

Mr. CRENSHAW, Florida
 Mrs. BROOKS, Indiana
 Mrs. BLACK, Tennessee
 Mr. RIBBLE, Wisconsin
 Mrs. WALORSKI, Indiana
 Mr. ZELDIN, New York

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. Madam Speaker, and Members, wow. There are actually people here in the audience and Members.

We have talked a lot about middle class economics, but why? Why is it important? Why did the President raise this issue in his State of the Union? What is this all about?

We are going to spend some time here today working our way through middle class economics, and some of my colleagues may join me, and I asked the Republicans, if they want to join, they could too.

It is okay, Madam Speaker, that they are not listening. But this is really an important issue.

So why is middle class economics important?

What is it all about?

It is really about driving the economy. If you want to create jobs in America, if you want to have economic growth in America, the middle class of America, the great middle class, the millions upon millions of men and women that are working families, they need to grow. And so middle class economics is all about growing the American economy, because that is where demand is created.

We often talk about the job creators, and businesses really create product and they create profit. But it is the middle class that actually creates the growth in the economy by creating the demand. So if we are able to grow the middle class, grow the paychecks, increase the vast number of Americans who are in the middle class, we will create the jobs. So that is why middle class economics is on our agenda.

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There are other pieces of this. It leads to higher wages. So when you increase the middle class, you increase the higher wages, creating the demand.

So that is what this is all about. It is about opportunity. It is about growing the ability of the working families in America to make it, to have a shot at education, to have a shot at a home. So that is what we are going to talk about today in the next 46 minutes, about middle class economics. The President brought this issue to us. We are going to spend some time discussing this.

I notice that our fearless whip, STENY HOYER of Maryland, has joined us.

Mr. HOYER, please, let's get into this conversation.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The reason I wanted him to yield is because I want to thank him. I don't know that there is any Member of this body or, frankly, the other body who has spent more time talking with the American public to let them know how focused we are on making sure that Americans can Make It In America. And the middle class, of course, is critically important.

I will tell the gentleman from California, he and I have both traveled outside this country—I think I have been to probably 60 nations—and every nation has its rich people, and every nation has its poor people. America's genius and success was posited, however, on the broad middle class that we had, that made America. They are the ones whose work and intellect and creativity and innovative spirit and entrepreneurial energy made America what it is and what it has been.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for the fidelity that he has shown over the years to this critically important objective of making sure that the middle class, working Americans have the ability to make it and to increase their standard of living over that of their parents. That has always been the genius of our country. It needs to continue to be. And the President, of course, has offered, as the gentleman points out, an agenda that is focused on working men and women in this country, making sure that they have the ability to live quality lives and have their children pursue education and do even better than their parents; and as they do so, their country, this great country of ours, will do better as well.

So I wanted to rise to thank the gentleman for his, as I say, fidelity to this objective, which is, after all, the critical agenda for our country.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank you, Mr. HOYER. Nobody has been at this longer than you. You have been working in the Halls of Congress and across this Nation advocating for the middle class.

Both Democrats and Republicans now agree that the middle class in America has stalled out. They have not seen the increase in their paychecks. In fact, in the last couple of years, there has actually been a decrease on the average middle-American paycheck.

So what we are all about and what the President proposed to us in his State of the Union was middle class economics. And it is critically important, if we want to grow the jobs in this Nation, that we have got to pay attention to the middle class and how they can improve themselves, how they can have a higher standard of living, have greater paychecks. In doing so, we will grow this economy. We will be able to deal with the deficit. There are numerous ways in which this can be done.

We need to look for higher wages. Infrastructure is critically important. In the budget that the President just put

forth yesterday, there is a major advancement that he is proposing for infrastructure, a 6-year program, over \$600 billion in that 6-year period—\$673 billion building our roads, rebuilding our bridges, our ports, our communication systems. When you do that, you actually are going to grow the economy, and it is the middle class that will have those jobs.

So this is all about growing the middle class, otherwise known as middle class economics. That is what we are going to debate this year.

We are going to spend the next several months as we put together the budget first and then the appropriations and the various pieces of legislation—for example, reauthorizing the surface transportation program. We want to structure that. We, the Democrats, want to structure that in such a way that the principal benefits flow to the working families of America so that they can see greater wages, so that they can see greater opportunities. And there are many, many pieces to this puzzle that we need to pay attention to. So we want to grow American jobs.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) was here just a moment ago. And he has been talking about this theme of making it in America, which builds on the Buy America laws which have been in effect for more than 40 years. Our taxpayer money must be spent, should be spent on American-made equipment. We will come to this in a little more detail, but these are the fundamental parts of growing American jobs. You make things in America, whether that happens to be a movie or a new app for your iPhone or a train or a plane, whatever it happens to be. Make it in America; and use our taxpayer money to buy American-made equipment.

This one here: a well-educated workforce is fundamental to growing any economy, whether it be in Bangladesh or in the United States, the education of the workforce. If you have a well-educated workforce, your economy will grow.

America used to have the best education system in the world. We are not there anymore. We have fallen way off that power curve. We have got to establish America's position as having the best educated workforce in the entire world.

