

will have some personal decision-making in terms of how do you get the benefit package that best serves you, best serves your spouse, and best serves your family.

I am so appreciative in a town where people dodge responsibility like it is the plague that the Budget Committee has said that we are either going to break promises tomorrow when we run out of money or we are going to be honest with people today about the state of the affairs that we are in: \$400 billion deficits, \$600 billion deficits, trillion-dollar deficits in the President's budget. And if you saw the chart that the vice chairman held up earlier, that pie chart of where America spends its money, interest that we are paying today dwarfs education spending, transportation spending, environmental spending, and the like.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. ROKITA. I thank the gentleman from Georgia again. He is not only a blessing to his State, he is a blessing to this Congress and to this country for his integrity, his hard work, and for his oratory. Thank you, sir, very, very much.

Mr. Speaker and Members of this body, please pay attention to the House Budget Committee tomorrow as we mark up this bill, hopefully not for 12 hours, but maybe so. We will be there for as long as it takes. And be ready—be ready and be proud—to vote on the floor of this House next week for a budget that offers honesty, real solutions, a balanced budget for a stronger America.

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

MIDDLE CLASS ECONOMICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak. I hadn't intended to talk on Medicare, although I think that the ultimate reaction to what we just heard is that the Medicare guarantee that has been the bedrock, foundation, for seniors really will terminate if this budget proposal that we just heard discussed for so long continues because it will basically give seniors an option not to have Medicare. I don't think we want to do that. This has been an extremely important program for more than 40 years now, and I want to look really, really hard at the proposal that is being put forth by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

What I came to talk about today is something that the President actually spoke to us about here in the Chamber in January, and it was middle class economics—middle class economics. How is it that we can grow the middle class which has been stagnant in its eco-

nomics growth for the last almost 25 years now, not seen a pay increase, husband and wife or a single parent struggling to make ends meet here in America? The President came here and he brought to us this middle class economics.

Why is it important? Well, basically, if the middle class is healthy, if the middle class paycheck is growing, the economy grows. It is an economy that is based upon the consumer, and the consumer really is the middle class. So it becomes absolutely important that we look at how we are going to grow the middle class in America.

There are many different ways to do that. Obviously, we need to strengthen the wages that the middle class have. We have seen very little wage growth in the last two decades. We need to really make sure that the men and women that are out there working day in and day out have the increase in their paycheck. We have seen little tiny bumps now as we look across the Nation, and as more and more people become employed and the labor market becomes somewhat tighter, we would hope to see this. But an important element of this paycheck is the minimum wage. So we advocate for \$10.10 minimum wage all across this Nation. We hope to get it.

But what we really want to spend time on today is the infrastructure and how to really see the infrastructure—the foundation for economic growth—really be put in place in America. We now have until mid-May, May 15, to put in place a new version of the highway bill. Can we do it? We have to do it. If we don't put in place and extend the Surface Transportation Act, we are going to see contractors all across America shut down their work, new contracts for highways and bridges not go into effect but, rather, be delayed. So Congress has an enormous task at its hand, and that is to reauthorize the Surface Transportation Act.

The current one? We kicked it down the road last fall. Well, the stop sign is right in front of us, so we need to get with it. We are going to talk about some of the elements in that. We know that if we put in a robust, full Surface Transportation Act, we are going to see the American middle class go back to work.

Let me just show you some of the elements that are in that Surface Transportation Act. Here they are. Last year, the President proposed the GROW AMERICA Act. I am going to call this the GROW AMERICA Act II. So we are looking now at how we can do that. The President came out with a full, 6-year program, a very robust increase in the amount of money available for surface transportation—fully paid for without increasing the excise tax on gasoline and diesel. No, you are not going to see an increase in the pump because of this program. Now, the oil companies may stick you, but not the government.

And so the President's plan, which we call the GROW AMERICA Act 2, has

all of these elements in it: rail, a full rail program that is a freight program; how you connect the rail system, the highway system, and the port system; buses; light rail and the intercity transportation systems that are so important for our urbanization. We are seeing a major need for these buses, for the light rail, the metro systems across the Nation. Ports: 90 percent of the commerce comes through our ports, and so the ports—Los Angeles, Long Beach, in California, Oakland, San Francisco, and Sacramento in my district—are critically important. So there are all of these elements.

We know we need to repair the bridges. We have a nice picture of the Golden Gate Bridge here. We probably should put the new Bay Bridge, or maybe we could actually put up this bridge. This actually happened about 3 years ago. This is Interstate 5 from the Canadian border to the Mexican border down the west coast, Interstate 5. Well, for about a month and a half you weren't going to get very far on Interstate 5 because this bridge is right near the Canadian border, and it collapsed. So bridges across the United States are in desperate need of rebuilding. Many of them are decades old, some more than 100 years old; and, finally, highways.

So this is the GROW AMERICA Act Surface Transportation Program that the President has proposed, about \$160-some billion over a 6-year period of time. It is a large program. It provides a lot of money for all of the things we need to do: freight, intercity travel, buses, light rail, metro systems, ports, bridges, and highways. It is all there. There is a separate bill dealing with our airports. This is our program. This is what we need to do. When we do this, we are going to put America back to work.

Now, one of my colleagues from California, the former speaker of the California Assembly, is here to talk about an element in this program. I welcome KAREN BASS to this 1-hour discussion.

