars, building houses, adding additions, or sending our children to college. That's why it matters. That's why conservative principles matter. And if we haven't done a good job articulating that, then shame on us, because that's what matters. It is the individual families. It is the individual hopes that we share.

So I come to a close tonight in having a wonderful time explaining why I believe conservatism matters and why conservatism is relevant for today. I believe it's individual freedom. I believe it's fiscal responsibility. I believe it's constitutionally limited government. And I will continue to view my decisions through those glasses. And there will be times that we're not all going to agree. And our side, across the aisle, we're not going to agree, but that's what this place is for. It's a place for healthy debate. It's a place in which we can share big ideas.

But if we, as a body, lose the reason we are here, if we lose the fact that we're not here representing always the big ideas or the things that are abstract, when we disconnect ourselves from the dinner table and the coffee shops and the hardware stores, then we have disconnected ourselves from our purpose for being here. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to do that.

I'm going to be in this well talking about what matters and highlighting things that may not be real sexy to the press. They may not want to put it in the paper, but it matters to the American people. And I want to encourage our body here in the House and our friends across the way in the upper Chamber and this administration to say let's come together.

I believe conservative principles matter. I believe conservative issues are what will get us back to the thriving economy and the jobs that we need to be focused on. But it's going to take work, it's going to take explaining, and it's not going to be something we can just brush off. It's going to have to be something that we take seriously so that we can go to the individuals that we see in our grocery stores and our service stations and our high school football games and basketball games and baseball games, and we can look our friends and neighbors in the eye and say, "This is what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to get Congress back to the role of understanding. It's about what happens to you, not what happens to us." When we do that, then America is much better off than what we have.

I appreciate my friend from Missouri being here tonight and discussing these important topics with me. The principles we set forward tonight will help guide not only myself but others in the month ahead.

I also notice that I have been joined by a friend from North Carolina, and I would be happy to yield to my friend from North Carolina if she would like to say something.

Ms. FOXX. I appreciate the gentleman yielding, and I want to compliment you on the job that you've done tonight and say as a freshman that I think you have picked up very quickly on the issues involved here. I commend you for taking the time to explain things so well tonight to the American people.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I appreciate that. And your work here is

something I can look up to, and I appreciate that so much, along with my friends from all over, Congresswoman BACHMANN and others, who share this. We've got to share this message. It matters. We can never lose sight. Amongst the 435, we represent 700,000 or more. They're looking to us for good, conservative, commonsense values.

The challenges that our Nation faces are great, but the resiliency of the American spirit is even greater. I'm encouraged by the accomplishments of this body and what we have put forward from the majority and the dedication and commitment of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. When we look at this, we can never forget the responsibility of the bounty that we have. It can only be matched by our vigilance to the responsibility of the abundance we've been given. If we keep vigilant, then we'll keep our eyes on the right prize, we'll keep our eyes on what matters, and we'll keep our eyes on our families.

And for me, it always goes back to three reasons: Jordan, Copelan, and Cameron, and a beautiful lady I call my bride of 25 years, Lisa. That's why I'm here, because they represent all the other families and nieces and nephews across this country that we can help if we get our act together and explain to them why this place matters still in our country.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5, STUDENT SUCCESS ACT

Ms. FOXX, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-158) on the resolution (H. Res. 303) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5) to support State and local accountability for public education, protect State and local authority, inform parents of the performance of their children's schools, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

AMERICA'S DEBT BURDEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRIDENSTINE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) for 30 minutes.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the recognition, and I want to thank the Founders and the American people for the privilege of being able to serve in the United States Congress and also for the form of government that they gave to us.

We've just heard a wonderful speech given on why it matters, why it's so important that we stand up for this concept that was given to all of us by our Founders, because this Nation is different from all other nations for a

reason and that's why we're so proud of it. And we need to say that once in a while, why it does matter.

There are issues before us now that our Nation is looking at, and it seems like life goes on and we aren't shocked. Yet here in Washington, D.C., we end up being shocked over and over again because most of us come here very normal people, a part of different various levels of the fabric of society. We bring our cumulated experiences here and we deliberate, trying to make the best decisions that we possibly can.

Why? So that our country can be better than it was before. Because the one thing that we know looking forward, we want to make sure what we have now is enhanced not just for ourselves, but for the next generation. There's a reason why we've put so much time into our children, into our nephews and nieces, into our grandchildren—because we know that they're going to carry the baton. We get our moment in the sun for a certain period of our life and then we hand the baton on to the next generation. That's also a part of why it matters.

Today, I was in the Financial Services Committee, Mr. Speaker. When I was in the Financial Services Committee, we were honored. We had before our committee the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Ben Bernanke. He has served faithfully for nearly 10 years. And under his leadership at the Federal Reserve, we've seen extraordinary changes in our financial system. Never before had we seen something quite like the Federal Reserve opening the Fed's discount window to private investment banks. We saw the Federal Reserve giving subsidized access to companies that we had never seen before. We've seen what the results of that have been within our economy.

Many people call this a jobless recovery. Well, a jobless recovery is no recovery at all; because if you don't have a job, if you don't have a good-paying job, if you don't have increased benefits, you've got trouble. You've got trouble because I believe it's all about Americans first, about American wages first, about American jobs first, and about North America benefits first.

I made a note, Mr. Speaker, when I was in committee today. I noted that the debt clock was running. It was on a TV in the Financial Services room. The number 17 was up there, and 17 is \$17 trillion, which is a lot of money. When I came into Congress, Mr. Speaker, we were \$8.67 trillion in debt, and we were all looking around wondering how in the world will we ever pay back \$8.67 trillion in debt. That was January of 2007.

We're now in 2013. So something over 6 years later, we have nearly doubled the national debt. That's the baton that we're handing to the next generation. It isn't a lightweight titanium baton. This is a baton that's made out of one of the heaviest substances on Earth.