Now, the President, in his State of the Union and as part of the middle class economics, spoke to this issue when he talked about community colleges, all Americans being able to get 2 years of education at a community college, perhaps to pick up an AA degree or some skill set, and that it be free. What an important, important element that is in having a well-educated workforce. There are many, many other pieces to this educated workforce, and we will, over the next several weeks and months, be talking about this as we go forward.

Research and development. Well, I am from California, and I represent a

major research university, the University of California, Davis. You can just see spreading out from that university new businesses in biotechnology, biomedical, biopharmaceutical. We are seeing energy programs and new companies being created from the research at the universities. This is not just at Davis, California, but certainly Silicon Valley is a prime example of the skill being used all across this Nation, and other research institutions around the Nation. These are the ways in which you grow American jobs.

We talked earlier about infrastructure. We will come back to that.

Trade policies are also critically important. We will be debating the Trans-Pacific Partnership here and the TTIP, the European trade agreement. In those trade agreements, it is vitally important that we don't give away the American jobs. It will be a great debate. Very important. We have seen what happened with NAFTA and other trade agreements when we have simply allowed the offshoring of American jobs.

So these are six pieces of how you grow American jobs.

I notice my colleague from Vermont is here.

If you would care to join us in this conversation, I would be delighted.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you for doing this.

One of the things that we have to recognize in Congress is that policies really make a difference.

Wages have stagnated; people haven't had a raise in 15 or 20 years; and there are a lot of reasons for that. Some of it is globalization. A lot of it has to do with the weakening bargaining power of unions that were so helpful in improving living standards for everyday Americans, not just for the members of the union but for others who benefited by the commitment of unions to good jobs, good wages, and safe working conditions.

There are pressures with globalization that have reduced bargaining power. It has made things cheaper to buy but has really helped contribute to lower wages. The bottom line is that we need policies in order to focus attention, as you are saying, on the middle class and improving their purchasing power, giving them what the middle class has always had: a wage or a salary where, at the end of the month, they can pay their bills, set aside a little money for college, set aside a little money for a vacation, set aside a little extra money for retirement. That is a basic contract that we should be making.

We have got a variety of things where we have created policies and undercut the capacity of the middle class to sustain itself.

The tax policy is out of control. It is really outrageous when we have been passing these Bush tax cuts that are skewed very heavily toward high-end folks with the notion and the assertion that it will create jobs through trickle-down economics. It hasn't worked.

When we have entered, in some cases, into trade agreements, it didn't take into account the environmental and labor standards that are so essential to having a level playing field. American workers are willing to compete, but it has got to be on a level playing field.

Then basic things that a confident nation always invests in, even in tough times, like education and the future. We grew up, and those ahead of us had the GI Bill. They came back from serving their country and got a free education. But you know what? They paid it back, and then some, with their productivity.

We established Medicare and Social Security that has provided a safety net for older people. We are trying to make inroads now into providing a secure health care system for everybody through the Affordable Care Act, but we have a big challenge in bringing down those costs.

We have an opportunity to invest in, as you were saying, not just the higher education, but job training for people so that they have the skills that we need to compete in a modern economy.

And the infrastructure that you mentioned, how is it that in this country, where we have extraordinary engineers, extraordinary needs, and bipartisan agreement that we have to rebuild our roads and our bridges, extend broadband throughout the country, including in rural areas of Vermont and, by the way, rebuild our schools, rebuild our hospitals, all of these are institutions that are essential to the well-being of local communities that are where the middle-class people live, so I really appreciate your focus on this.

What is frustrating, I think, for America and for a lot of us in Congress is that our focus on policy is how many more tax cuts should we give to folks who don't need them, how much more should we spend on things that don't reward investment and hard work, and for how long are we going to continue this disinvestment in science, in research, in medical research, in infrastructure, and in education.

I am pretty amazed, as I know you are, that young people getting out of college, on average, have a \$30,000-plus debt. Many have accumulated debts in the range of \$100,000, and a lot of those debts are shared by their parents who have cosigned. They pay higher interest rates. A lot of those parents who have finally paid down their house and were looking forward to maybe taking a 2- or 3-week vacation, maybe a cruise, suddenly find themselves saddled, along with their kids, with these very high monthly payments for education.

So there is a bipartisan desire, I think, to help the middle class, but we are in a debate about what the solutions are. Essentially, one argument is that no taxes, no regulation, will somehow lift all boats. I don't think I have seen evidence that that is the case. Another argument is you have got to make sensible, prudent, disciplined de-

cisions about how and where to invest in the future of this country.

So, Mr. GARAMENDI, I salute you for your advocacy here and for speaking so eloquently on this issue that I think is the issue of our time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. WELCH, your representation of the State of Vermont is unparalleled. You have been at this for some time, and you have so correctly pointed out all of the various policies that are in law today that hold back the middle class.

You have talked about the tax policy that basically supports those at the very, very top—the one-percenters, the 10 percent—and forces, therefore, the tax burden onto the middle class and the poor. The President is suggesting a shift in that, and we are going to debate that here—and we should. But again, that is one more piece of this middle class economics to grow American jobs. These are all public policy issues, the Make It In America, the Buy America provisions, the education.