Ms. BASS, if you would like to tell us what is going on in California.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, last year, Congress took an important first step. The CR/Omnibus allowed transit agencies to pursue local hiring. It didn't require them to adopt local hire policies, but it put hiring decisions in the hands of local government officials. I think my good friend and colleague from California is making the point that transportation is the backbone of this country, and certainly we have been the world's leader in infrastructure, in projects like has been described by my colleague, but we need to do more of that.

Every now and then, Congress does something in a bipartisan manner, and because of this action, the Department of Transportation established pilot programs that will permit L.A. Metro to

prioritize local hiring on over \$2 billion in transit and highway projects. Not just L.A. Metro, but around the country, local hire is now a policy. This investment will translate into tens of thousands of well-paying jobs for Angelenos putting these tax dollars back into the communities that paid for the projects.

□ 1730

Los Angeles is in the midst of a multibillion dollar investment in transit projects that will reduce congestion on our streets and reduce air pollution. Two major projects, I am fortunate to say, are in my district.

One is the Crenshaw line, which is an 8½ mile light rail line between the Expo line on Exposition Boulevard and the green line. It will serve the Crenshaw District, Inglewood, Westchester, Los Angeles International Airport, and surrounding communities.

Another project is the purple line that will provide a high-capacity, high-speed, dependable alternative for those traveling between communities, such as Miracle Mile, Beverly Hills, Century City, and Westwood. Angelenos have repeatedly voted to raise local taxes to help build these local transportation projects, but L.A. metro had not been allowed to prioritize hiring local workers.

In LA, it is crucial that we adopt local hiring policies. Los Angeles unemployment remains higher than the national average, and people living in south Los Angeles, who are directly impacted by the transit projects I mention, are facing some of the highest unemployment rates in the State.

Their tax dollars are paying a vast majority of these projects. Their businesses and homes are being the most impacted by the construction, but they don't benefit from the thousands of jobs that these transit projects will create.

While I was back in my district last week, I heard numerous commercials on how Crenshaw Boulevard, a major thoroughfare through south Los Angeles, will be closed for several days because of the light rail construction. This closure is directly impacting businesses trying every day to provide goods and services to the people who live there, as well as the residents who call south Los Angeles home.

This closure is difficult, but ensuring that these transit dollars will bring well-paying jobs is one way to alleviate the temporary pain from construction. We have done the right thing and allowed transit agencies to have control over local hiring practices. This will bring high-quality jobs to the areas most impacted by the disruption of transit construction.

Democrats and Republicans can often disagree, but on this area, we are on the same page. More local control to transit agencies will mean they can build light rail and subway projects that will last for generations while ensuring that people who need jobs today

will be the first in line for the jobs these projects create today.

This is an example of bipartisanship. My colleagues that are here today talking about the Grow America Act, this is a first step; it is positive, but we obviously need to do so much more. The example of the projects that you have given is where we need to go next.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much, Ms. BASS. I really appreciate your support. You have been a leader in California for many years, despite your youth. We look forward to this.

I am very familiar with the extensions that you are talking about in southern California. As Lieutenant Governor, we were working on many of those projects, and I really like that local hire. That is so critically important.

We have this issue not just on big transit programs like yours, but we also have it on our military bases, two of which I represent. All too often, people are imported from other States to do work in our local communities, and I am going: No, no, no, hire local, hire local, buy local.

Let me put one more thing up here, and then I am going to yield to my friend from New York because this is really his turf. Make It In America, Buy America. So when you are going to build these projects, let's do it with American-made products.

I think this one, Ms. BASS, this is, I don't know, a problem that occurred in San Francisco. When they decided to rebuild the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, they decided to use Chinese steel.

Some 6,000 jobs went off to China. The steel came back. It turns out that the steel had all kinds of problems: welding problems, structural problems. They are still dealing with this. This is really the "San Francisco Made in China Bay Bridge."

On the other hand, my good friend here from New York, PAUL TONKO, the Tappan Zee Bridge, across the Hudson River, both of them about \$6 billion to \$7 billion. This bridge made in America, with American workers, and American steel—and it is coming in on budget—not Chinese steel.

I don't know, Ms. BASS, but when you talk about making it local, hire local, we ought to have Buy America, Make It In America, and then we can really see the jobs, not just the local jobs in the construction, but all of the other parts that go with it.

Where is that train being made? It could be made in Sacramento by Siemens with American workers, made in America, our tax dollars hiring local workers and American-made products. It can be exciting. We can really build this economy. We can grow America, and we can rebuild the American middle class in the process.

Mr. TONKO, congratulations on your Tappan Zee Bridge made in America with, as Ms. BASS would say, locally hired workers.

Mr. TONKO. We are proud of any Make It In America provisions.

Let me thank you, first and foremost, for bringing together Representatives like Congresswoman BASS and you always at the helm to lead us into discussions at the soundness of investment, in infrastructure, that is required for a modern-day society, for commerce to function, for economic recovery sake. We need to include infrastructure as a bit of the formula that takes us to the maximum outcome for producing jobs.

I think any of us comprehends how investment and infrastructure equates to job creation. It is an easy exercise to relate to the skilled set of labor that is required to build these bits of infrastructure, but it is in the millions that we can strike in terms of added jobs and certainly a bolstering of our regional economies and certainly our national economy.

This one is a no-brainer. It makes sense across the board to invest in what is crumbling infrastructure, improving those deficit-rated bridges, deficient bridges, and to be able to provide for the sort of vision that we as a nation require, this Nation requires, in order to move forward on a path of soundness.