You raised something that has been very, very much on my mind. I have kids that have school debt from going to medical school or nursing school or even just to the 4 years, and I often wonder, the great majority of the student debt is actually owned by the Federal Government. I think about 60 percent of the \$1 trillion-plus in student debt is owned by the American public.

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We refinance everything. We refinance our credit cards, and we refinance our home, seeking a lower interest rate. I just wonder: Why don't we refinance the student debt?

Mr. WELCH. That is exactly right.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We could borrow money at less than 2 percent now for 10 years, probably 3 or 4 percent for 20 years. Why don't we go out and borrow at 2 percent, refinance that debt, and let them pay 2½ rather than 6, 7, 8, and 9 percent?

Mr. WELCH. If I may, Mr. GARAMENDI, you are so right. One of the upsides of this really tough economy is that interest rates have gone down, and a lot of folks have been given a little breathing room by being able to reduce their interest rates on their mortgage from 7 or 8 percent down to 3½ percent. That is real money in their pocket.

Mr. GARAMENDI. You bet.

Mr. WELCH. Why not allow students and parents who have cosigned on students loans that same opportunity to save a few bucks? They will pay those loans back.

So I salute you.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Refinance your home; refinance your student debt. It is a bookkeeping procedure at the Federal level. Right now, those students are paying a very, very high interest rate to the U.S. Government, and they are held back. This is a major part of the middle class.

Mr. WELCH. Well, I thank you for your leadership.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. WELCH, thank you for joining us.

Madam Speaker, I am going to carry on here for a few more moments. We are going to talk about a few other things that go into this. That previous placard had Make It In America as one of the principal ways of growing American jobs, and it is really true.

Madam Speaker, I want to give you just two examples of how Make It In America and Buy America creates American jobs—or not. Two bridges, one on the west coast, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, and one on the east coast—New York, actually—the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York.

This bridge in the San Francisco Bay was supposed to be about a \$3 billion project. It turned out to be over \$6 billion. Instead of buying American steel, they went out and bought Chinese steel. It was supposed to be 10 percent cheaper. It turned out to be far, far more expensive. It became over budget.

It did create 3,000 jobs in China and serious problems with the quality of the steel, the welds, and other problems. Anyway, it wound up almost \$4 billion over budget, more than 100 percent more expensive. That was San Francisco. This is my State. This is a major controversy and, if you will, a major scandal in California.

In New York, the Tappan Zee Bridge is now under construction. It is 100 percent U.S.-made steel. It is coming in at about \$3.9 billion total, under budget, and there were 7,728 American jobs as a direct result of the decision made by New York to buy American, to make it in America.

This is the most clear example that I have been able to find—west coast, east coast—and the east coast is making the right decision of buying American, using the American taxpayer dollars in the case of both the commuters in New York or the commuters in San Francisco Bay, paying their money to China in the case of San Francisco Bay Bridge, or to American workers and American steel companies, a prime example of why Make It In America is so critically important because it is all about those middle class jobs.

It is about the steelworkers, the ironworkers, and the men and women that are doing the welding that are in the shops and in the steel mill harvesting or mining the coal and the iron ore to make the steel.

Keep this in mind, America: when we talk about Make It In America policies and when we talk about middle class economics, we are talking about bringing it home, keeping it home, and building our own economy.

China can do what they want to do, but let them do it with somebody else's money and not with American taxpayer money, so we are going to push this policy hard.

I want to give you another example, Madam Speaker, and that is that at this moment Amtrak—we know what Amtrak is. It is just the American passenger rail system. Amtrak is request-

ing a waiver from the Department of Transportation on the Buy America requirements for the purchase of 28 new high-speed rail train sets for the east coast corridor.

Amtrak correctly wants to make the trip between Washington, D.C., and Boston a whole lot faster. To do that, they want to transition to a whole new type of train—not the Acela, which was the last version of high speed. They want to go to a real high-speed system here on the east coast.

However, we are talking about tens of millions of dollars to be spent on these high-speed train sets, 28 of them. They want to waive the Buy America requirements—waive the Buy America requirements.

What happened with the Bay Bridge, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge when they did that? The jobs went overseas. I am saying: No way, no how, are you going to waive the Buy America requirements. They say: Oh, but you don't understand. America doesn't make high-speed trains.

Yes, that is correct because we have never had them in the United States, and we never will if we waive the Buy America requirements both for the high-speed rail on the east coast or the high-speed rail on the west coast.

No way, no how, Madam Speaker, should we allow American taxpayer money to be spent overseas. Build it in America, make it in America, and hold on to those Buy America requirements. They are legal. They have been in law for nearly half a century. Keep them.

Amtrak, I am sorry, but I have talked to the companies that could manufacture these trains. They say: Of course we can make them in America. It is going to take a little while. We have got to build the factory. We can do it. If it is required, we will do it.

I will give you an example of how it actually happened. In the stimulus bill, the American Recovery Act, there was a provision, some \$700 million for Amtrak to purchase 100 percent American-made locomotives—these are the electric locomotives that will be operating on the east coast corridor, 100 percent American made, \$700 million, about 80 different trains, 80 different locomotives.

Siemens looked at that and said: Hmm, 700 million, that is a lot of money, 80, 90 trains or locomotives, we can do that.