The siloing that needs to take place—or can take place, perhaps better said—is a frightening thing. We need to look at this infrastructure improvement through that silo, through certainly the opportunities for economic recovery, the environmental policies, the energy policies.

If we can move forward with these investments, encourage American-made manufactured goods and products for these projects, and then also see the soundness of putting together multimodal concepts where we bring together, through a sense of planning, all of the modes of transportation so that they are put into a hub concept where we are putting together the best energy outcome and that constantly working in that silo mentality that doesn't produce the results that will be most beneficial to all of us and for generations that will follow.

I think that we need to understand that we improve our bridges, we structure new where it is required; we don't continue to build to capacity without the element of rail opportunity that can remove some of those cars from the highway.

Energy efficiency is a common factor with rail transportation. It is the most energy-efficient mode of travel. If we can invest in rail and then incorporate that with soundness of transportation and infrastructure so that we are not building where it is not essential, where it can be avoided by multimodal concepts, we will then have the best product.

All of this is focused on the needs of a modern-day society. When we have seen the crumbling of infrastructure, where we have put on the back burner maintenance and repair and improvements, it begins to catch up with the

budgetary thinking here, and we develop crises that require huge outlays of money.

It is important for us to move now as urgent as we can, as quickly as we can, to invest in our infrastructure, in our roads, and our bridges.

I have looked at the needs within my district. They are there; they are very heavy. The impact on consumers with faulty roads, with less than acceptable infrastructure, is costly to the individual motorists.

That is in terms of repair and maintenance of your vehicle; it is in terms of idle time where there are traffic jams related to, again, a need for infrastructure that is soundly developed through a sense of planning where we look at all modes of transportation.

We have seen other nations begin to leapfrog past where we are at. We have instructed developing nations on how best to build their infrastructure, not just transportation roads and bridges and the traditional transportation infrastructure, but with utilities, with communications wiring, with all sorts of opportunities in water and sewer.

We can advise, but we need to take our own advice as a nation and begin the investment in what is soundly a strengthener of commerce, public safety, and quality of life issue for all of us, individuals and families in this country.

This is a golden opportunity. This is a way to put people to work. It is a way to purchase American-made goods that are, again, producing jobs in their manufacturing centers. It is a way to embrace sound planning. It is a way to be a better steward of the environment. It is a way to be energy smart in the outcome.

All of this can be taken care of if we do this incorporated sense of thinking, a collaborative model that doesn't silo us to the tomorrows of our society, but builds on a pathway to soundest investment, to most efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars.

People want safe roads. They want safe bridges. They want the modern convenience of utility infrastructure and communication infrastructure. They want the soundness of thinking that a company's water, drinking water, and water and sewer infrastructure are sound.

Representative GARAMENDI, you are on the west coast. I am the country span away on the east coast.

Mr. GARAMENDI. 2,800 miles.

Mr. TONKO. We are sitting on very aged infrastructure, and it is important for us to recognize that fact. There is a life expectancy that, when met, begins a huge crumbling of the infrastructure.

We need to acknowledge that fact. We need to acknowledge the fact that the soundness of workers skilled, trained, prepared, ready to do this work can be put into meaningful work opportunities, and we can get, again, the pathway to soundness of commerce and quality of life addressed in a very reasonable fashion.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much. You are always passionate about growing the American economy, making the jobs. Often, you talk about research and the important role of research and, today, the important role of infrastructure of all kinds.

Earlier, as I was going through some numbers about the GROW AMERICA Act II—this is this year's version of the President's infrastructure bill—I misstated. I said it was about a \$167 billion program. Actually, it is a \$478 billion program over 6 years.

It happens to be \$176 billion more than we are currently spending at the same rate, so it is really a terrific boost in the infrastructure. It does cover all of these things: rails, buses, ports, bridges, highways.

That is not all that we need to do. The American Society of Civil Engineers laid it out. If you look at our airports, they are getting a D; bridges, a C-plus—you go down through the list—drinking water, a D; energy, a D—just all through the list, all of the infrastructure—sanitation systems, D; water systems, D.

Many of our communities, New York City and others in your area, are communities that are two centuries old, and some of the infrastructure is also two centuries old. We have this enormous need to rebuild our economy. If we do so, we are going to create a lot of jobs.

One of my favorite publications that came across my desk recently is this one: "Infrastructure Investment Creates American Jobs," Duke University. This isn't something put out by the Democratic Party; it is put out by Duke University.

They say for every billion dollars that we invest, we not only get the infrastructure—the roads, the ports, the airports—but we also get 21,671 jobs. The economic impact is not just \$1 billion or \$1; it is actually \$3.54.

You are getting this boost in the economy. You are getting that thrust growing the American economy and, as the President said, "growing the middle class" because these are middle class jobs.

I am sure you see this in your area.

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely.

Again, the aged infrastructure is one factor; the new development, innovation, cutting-edge, high-tech opportunities that are not embraced, not incorporated into the infrastructure that we currently require—these are two major driving factors as to why we should be aggressive in our pursuit of infrastructure resources.

□ 1745

There are those, ourselves included, who embrace an infrastructure bank bill, making certain that we can get more for the dollar, that we can leverage and stretch the commitments that we make to reach more projects.

You talked about water infrastructure. I am seated on the Energy and Commerce Committee and am ranker

on the Environment and the Economy Subcommittee, so it is an appropriate place to review and to further inspect the state of our drinking water infrastructure.