They took their light-rail factory in Sacramento, California, about a mile from my district, a few miles from my home, expanded it, and began the process of making it in America. Those new locomotives are 100 percent American made by a German company operating in the United States.

Don't tell me you can't do it. Don't tell me that you cannot make aluminum frames for these trains, that you can't make wheels and brake systems in the United States. This is the United States. We used to be—and we must be—at the top of the pack. We can be if we bring it home, if we keep it home, and if we make it in America.

Remember. Remember this fiasco in California. Remember what happens when you went to China to buy steel, 100 percent over budget, and a lot of ongoing problems as to the safety of this bridge going forward.

Remember New York. They said they were going to buy American. It comes in under budget with 7,728 jobs in the United States, built by Americans. I am not proud of California in this situation.

Madam Speaker, there are a couple of other things that are on my mind. As I said, why middle class economics? It is about growing the demands. It is about rebuilding the middle class, giving the purchasing power to the middle class, and growing their wages.

Grow the paycheck. Grow the paycheck. Grow the jobs. Grow the paycheck. These are all ways in which we can raise the wage. There is this little #raisethewage, so when you see that out there on your Twitter account, you know what it is about. Grow the paycheck, buy American, education—job training and education.

This is a big one: more than 50 percent of the women in America are working, and they are working at the same job as a man for about 75 percent of the wage. Do you want to grow the wage? Do you want a bigger paycheck for American families?

Then pay attention to the law that has been in effect in the United States since John F. Kennedy signed it in the sixties, and that is equal pay for equal work.

This one down here at the bottom, the men and women at the bottom at the minimum wage. We have been calling for a raise in the minimum wage for months and years here.

If you want to help out the American economy, you raise the minimum wage—we excuse me, not you, us—Members of Congress and the Senate—raise the minimum wage, and we will see greater purchasing power and a growing economy as a result of that.

You don't lose jobs. The economic studies are clear. You are not going to lose jobs by raising the minimum wage. It hasn't happened in California. The minimum wage went up in California a year ago. We have seen job growth. We didn't see less jobs.

What we are seeing, Madam Speaker, is greater purchasing power by the families of America, fewer people on food stamps, and fewer people on welfare. As you raise the minimum wage, that is what happens, so this is what we call grow the paycheck, raise the wage.

I am going to let education go. We will pick that up later. I want to pick up one of my current challenges. I think anybody that studies American history will know that America was the greatest maritime nation in the world. We would contend with the United Kingdom—England—as to which was the greatest maritime nation, and we surpassed England.

We have lost that. We have seen our maritime industry—our mariners and

our ships—decline. We have very, very few ships flying the American flag anymore. All of the cruise ships that are advertised even on the Super Bowl 2 days ago were flagged overseas. They didn't have American crews on them, although all of their passengers seemed to be American—or at least many of them.

What we need to do is to find ways to rebuild the American maritime industry. These are the sailors, the merchant marines, the American mariners, the captains, the sailors, and the engineers.

It is also the shipbuilding. The great shipyards of America are in need of business. We do a lot of naval ships. Madam Speaker, this is a fundamental national security issue. The shipyards in America, the ability to build ships for the Navy and for our domestic trade is critical as a security issue. Obviously, it is critical as a jobs issue. We can do this.

We are in the process of exporting natural gas with liquefied natural gas. A new terminal by the Cheniere company in Texas will need 100 ships or more just for that one terminal. What I am saying is that if we are going to ship a strategic national asset—natural gas in the form of liquefied natural gas—if we are going to export that, then we ought to use that export to secure a second national security issue, and that is our merchant marines and our shipyards.

When this tanker, which happened to have been built in Japan, finds its way to an American port, will it be American sailors? This is a very dangerous thing. You are talking about millions of gallons of natural gas in liquefied form. Will it be American sailors? Will this ship be an American ship?

India wants to buy natural gas from the United States. They have a tender offer out. That tender offer says: We want to buy X gazillion cubic meters of natural gas—good—and three of the ships that transport that must be built in India.

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And I say to India: Great. The other six or seven ships must be built in the United States. You want our gas, terrific. Then we want to have the ships built in the United States with American sailors.

This is a fundamental national security issue.

I just noticed that my good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO), came to join me on the floor, probably because I was praising New York so profusely with the Tappan Zee Bridge. Mr. TONKO, good for New York. Shame on California for building a bridge with Chinese steel.

Mr. TONKO. I thank the gentleman from California for leading us on middle class economics and on infrastructure and on growing the jobs and growing the economy. That can be—must be—our top priority, making certain that the dignity of work and the

strength of drawing a paycheck are the American Dream that we want to help individuals and families across this country tether so they can move forward, utilizing their skills and talents and passions in order to be able to maintain a household, raise a family, and provide for the American Dream. It is always a pleasure to join you when we are speaking on these issues so forcefully, and to know there is a solution out there. There is a way to grow this economy, and looking at some of the items mentioned in the budget is important, and we should pay respect to that.

Certainly infrastructure that you just made mention of, and thank you for leading us in a recent motion to recommit to make certain that those who will staff those boats, transporting that cargo of LNG, create American jobs. We need to be very much disciplined in how we create a working agenda for America's families, and that is one step in the process.