In the last district work period just completed, I began with my crew at home the initial steps, with tours, of reviewing the water infrastructure that serves the communities that I represent. In Schenectady, New York, which is a town of about 60,000 individuals, we have some 240 miles of pipe in one community. That pipe may be as old as 100-plus years. The main feeds are 36-inch and 24-inch pipes.

When you look at all of this infrastructure, knowing that the replacement factor is going to come, isn't it a better thing to plan how we are going to share those resources with communities?

This is understanding that when we have a water main break—and we witnessed many of those during the very harsh winter that the Northeast of the country faced this year, and a number of the frost heaves are now busting this infrastructure. When we have some of these major breaks and when you see the water flowing from that location, it is not just water that is flowing by; it is dollars and it is electrons, because it took immense amounts of electricity, energy supplies, to treat that water. It took tons of taxpayer dollars to make certain that it is acceptable in its form for consumption, drinking water, and, of course, it is the water wasted.

So we need to see this as a way to save water, to save dollars, to save energy, and why not incorporate into this discussion all of those elements that speak to drinking water needs in this country?

You have seen too many opportunities or impacts on communities where they have had this "boil water" provision for days, if not weeks. You see it around the country. People are getting impacted, again, with this infrastructure that is so old, and it is in need of repair. We are sitting on not only pipes in the ground but well systems, the infrastructure, the computers, the workforce that is required.

Are we training the appropriate workforce to pick up in these areas who have high levels of certification? The know-how is immense, and the responsibility is awesome. There is the human infrastructure. There is the training. There is the planning that is required and, certainly, the outstanding need for the soundness of all of the system that brings you from that aquifer, that water source, into the business place or the home place.

This is something that we are going to further explore because we know there is an inordinate need, and we want to put together a sound plan that is thoughtful and reaches to the expected—the projected—needs and offers the assistance to local governments, which is so essential.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, you are talking about water. In just looking through the report card from the American Society of Civil Engineers, they have down here “water systems,” with drinking water, D; energy, D-plus; sanitation is another D; and wastewater, D.

Just across the Nation, in terms of a modern water infrastructure, both drinking water—potable water—as well as the sanitation systems, we rank them a D. In other words, we are polluting. We have contaminated water to drink, and we have contaminated water going out the other end of the sewer plant.

Let me just take a second to talk to you about a place where there is not enough water—California. We are in the fourth year of a major drought in California, Mr. TONKO, and you are talking about all of those water problems you have in New York. Perhaps you could put it on one of those tank cars and send it out to California, because we are in desperate need of water in California. Fortunately, last November, the people of California took note of this problem, and they passed a \$7.5 billion bond to build the water systems of California.

There are many parts to this—rebuilding the community water systems for small communities like you described. We have problems in California because communities are out of water. They don’t have any water at all. That is part of it. There is another part in dealing with conservation so that we would conserve our water. There is another piece of it that deals with recycling. In fact, the fifth-biggest river on the west coast of the Western Hemisphere—from Alaska all the way to Chile—is the sanitation plants in southern California.

You take, for example, water coming from northern California—500 miles, 5,000 feet in the air. You take it into southern California. You bring it in from the Colorado River—200 miles, 2,000 feet. You bring it into southern California. You clean it. You use it once. Then you clean the water to a higher standard than the day it arrives in southern California, and you dump it in the ocean. Hello. Anybody thinking? So the people of California said, Let’s recycle, so recycling programs are going to be part of California’s future.

We need to build reservoirs. We need to take care of the underground aquifers, which are rapidly being depleted. Unlike in New York, we are depleting them in California, not only in California, but in Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Georgia, Florida, and Oregon. All of these States are seeing a depletion in their aquifers. In California, we need to get with this.

In doing so, what I would like to see us do here in Washington is to take our Federal water programs, which are several. We have a recycling program and a conservation program—title VI is the Central Valley Improvement Act—

available to the entire Nation. We have the EPA with its water programs, the Department of Agriculture, obviously the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Corps of Engineers.

For those programs that are California’s, we ought to put them right underneath that water bond and augment, supplement, and drive forward that water bond that the people of California already voted for. We have our task in major infrastructure, in putting people to work, and in guaranteeing the future for California water supplies.

Mr. TONKO. I couldn’t agree more. I think what we can do to supplement efforts in individual States is so critical right now because the need is so in demand.

When I talk about this, I hear from your counterparts in California about the huge loss of water they had with some of the water main breaks. Again, it is the water; it is the dollars; it is the electrons that are flowing right by us. I have heard from Representatives from Texas, from those in Maryland, from those in the Northeast—New England and the Northeast—all saying it is about time. We need to do something here. My gosh. We have wooden pipes serving some communities. It is out of sight, out of mind. It is beneath that surface, and we are just believing that the water supply will be there and that the pipes will last forever. We know that the acidic quality of soils will wear the pipes from the outside and that the velocity will wear the pipes from the inside. They will not last forever.

It is important for us to make certain that we communicate well, establish that dialogue with the water maintenance crews at all levels in our home States and have them instruct us as the first line of that service delivery system and say, Hey, this is the situation. These are the conditions. These are the needs. And let us go forward with this infrastructure discussion that fully incorporates all of the elements of infrastructure—from the safety of our roads and bridges to the advanced investment in ports and rail, to communications to utilities. We have monopoly designed settings now wheeling electrons from region to region, State to State, nation to nation, nations to the U.S. All of this needs to be broadened in terms of the dialogue that we share and develop.

We need to understand that we are at a cutting edge where, in this century now, we need to upgrade because of new opportunities or upgrade because of aged infrastructure. It begins with the soundness of planning, and it is why I enjoy these discussions with you where we can ignite, so to speak, that thinking at home and, certainly, amongst our colleagues here in the House and down the hall in the Senate to make certain that we are just avidly supportive of going forward with a progressive order of policies that will speak to these infrastructure needs and

where we allocate the resources that are going to respond effectively to the given situation at hand.

It is within our grasp. The bottom line is it produces jobs—millions of jobs—all while addressing safety and quality of life and commerce opportunity.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much. You keep bringing these issues so clearly to all of us.

There are some among the 435 Members of this House who believe that the Federal Government should not have a role in these kinds of projects, and I think they are doing two things as they advocate that the Federal Government ought to get out of this business.

First of all, they are ignoring the Constitution, which specifically says Congress is supposed to take care of postal roads. They are also ignoring the Founding Fathers. Washington asked his Treasury Secretary, Hamilton, to develop a program on advancing the American economy, and he came back with a program to build ports, postal roads, and canals. So this has been a long history of America from the beginning—that the Federal Government has a role in all of these.

This morning, we had a hearing in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee about the highway bill, about the surface transportation bill. We note that the President put forward what I call the GROW AMERICA Act II—this is this year’s version of last year’s bill—that is for \$478 billion, a 6-year program, \$176 billion more than proposed last year, and fully paid for.

I notice that the ranking member of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has joined us. Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON of Washington, D.C., is with us now. This is her turf as ranking member of that committee.

Thank you so very much for joining us, Ms. NORTON. Share with us your thoughts on how we can grow America—grow the middle class, increase the paychecks for Americans, and build our infrastructure.

Ms. NORTON. I thank both of my good friends.

I certainly thank you, my good friend from California, Mr. GARAMENDI, for the consistency with which you have taken on these Special Orders. You don’t need my support, but I thought I would come down and offer my support, not only because of how comprehensive have been your comments to remind the American people of how important our bill is, the surface transportation bill; but I would like to just take a few minutes to relate to what I have heard both of you say. Indeed, I have heard you mention jobs and the economy in one form or fashion, but I want to take this moment to indicate the link between jobs and the surface transportation bill. What makes me want to do this is the Gallup Poll.

We have always known that the surface transportation bill and, indeed,

that infrastructure has been an engine of the economy, and one reason is that it throws off jobs. It starts, of course, in construction, but then, more than any other sector, it stimulates jobs all the way up, jobs that support all the way up. That is what the GROW AMERICA Act will do. Of course, if you want to do that, you need stable funding. When I looked at what the American people want, I saw immediately the link between that and this Special Order hour today. If you look at the most important problems in American life, it is amazing what they are. The Gallup Poll asked, What is the most important issue for the American people?

□ 1800

There were eight issues. Of those eight issues, seven out of eight have to do with the economy.

Number one was economic problems, divided into the economy and unemployment and jobs. Federal deficit and Federal debt were there, but everything else was about jobs and the economy.

There are gaps between the rich and the poor, lack of money—that is how the American people put—wage issues, and the high cost of living. There you have it. What is the best way to do what Americans want.

I agree with my good friend from California, we had a good hearing this morning, but I wonder if both of you weren't surprised that there was not more talk in this very bipartisan hearing that we had about jobs and the relationship to the surface transportation bill. I think there is a reason for that. That is that we can't yet pass the first hurdle: How are we going to pay for it? It costs money.

Your chart there—rail, buses, ports, bridges, highways—are not free. We are so hung up on trying to do the impossible, fund all of those without money, that we can't get to what the money will do. We are approaching the absolute deadline, May 31. The construction season is already here. It is 65 degrees in Washington, D.C., today.

I wonder, Congress knows that that very first bill, that Eisenhower bill in 1956, had a 13-year authorization because the Republicans in the 1950s were attuned to how long it takes to do exactly the kinds of things, Mr. GARAMENDI, that your chart points to, and you need an authorization more than a few months or even a few years to get that done—a 13-year authorization. No wonder that those post-World War II years were the very best years for the American economy.

The States simply cannot make capital improvements. That is what your chart speaks to. Every last one of those is a capital improvement. You can't do it without capital funds that come in bulk. The States, of course, have thrown up their hands. How many of them have just said, "We have got to do it if Congress won't do anything; we just can't go on like this"? Of course,

they are forgoing the projects they most need because no State has that kind of funds. Eleven States don't even have the option of putting up their own funds, they depend so heavily on Federal funds.

But to show the link that I came to the floor to make to jobs, the occupations with the largest growth today would make the American people cry. Number one is personal care aides. Heaven knows we need them. We are having a big rally here in the District tomorrow because of the low pay of these workers. But at the bottom is construction laborers. The personal care aides make median \$19,000, almost \$20,000. The construction laborers make almost \$30,000. That is a difference between a higher-wage job and those are the kind of jobs you are talking about, Mr. GARAMENDI—and a low-wage job. We are making only low-wage jobs because we are not, in fact, funding bills that would not only deal with rail, buses, ports, bridges, and highways, but the other parts of our transportation and infrastructure that my good friend has also mentioned.