But to the greater issue of infrastructure, I would suggest that we are well beyond that deadline when we should have responded to America's needs. We have a very deficient infrastructure. There are many bridges in this country that are rated deficient and weak. There are a number of situations with the grid system that was designed for a monopoly setting, and we now know that we transmit, we deliver electrons not only from region to region, former monopoly region to monopoly region, but State to State and country to country. It requires an upgrading in investment in our electric utility grid and certainly broadband. For our communication's sake, we need to wire neighborhoods in remote areas in communities across the country to enable us to strengthen the outcome, the commerce end of it all, to give businesses those needs that are so important.

Let me just close with this, because I see our friend, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) has joined us. I believe it is the Ninth District of Ohio.

I recently held a press conference at home after a week of being on the floor here, and it was about the child care and dependent child care credit, tax credit, and it was amazing to hear the real-life stories of parents who struggle, trying to work. They need two incomes and are impacted by the high cost of child care, quality child care. They need that comfort zone to know that as a coparent, in a way, with the given agency that they are in a secure setting, so that they can be productive at work and know that their children are well cared for.

And it brings great benefits. There are social and cognitive and educational skill sets that are introduced into the lives of those toddlers and children that makes them all the more ready for that pre-K to K to elementary setting, so it has great benefits. But when you think about the fact that the average cost is \$10,000 per year for child care, and when toddlers can be as

high as \$16,000 and a 5-year old as high as \$12,000 per year, that is an immense cost to families.

So as the President addresses this issue in the budget, he triples that benefit to some \$3,000 per child under 5 per family. For families making as much as \$120,000, they can get that full benefit, and there is a scaled-down benefit for family incomes as high as \$210,000.

So there are efforts here to grow the economy through middle class economics. The middle class has taken it on the chin for far too long. We have seen the growth of this economy post-recession and all of the added wealth that has come since that turnaround, that upward movement that has gone to a relative few in our society. Now it is time to share the wealth with the great numbers of us in the middle class, and that is the engine that runs America.

If you give more purchasing power to the middle-income community, you give it to the working poor, give it to those looking to ascend into the middle class, that will drive a strong economic recovery, even more powerful than what we have seen since the President took office in 2009, when we hit the lowest point in March 2009. From that recession that President Obama inherited, we have done really well. We could have done much better with infrastructure investments, which would have put many people in the trades to work and where we would have responded with a much stronger outcome for purchasing power for the great many of us in that middle-income community.

So, Mr. GARAMENDI, it is always a pleasure to join with you and our colleagues to make certain that we bring to the public's attention direct assistance that we can provide, items that have been introduced in bill format or included in a proposed budget from the President that can make a difference in the fabric of this community called America, where we can tether that American Dream in more noble and measured terms, and where we can make certain that we not only grow the climate for job production but grow the economy.

So it is within our grasp, but we just have to be bold in our attempt to go forward and to be progressive in our thinking and in our policies.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, you have been here on the floor with me many times over the last few years, and we keep beating this drum about American jobs. We now have a policy from the President, middle class economics, that has all of the elements, many of which we have talked about on the floor—the research issue, the education issue, the job training issue, the infrastructure, all of those things—and it is all pulled together in middle class economics.

Another piece of that puzzle is trade policy. If we are going to grow American jobs, as I put this up before—Make

It In America, Buy American, education workforce, research, infrastructure, and then this one down here, trade policy.

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) has spoken to us on the floor about this issue many times. She is passionate about it. I think she is right about it. We have to be really, really careful as to how we do our international trade programs so that we don't hollow out the great American manufacturing sector, American jobs, whether they are in agriculture or manufacturing, or in other parts of our economy.

Ms. KAPTUR, we would love to hear from you on this issue. I know that you are passionate about it and very well informed.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. GARAMENDI for bringing us together again. He is truly a leader on growing American jobs, all of the way from California, way out on the west coast, to the gentleman from New York's community on the east coast. I commend both of you for your dogged determination to keep expanding the recovery and doing everything we can to help the American people have increasing paychecks and fulfilling work and a good family life where they are able to raise their children and fulfill their dreams, whatever they might be.

I just wanted to come to the floor and talk about America's trade policies for a brief moment and the records. Statistics don't lie, and our trade policies have been costing us more jobs than they have been yielding us for a very long time. The trade policies that have been enacted have actually caused the United States to cumulate since 1976 a staggering number—\$9.5 trillion—in trade deficits. That means more imports coming in than our exports going out. Translating that into lost jobs, foregone jobs, 47.5 million lost jobs in that little over a quarter century.

The American people say: Why do we have a budget deficit?

Well, I will tell you why. When you lose this much productive wealth inside your country to other places, our people start to backslide, and they have been backsliding since the 1980s. Despite our hard work here to try to make a difference, trade policies have an enormous impact on the ability of the American people to maintain a standard of living and to both remain in the middle class or aspire to it and earn their way forward.

It now takes two in a family to earn enough, whereas when I grew up, our father worked and that was enough to support our family—until he became ill, and that is a whole other story. But today, it is so hard for people to have two people working in the family and hold their household together. They are scrimping every week as to where they are going to put their limited incomes.

I just wanted to put this so people start thinking: How did America get in

this deep a hole on trade? I believe before we sign any more trade agreements, we ought to go back and fix what is wrong with the current ones. Wouldn't that makes sense?

They promised us with Korea, which is one of the most recent agreements, that we would be exporting 50,000 automobiles over there. It hasn't happened. In fact we have already lost 17,000 additional jobs because of the Korean agreement not being in balance.

So I think we have to be rigorous and ask ourselves: How do we fix this for the sake of the future, not just this generation but the next? I have a long list, and I am going to be coming to the floor many evenings going through this list, talking about companies that we have known in this country and where they have relocated. I know that the workers in those places and the executives who used to run those companies, I know how hard they worked to create great American products, and they didn't deserve the fate they were dealt because of bad trade policies.

Let's look at Huffy Bicycle in Celina, Ohio. Huffy Bicycle used to be known coast to coast. It was made in western Ohio, and it actually became and is currently a Wal-Mart supplier. Unfortunately, well over 1,000 people lost their jobs at Huffy Bicycle in Ohio in the late 1990s—1998—and the plant first moved from Ohio to Missouri, and then it moved from Missouri to Mexico, and then it made its final move from Mexico to China.

So if you look at Huffy Bicycle today, you will see the paint job is not the same. You will see the tires aren't the same. The quality of the metal is not the same. It is not the bicycle that used to be made in Ohio that lasted a lifetime.

So there has been a knockdown, a decrease in quality, that has come with that manufactured product, which is then shipped back here to the United States and sold in different locations. It is kind of sad, really, what happens.

I love chocolate. I used to really like to buy Hershey bars, and I still eat Hershey. But Hershey had always been manufactured in Pennsylvania—in Hershey, Pennsylvania. In fact, when you walked through Hershey, you could smell the chocolate in the streets. It was just absolutely captivating. But if you have noticed, Hershey has changed. The recipe has changed. They will deny it, but a large part of their production was moved to Mexico. They even had to change the wrapper to withstand the warmer temperatures, and the recipe changed, and all of those workers in Hershey, Pennsylvania, in 2011. That happened in 2011. These are brand-name products that we know in our country.

Dell—Dell had been located in the Carolinas, and in 2009 they moved to Mexico, too. So you think about the manufactured products that we have known, and companies like Bank of America that had offices in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Independence, Ohio, they

moved production to Mexico too, in 2013. So if people think they are safe in their service job because they are not in manufacturing, they will be very surprised to learn that the service jobs will follow.

How many phone calls have you gotten in your home from a call center located in—and it could be anywhere in the world but here. And I always ask the person from the call center:

Where are you calling from and how much do you earn?

I find that their earnings are so low they can't buy the very product that they are selling over the telephone. What kind of world are we creating?

The markets that exist in other places like Korea, Japan, and China are closed to us. We are racking up these gigantic trade deficits because we can't get our products in there, and the people in those places don't earn enough money to buy some of what we export. So it is really a rather vicious cycle. I am not going to take up much more time except to say that I believe where America went wrong was about 30 years ago.

□ 1800

We should have signed a trade relationship with Europe which shares our political and legal values. They subscribe to a rule of law: "We can do business." Though their markets aren't completely open, they are pretty open, and we could work with them.

Then we should have invited into that structure, which starts with a belief in democracy and representative government, these other countries that are aspiring to be better than they are, but without the political advancement, their economic system will never work for them without the rights the American people have.

We could have invited in Mexico. We could have invited in the CAFTA countries. We could have invited in Korea, et cetera, to that union of democracy-loving republics. We didn't do that.

What worries me over time is, in the end, we might be cashing out our very liberty because, if you look globally at what is happening, you will find in those places that the people are not treated well that are doing this work. Over time, what kind of residue does that leave toward our country and toward those who are their new overlords?

I have walked through some of these places; I have walked through some of these companies. I remember walking through with our mother—God love her—when she was still living, through one company in Mexico.

She said, "MARCY, look at the women's faces," and I did. They were so afraid. They were afraid of their boss. They were afraid of us. They were afraid of losing their work because there was no worker representation. What kind of a world are we contributing to in these other places that most Americans will never visit?

I thank the gentleman. As I see your title there, "Grow American Jobs," I

would say, "Grow American democracy. Grow representative government at the same time as we do trade."

I think we really got way out of kilter back in the 1980s when these agreements began to be imbued with the kind of power they had.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Ms. KAPTUR, you are very, very correct about the role of trade policy and hollowing out the American jobs in almost every sector—you mentioned several sectors—and in every one of those, we have seen this happen.

We are going to be engaging in a debate this year about whether we are going to extend trade policies to what is called the Trans-Pacific Partnership and, also, very, very soon, whether we will give away our constitutional obligation to write trade policy, whether we are going to give that away to the administration.

For me, this is extremely important. We have seen this year after year, we have seen this problem, and I do not want to see a repeat of it in the new legislation.

I would like to just move to a couple of other issues. We have got about 7 minutes left. Perhaps, Mr. TONKO, if you would take a few of those minutes and wrap up, keeping in mind that this is all in the context of middle class economics, how the American family that is struggling to make it in America, how they can do better with a set of policies that we are proposing to the American public—tax policy, infrastructure, educational policy, research—all of these things that are part and parcel of middle class economics.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative GARAMENDI.