Of the fastest growing occupations, the top 10, only two have to do with what would grow America—insulation workers and brick and stone masons. Those are only two of the top 10.

In my own district, the District of Columbia, I would hate to ask you to guess what is the occupation with the largest job growth—security guards. We need security guards and we welcome security guards, but I want my two friends at the podiums to know that not one job, not one truly high-paid job, except registered nurses and lawyers—God forgive us—is on this list.

So I come to the floor to thank both of my good friends for the conversation you have been having, to join it, and to link it to what worries the American people. They can think about nothing these days. They don't even think about ISIL. They hardly even thought about the Department of Homeland Security bill that we just passed here only last week. They can't think about anything except that as we say, rightly, there is a growth in jobs, and yet their wages stagnate because the growth is not where the wages would grow.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Ms. NORTON, you hit right on with your closing sentence. It is about the middle class; it is about middle class jobs; it is about growing the economy and laying the foundation for present and future economic growth. We could do that. The President's plan last year, which he called the GROW AMERICA Act—and I am saying this year we call it the GROW AMERICA Act II—is \$478 billion. That is a lot of money, and we put that into the surface transportation.

I was thinking about as you were talking about the surface transportation, Mr. TONKO, over there, and about the new Amtrak bill that just passed out of our committee. It will be

on the floor pretty soon. It calls for a lot of investment for Amtrak on the Northeast corridor so that you can go from Washington, D.C., to your home up on the Hudson River. I think there is a rail line that goes up there.

Mr. TONKO. There certainly is.

Mr. GARAMENDI. They call for a big investment there. One of the things we think ought to be in this bill—in fact, it is in the bill—is a very strong Buy America provision. This is a locomotive, electric locomotive for the Amtrak line here on the Northeast corridor from Washington, D.C., to Boston, and this locomotive is 100 percent American made. It is made in Sacramento, California, of all places, by a German company, Siemens, who looked at the American Recovery Act, and there was \$700 million in there to build these locomotives, and they said 100 percent American made. And Siemens looked at that and goes: \$700 million, make it in America, we can do that, and they are doing it. These are now being deployed on the east coast line.

But the next phase is a high-speed line between Washington and Boston, and that high-speed line calls for a new kind of train, high-speed train, and out of our committee we said that it is going to be built in America.

Now, Mr. TONKO, here is where I turn this over to you. It turns out that one of the foreign companies, Alstom, which is a French company, has a manufacturing plant in upstate New York, maybe near your district. If so, you are going to have those middle class manufacturing jobs when this bill passes with a 100 percent Buy America provision.

Mr. TONKO. Well, interestingly, when I was on a recent trip south of D.C., into the southeast of the U.S., I got to tour a brand-new car that is a luggage car, storage car, includes racks for bikes, all sorts of storage done on that car itself, and proudly they wanted to share with me it is made in Elmira, New York, in upstate New York, state-of-the-art design, brand new vehicle, just put on, I believe, that week that I was on the train. So, you are right, this translates into jobs of all orders, from manufacturing of these cars, these train cars, to innovation and research that is required, for instance, in our electric utility infrastructure.

But, you know, I think Delegate HOLMES NORTON struck something that should speak to our senses, and that is history dictating to us when we were at our best. When we had this dip in our economy, when we were in post-Depression, when we needed to recover, we invested in jobs; we invested in infrastructure. My gosh, you look at the buildings that came through those late 1920s and 1930s that are still standing, not only solid as a rock, but tremendously designed and great bits of architecture that speak to a great bit of cityscape in our communities that really added to the look of the community.

And we can take it back even before that in the history of our time when, as

we have talked on this floor before, the Erie Canal, barge canal, was constructed. It was done at a time when Governor DeWitt Clinton had this goal—and the economy was in tough shape, too—and so he drove this idea through tough times when people said we can't afford it. And elements in history, chapters in history repeatedly remind us, you know, we are replete with these anecdotal bits of evidence that tell us, when things were really tough, when the economy was really, really weak, we went and pulled ourselves out of those pits, those financial downfalls, and did it through investment in infrastructure.

Here we not only have an opportunity to pull us up and have a stronger economic response, but it is also enabling us to utilize the intellectual capacity of this great country that grows innovation, grows ideas, new concepts, research on lighter weight materials that can make our renewable energy supplies all the greater, where the bang for the buck is all the stronger.

So there are elements galore that speak to an effective bit of planning that can take us through these tough economic times, respond to this crumbling nature of infrastructure or the need to build the new state-of-the-art elements into our Nation, be it communication, utility, transportation-wise or water and sewer-wise. There are golden opportunities to add to the workforce and then utilize the best opportunities out there, technologically, that have been developed through the soundness of American know-how, American ingenuity. So this gives birth. This gives—it coaxes from us the strength that we have as a nation to rely on that creative pioneer spirit that builds America in the truest form and fashion.

So coaxing that kind of activity, America needs to be coaxed by that, pushed to embrace the pioneer spirit. Go forward with these opportunities to make us a strong, strong voice that will resonate with all communities across this country because they know that need for infrastructure is strong. It is really beckoning our leadership to go forward and commit to the soundness of that infrastructure investment, and we see it in so many aspects of the work done here.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We know that one of the key opportunities that presents itself to Congress in the next 3 months is the surface transportation bill. We know that we have to have it out of here, renew it by the end of May. We know that if we do that, the construction season—while being a little bit rocky because we are late in getting this done—will be able to move forward through the summer and then on into the fall.

One of the tasks that our Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON has is to push that out, and if in that piece of legislation we maintain the Buy America provisions, it is not just the construction jobs, it is going to be the

manufacturing jobs, and men and women that will build the light rail, that will build the buses, that will build the Metro systems, will put together the pieces of the port, the bridges, wherever they may be, and of course the highways.

Ms. NORTON, you have got a task out ahead of you. I know you are up to it. If you would like to share some additional thoughts, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Ms. NORTON. Well, my additional thoughts are really stimulated by the comments that both of you have made. You spoke about manufacturing. One of the reasons, one of the first things that occurred that got out of this recession was that manufacturing began to come back in America; and now, of course, corporations are finding good reasons to manufacture in America, and particularly at this time.

Mr. TONKO, in essence, you were talking about stimulating the economy, and the best way to do it is to build something. You mentioned the buildings in Washington. If you look at the cornerstone of virtually all the public buildings downtown, the buildings that people come to see, the Federal buildings, they all have a 1930s cornerstone, because that is when we stimulated ourselves out of the Depression.

Mr. GARAMENDI mentioned Amtrak. Well, this is the hub of Amtrak, my own district. I must tell you, when I think about high-speed rail, speaking of Amtrak—and we haven't put the first high-speed rail on line, not the first, which puts us behind not only all of our allies, but even some developing countries.

□ 1815

It makes me almost ashamed to be on this committee, we are so behind. If we really wanted to get the economy going, we would give ourselves a deadline for high-speed rail. We would understand that if you want to move your economy quickly, you do not do something like cut taxes. You build things. You build America.

I don't know how much time you have left, but I just want to thank you for the leadership, Mr. GARAMENDI, that you have taken and to say to you that I am with you as we continue to remind this Congress that this should be one of its foremost tasks this year: our surface transportation bill.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Your leadership on the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit is exceedingly important. All of us look forward to your success and the success of all of us in building America's infrastructure.

We have about a little less than 5 minutes left. If you would like to take a few minutes, then I can, and we will call it an evening in which we have come, once again, to talk about building America, rebuilding the American middle class.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you. Certainly, it is an honor to join with you and our colleagues this evening, as so many

have come to the floor to speak to the soundness of infrastructure.

We have talked about the present moment. We have talked about being inspired by the past, but let's look to the future. Not only do we owe it to the present moment to embark upon some of the newest options, alternatives, and innovative concepts, but what about the impact on future generations?

If we don't do what is required of us in this present moment, we are saying that we are willing to survive on that fat of the land, that we take all of that thoughtfulness and all of the sense of progress and the pioneer attitude of generations before us who said: We are going to leave a sound bit of infrastructure, and we are going to know that we did the most we could in our moment so that generations to follow will be able to live—and live strongly—and be able to prosper from that and perhaps further stretch the thinking of America.

Well, we haven't done that. We have taken that opportunity and utilized it in a way that serves our present-moment needs. The neglect here, I think the sinfulness of this outcome, the moral compass that should guide us is that you leave a better world for those to come.

The payment mechanism isn't going to get cheaper. We know that. The need is inordinately high. The sense of vision that we need to share as leaders of a nation that is so great as the U.S. needs to provide for a soundness of planning and cutting-edge opportunities and an infrastructure that is strong and vibrant that allows for job creation, for commerce and its needs, for public safety, for individuals and families across this country.

Representative GARAMENDI, this has been a very sound way to share with people across the country what the thinking is of the Democrats in the House. The Democrats believe in the soundness of infrastructure. They believe in investing in jobs. They believe in investing in a better tomorrow, investing where you rightly anticipate lucrative dividends—lucrative dividends.

It is not spending foolishly. It is investing soundly in a way that speaks to documented need and then encourages and inspires us to speak in bold terms that will take us to cutting-edge opportunities that we will leverage in the present moment so that generations to follow will say: They got it, they tackled the problem, they responded to the challenge, they were bold in their attempt.

Let's leave that as our message. Let's leave that as our legacy.

I thank you for the opportunity here this evening.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much for joining us tonight and your leadership on this whole range of issues.

It is about tomorrow. Tomorrow will be solid for America if we build a solid foundation, and that foundation is the

infrastructure. It is the research facilities, the sanitation, the water facilities, the highway and rail facilities.

The President has made a proposal. It is up to us to respond to that. Six years, fully paid for, no increase in the gasoline and diesel tax, it is all there. All we need to do is grab it and grab the future in the process. I am happy for the opportunity to share this evening on building tomorrow's future.

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

IRAN NEGOTIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting these days to hear our current Secretary of State, someone who as a Congressman went to Central America and basically was negotiating a deal with a communist leader—corrupt—at the same time the Reagan administration was conducting negotiations.

I am very proud of my Senate friends down at the other end of the Capitol who sent a letter to Iran, since the former constitutional law instructor—not professor, but instructor—from Chicago doesn't seem to realize he needs the Senate advice and consent in order to create a binding treaty with another country, especially one that actually has a major impact on the ability to continue to exist for Israel and the United States.

If this President and Secretary of State get the deal that includes everything that we would want that this administration has not already taken off the table overtly, then it means nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

Our allies in the Middle East, so-called Saudi Arabia; Qatar; UAE; Egypt; and, in fact, most of the nations in the Middle East—Jordan, perhaps—are all going to need nuclear weapons to protect themselves.