If I could just associate my comments with the representative from Ohio, MARCY KAPTUR talked about the impoverishment factor around the world. These negotiated agreements are much more than just trade barriers and tariffs. They become public policy.

When you lose American jobs, that is only the beginning of the story. We have made a situation very critically tough here, and we have resulted in impoverishing workers around the world, so that is an undoable, unsustainable outcome.

I think back when Ms. KAPTUR spoke of the exodus of jobs and the incremental steps that took them eventually offshore. I think of the entire passageway of the Erie Canal system that drove a westward movement, reached Ohio, and then eventually allowed for the development to the west coast.

You think of that, and many a person, many a worker, tethered the American Dream to those mill towns that were given birth to by that Erie Canal system. That was the empowerment of this Nation—and to think that that whole history has been rejected. A lot of the creative genius came from the immigrant who was working on those assembly lines. We need to remember that history. We must have it speak to us.

This whole idea of inserting public policy into these agreements or, again, circumventing our responsibilities here in the House—people who we represent at home need to ask us: Where are we on fast track? Do we want to give up that congressional responsibility and just do thumbs up or thumbs down on a negotiated agreement?

The other items that I am concerned about are items like the earned income tax credit. That is part of the budget request made by the President. I spoke to a number of people in my district who rely on that and others who aren't even filing for the earned income tax credit and they qualify.

I want people to understand that this is not a tax loophole, this is economic and social justice, where we take folks who perhaps might not even make enough to file a tax return to get an earned income tax credit.

This is one of the greatest anti-poverty agents we have in the budget, so we need to make certain that that earned income tax credit is available when the final budget is completed, and we need to make certain we get the word out.

This is about empowering those who are at the lower strata of income. We want to make certain that programs like the earned income tax credit speak to those who are working. It is encouraging people to work, and it is trying to bring again some economic justice and social justice.

So many of these communities are benefited when we remind people that these tax opportunities are available for them. It empowers the regional economy. So many times, there is poverty clustered in some of our urban cores, and so the social justice that comes with an earned income tax credit is that millions of dollars are now brought back into the community.

On those budgets where our lower strata income qualifying folks are, they are going to spend those dollars, they are not going to bank those dollars. So an earned income tax credit, dependent child care tax credit, these are important items—fair trade, infrastructure improvement, there are a great number of things that we can do to muscle up the outcome here.

It begins in those hallowed halls of government where you can, through these efforts in the halls of government, make policy happen. We need to take heed as to what needs to be done for our middle income community.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, I thank you so very, very much.

Ms. KAPTUR, we are in what we call the rapid fire. You have about 2 minutes, then I will wrap it up with another minute, and we are out of time. If you would, please.

Ms. KAPTUR. I appreciate your focus on growing the middle class and helping those who aspire to be in it to be successful in that journey. There is no question that when you have a robust middle class, it creates the demand that then buys the products from the

corporations across this country that want to earn dividends, so that they can share those with their shareholders.

Growing the middle class drives our economy and it creates the jobs, and the people who do those jobs really create the company, they make the company work.

It isn't the shareholders who are down there on the lines, although I believe very much in shareholder equity for workers. I wish I could encourage more of it. Wouldn't that be great if they could all have a part of the indexes that the wealthy invest in? Because they certainly have earned it.

Through good jobs with decent wages, through the transportation and infrastructure bill I hope we can pass this year, which would be one action we could take that would help to give a big boost to this economy from coast to coast, all of that can help lift people's boats across this Nation.

I join in alliance with my two dear colleagues, Congressman TONKO and Congressman GARAMENDI, who are down here all the time. You are such good Representatives from your respective States, fighting on behalf of the American people.

Most of the rest of the place has gone home, but you are on the job. You remind me of members of my family. They always worked overtime.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I want to thank you and Mr. TONKO for joining us, so I have got Ohio and New York. Mr. HOYER was here earlier from Maryland and Mr. WELCH from Vermont. We covered a large part of the United States.

We are all talking about what the President has put forth as a national policy of middle class economics: how we can grow the American economy, why it is so important for the middle class to really succeed, because that creates demand that then America businesses can fulfill in their many, many ways.

I notice that the esteemed chairman of the Rules Committee is here, and I suspect he wants to present us with some information. Mr. SESSIONS, if you are ready—and I will continue on until you are ready.

In the meantime, the elements of the middle class economics, we know why it is important. It builds the demand that the businesses can then fulfill—American business—and so you really create the jobs with that demand.

It also gives us higher wages. You are strengthening the middle class with higher wages.

We talk about infrastructure. We will spend a lot of time talking about infrastructure as we come up to the May deadline where we must renew the infrastructure law, the surface highway transportation.

All of these are pieces of the puzzle. We are nearly out of time, but I see the esteemed chairman of the Rules Committee.

Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the gentleman very much, my fellow Eagle Scout from California.

In fact, I did walk on the floor here, and I noticed that Ms. KAPTUR is here, Mr. TONKO is here, and you are having a vigorous discussion which is important with the American people.

I am about to be in receipt of a bill that will come down that will be presented to the floor here in just a minute, so if I keep talking here for just a minute.