If this administration continues to persist with anything that does not require dismantling and stoppage of the spinning of the centrifuges in Iran that continue to develop nuclear material for bombs, then the whole world is going to be in trouble.

In fact, the negotiations have become so desperate on the part of our own administration that then-Congressman John Kerry would try to sit down and negotiate with a communist criminal leader in Central America and undermine the efforts of the Reagan administration.

Our friends down the hall—47 Senators—were completely aboveboard. They said nothing inappropriate. There was no crime, no treason. They were just advising people to the negotiations that here is what the U.S. Constitution says.

Apparently, they had not been so advised by our constitutional law in-

structor Commander in Chief, so it is important that somebody did, and I am pleased that my colleague and friend TOM COTTON did just that.

But here we are. I think this article from townhall.com by Katie Pavlich illustrates very clearly just how desperate this administration has gotten to get any kind of deal, just any kind of deal so they can say they got a deal.

Yes, okay, Iran has an agreement that will allow Iran to continue to cheat, as they have been found to have done a number of times, so it doesn't actually allow them to have not just a nuke in 10 years, they could covertly develop a nuke within the year if they so wished.

My friends DANA ROHRBACHER and STEVE KING met with IAEA representatives who had been inspecting Iran, and it left me extremely concerned about how quickly, easily, and covertly Iran could go ahead and move to the next step, even beyond 5 or 20 percent enrichment, as Iran has gotten.

Here is this article from Katie Pavlich from March 16. In part, she says:

According to a report in The Times of Israel, the National Intelligence Agency delivered a report to Congress that scraps Iran and Hezbollah from the terrorism list, citing the country's work against ISIS as one of the reasons why.

Mr. Speaker, if this administration is scrapping—taking—Iran and Hezbollah off the terrorist list, then the last thing we need this administration doing is negotiating with these terrorists—this terrorist regime—trying to work out a deal because anybody that would say Iran and Hezbollah are not a terrorist country and terrorist organization should not be negotiating anything for the United States of America, where the vast bulk—thank God—of the American people do not want to support, lend credence to, or in any way help terrorist countries or a terrorist organization like Hezbollah.

It goes ahead and quotes from the National Intelligence Agency report from The Times of Israel and then has Ms. Pavlich's question:

Is ISIS a threat? Absolutely. Should we align ourselves with or appease Iran because of their work against ISIS? Absolutely not.

As a reminder, Hezbollah, funded by Iran, is the largest terror organization in the world. Before 9/11, Hezbollah, not al Qaeda, was responsible for the majority of U.S. terrorism deaths, including the 1983 bombings of U.S. Marine barracks and U.S. Embassy in Beirut, in addition to a series of attacks in the 1980s.

Hezbollah is also responsible for countless attacks on Israel. In 1992, Hezbollah, with help from Iran, bombed the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires. In 1994, they bombed the Jewish community center in the same South American city.

Those are just a handful of examples that don't even account for the thousands of rockets Hezbollah has launched into Israel throughout the years.

So what's going on here? Why strip Hezbollah and its funding parent Iran from the terrorism label? Especially now? It all points back to getting President Obama his deal with Iran at all costs.

This reclassification of Iran and Hezbollah without the terrorism label is a certain warning sign the deal the White House is working on to appease the rogue regime does not have the best interests of the United States as a top priority.

Since, apparently, this administration is not aware, I would hope, Mr. Speaker, our colleagues here in Congress would want to be aware of what the administration isn't. Maybe that comes from not reading the intelligence reports, but you don't even have to get an intelligence report from an intelligence agency.

This, for example, comes from the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, and it is a timeline for Hezbollah violence.

1982, Israel invades Lebanon to drive out the PLO's terrorist army, which had frequently attacked Israel from its informal "state within a state" in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah, a Shiite group inspired by the teachings and revolution of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, is created with the assistance of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

The group is called Hezbollah, or "party of God" after initially taking responsibility for attacks under the name "Islamic jihad."

Some thought that was the Republican Party, but actually it is Hezbollah that is the party of God.

□ 1830

In July of 1982, the president of American University in Beirut, Davis S. Dodge, is kidnapped. Hezbollah is believed to be behind this and most of the other 30 Westerners kidnapped over the next 10 years.

April 18, 1983, Hezbollah attacks the U.S. Embassy in Beirut with a car bomb, killing 63 people, 17 of whom were American citizens.

October 23, 1983, the group attacks a U.S. Marine barracks with a truck bomb, killing 241 American military personnel stationed in Beirut as part of the peacekeeping force. A separate attack against the French military compound in Beirut kills 58.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand that, to the Obama administration, the killing of all these marines, the killing of all these American citizens in Beirut, and the kidnapping of Americans and other diplomats by Hezbollah would be considered workplace violence. I get that. But to most people in America, they understand these are acts of sheer terrorism, and they need to be called what they are.

September of 1984, the group attacks the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut with a car bomb, killing two Americans and 22 others.

More workplace violence.

March of 1984, William F. Buckley, a CIA operative working at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, is kidnapped and later murdered.

April of 1984, Hezbollah attacks a restaurant near the U.S. Air Force Base in Spain. The bombing kills 18 U.S. servicemen, injuries 83.

December of '84, Hezbollah terrorists hijack a Kuwait Airlines plane. Four passengers are murdered, including two Americans.

I don't see how this administration would be able to classify that hijacking and murders as workplace violence, but you never know.

February 1985, Hezbollah publicizes its manifesto. It notes that the group's struggle