Mr. GARAMENDI. If I may interrupt here for a second?

Thank you for the courtesy that you provided to me in the Rules Committee when the liquefied natural gas—the LNG bill came up and when we talked about how we could use that strategic asset to enhance another strategic asset, the American shipbuilding industry. You were kind.

We had a wonderful discussion in the committee and then again on the floor. It is another way in which we can grow the American economy, by using public policy in this way, and there are many, many other pieces to it.

I think your staff has just arrived with the papers that you need, so I will yield to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. I would, pending receiving those, which is just about to happen, say to the gentleman that his ideas that he brought to the Rules Committee, in fact, were received well, the ideas about shipping in American ships, building of American ships, the opportunity for American ships to employ people as they transported American products around the world.

We will be ready here in half a second, so anybody who is watching gets high drama.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I have always looked forward to a dialogue, a bipartisan dialogue, on important issues, and I didn't quite know that we would come to that at this moment while we await your staff bringing down their papers.

In the meantime, I thank my colleagues very much, and I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 527, SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 50, UNFUNDED MANDATES INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2015

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-14) on the resolution (H. Res. 78) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 527) to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 50) to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE EFFECTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMY

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I do appreciate my friend's discussion today. In fact, there is an article I would like to move right into regarding the President's proposal to help middle America by going after corporations.

□ 1815

This is an article of Money News from Newsmax, by Peter Morici. This points out:

Posturing as champion of needed public investments and fairness, President Barack Obama wants new taxes on the overseas earnings of American businesses. That would kill jobs and punish retired Americans. Although special deals permit some corporations to pay low taxes, most pay a heavy burden. The estimated effective U.S. corporate tax rate is about 27 percent and is well above the 20 percent imposed by other industrialized countries.

The United States is virtually alone by taxing the overseas profits of its multinationals when those are repatriated. This has encouraged U.S. firms to invest nearly \$2.1 trillion of their earnings abroad instead of bringing some of that money home to create jobs in America. Now the President wants an immediate 14 percent tax levy on those assets to raise about \$500 billion and to impose a 19 percent tax on future earnings to finance infrastructure investments.

Madam Speaker, we have heard this before, this mantra about how we are going to build infrastructure. If you will just give us, as it was the last time, \$900 billion, we are going to rebuild the infrastructure of America.

What happened?

We got Solyndra, and some Democratic friends got lots and lots of money and grants and all kinds of benefits, and we didn't get the infrastructure we were promised. Every time the President wants to trot out a new program, he throws that in because it worked. Seriously, it worked 6 years ago. Americans bought into it, and the majority here bought into it. Let's give him the money so we can build infrastructure, and we saw that that was a word that was not kept.

There is the point that many have made about the President's new proposals that he brought up in the State of the Union Address to help the middle class, to help the Nation's poor, and we have seen how the middle class has been helped under this President—the middle class has gotten smaller. The gap between the ultra rich and the poor has gotten wider, and we have more poor. We have got more people on food stamps than ever in history, more than anybody could have ever imagined when that program was started, and it continues to be a massive problem for much of America.

There is trouble getting a job. Oh, I know we keep being told that the Cook

numbers work well. Gee, the economy is doing so well. But across America, people understand "I am not doing well." If they have been able to keep their jobs, they have not seen their wages keep up like they should have. At the same time, the administration is trying to convince the middle class and the Nation's poor: "I am taking care of you."

What is actually happening behind the scenes?

We know for at least the first 5, 6 years of this administration and for the first time in our Nation's history, 95 percent of the Nation's income went to the top 1 percent. Before this administration, the Obama administration, that had never, ever happened.

It is tragic when you see the effect that it has on families. It is tragic when you see that people had such hope for this President's helping the poor, not adding to the poor. They had hope for climbing up through the middle class and maybe, one day, having a shot at being wealthy. Unless you are a President or a former President, it is kind of tough to make that kind of move because not everybody gets paid a million bucks or even \$100,000 for giving a speech. So most of America that was suffering before is still suffering. In many cases, it is much worse.

The people who really understand money management are pointing out: wait a minute. If you break down what the President is proposing in order to help, supposedly, the middle class, and if he is going to tax these evil corporations on money they have earned overseas when they have a corporate presence here and there, some of us have been proposing: if you will just eliminate any penalty, then they will bring that money into the United States; they will use that capital here in the United States; jobs will be created, and plants will be expanded; and there will be more people able to join unions of non-government working people because those are the kinds of jobs that would come back. If you lowered the tax on corporations down to where China has it, you would see companies come flooding back into the United States that built their plants in China.

As our good friend Arthur Laffer has pointed out, the rich are the people you are not really able to tax because they will move on you. They will move, and they will change the way they make income. I know people like Democrat Warren Buffett like to say: "Oh, gee. I am willing to pay more taxes." It is one thing to say it. It is another to write the check, and that hasn't happened. If he wanted to pay the same income tax rate that his secretary pays, then he could pay that. Write the check. You don't have to keep it all. It is okay. You can send it to the government if you want to. Unfortunately, when you tax corporations as much as we do in the United States, and when that tax gets passed on to the consumers—because, if it doesn't, they don't stay in business—then it is back to the middle class paying those taxes.