

they already received extensive training.

I want to thank those who have served for their dedication to protect and serve and to defend our communities. Your service will not be forgotten.

FLORIDA'S SUCCESS UNDER TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of tonight's Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor tonight to host my colleagues from the great State of Florida to highlight the successes we have seen since passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

With job growth, wages, and labor participation all up since the passage of this bill, hardworking Americans and businesses are already experiencing the many improvements that are the result of these reforms to our Tax Code.

In its April report, the U.S. Labor Department announced that the unemployment rate dropped to 3.9 percent, the lowest level we have seen, Mr. Speaker, in 18 years. The tax cuts and simplification of our Tax Code that we passed only a few months ago, along with our President's regulatory reforms and progrowth policies, are creating jobs and restoring confidence in America's economy.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, we celebrated National Small Business Week to recognize the importance of small businesses across the country. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy and create millions of jobs to help Floridians and Americans pursue a better future for themselves and for their families.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is working for small businesses. According to the National Federation of Independent Business, small businesses are the most optimistic that they have been in nearly three decades. This is no surprise. The reforms in this bill have dramatically improved the way that small businesses are treated under the Tax Code, unleashing hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts.

Just last month, Mr. Speaker, I toured Magellan Transport Logistics, a service-disabled, veteran-owned logistics company in my hometown of Jacksonville, Florida. They are adding at least 100 new jobs in the next 5 years

and were able to acquire a new 47,000-square-foot facility.

During the tour of the facility, we were told by the company's CEO that this expansion is a direct result of the tax cuts that the business received from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This is just one example of the differences that these cuts are making to improve the way of life for countless Americans in Florida and across the Nation.

I have heard from many small businesses throughout my district who are thriving unlike never before because of these landmark reforms.

As the Representative of Florida's Fourth District, I am proud to represent the historic city of St. Augustine. St. Augustine is known around the world, Mr. Speaker, as the oldest city in America. It is full of unique family and community-owned businesses, including the St. Augustine Distillery.

Located in the site of Florida's oldest ice plant, the St. Augustine Distillery's opening in 2014 marked the first time that spirits have been distilled and created in northeast Florida since Prohibition.

As a young business facing more than their share of regulatory challenges, the St. Augustine Distillery was relieved, to say the least, when the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was signed into law. The distillery announced shortly after the bill's passage that they would be using their savings to make further investments in their employees and increase their equipment and inventory, creating new local jobs and hiring additional staff to manufacture, market, and sell their products.

Small businesses are an important part of my community and our economy, but they aren't the only ones that have been given relief under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Mr. Speaker, last September, northeast Florida was devastated by Hurricane Irma. The storm surge was over 5 feet and dropped more than a foot of rainfall. Our community saw some of the worst flooding in over 100 years along the St. Johns River, and many areas are only now recovering.

Because of the Federal tax savings that they received, Tampa Electric, Florida Power & Light, and Duke Energy Florida all announced that their customers would not receive a rate increase for power restoration costs associated with these companies' response to the hurricane damage. With the money that they would have paid in corporate income taxes, these companies were able to recover the cost of restoring power and repairing the damage after Hurricane Irma, which has spared thousands of Floridians an increase in their energy bill this year.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the many ways that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has already made a difference in the lives of hardworking men and women in northeast Florida and across the State by allowing them to keep more of their hard-earned money in their paycheck.

Tonight, we will hear from a number of my fellow Floridians about the great successes of this bill and helping the lives of Florida families in our district.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida's First District (Mr. GAETZ). He a great colleague of mine on the Judiciary Committee and a defender of a strong, booming economy.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say how proud I am to be a Floridian taking the floor this evening to talk about the great value that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is bringing to the folks in the Sunshine State.

I am particularly proud that Florida was prepared for this uplift in the economy as a consequence of the work of Congress. Since Governor Scott took control of the Governor's mansion, our State has reduced over 50,000 regulations. We have cut taxes over 50 times.

Folks like my colleague, Mr. RUTHERFORD from Florida, served in our law enforcement community and led to safer streets and safer communities so that we could grow and prosper in a way that was conducive to a family-friendly life.

For so long, while we had been cutting taxes and fighting for a more competitive economic ecosystem, the Federal Government had thrown a wet blanket over the economy. With a corporate tax rate that was one of the highest in the world, Florida companies weren't able to leverage the great talents that were coming out of our State to go and compete because the rules were stacked against us as a consequence of bad policies in Washington.

I am so proud that during the 115th Congress we were able to pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act so that States like Florida could realize the great benefit of conservative leadership.

In my district in north Florida, where we have got a number of hardworking folks particularly in the manufacturing center, there is a new sense of economic optimism and prosperity that is sweeping across our State and my region.

The National Association of Manufacturers' 2018 first quarter Outlook says that 93.5 percent of manufacturers now have a positive outlook regarding the growth of their businesses. This is entirely consistent with the feedback I have gotten from manufacturers such as Ascend Materials and American Elite Molding, where we are competing with the best around the world, and we are winning and growing.

Manufacturers in my district have said that one consequence of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is that they are able to reinvest in their facilities: buy new, cutting-edge equipment and grow and expand their physical plant. This creates jobs and better competition—absolutely outstanding.

Energy cost is something that impacts our small businesses and families alike. As a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Gulf Power, the independently owned utility in my district, is cutting rates so that ratepayers will

see savings of over \$100 million. That is \$100 million plowed right back into the economy in my district, right back at the kitchen table at the end of the month. Certainly, it is of great value that we have been able to see that result for our families and for our businesses.

Publix is another great business in our State. They are increasing pay for employees, allowing employees to be able to buy into employee stock option programs at greater frequency.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is the largest businesses in our State or the smallest, whether it is families that have been prosperous or families that are looking to climb that next peg on the economic ladder, I can say with great sincerity that the feedback as a consequence of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has been entirely positive. Folks are more optimistic. Ultimately, that will ensure that the State of Florida is able to participate in a more competitive and productive economic environment going forward.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I had the great honor as a sheriff in Florida representing the Florida Sheriffs Association to work with MATT GAETZ when he was in the House. I have to tell you, there is no one that works harder for the State of Florida and this country now that he is in Congress. I just want to thank him for the hard work. He has always been a great partner to work with. We had some great successes there, and then to come up here and actually be part of the first tax cuts and reform in over some 30-odd years was significant.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from north central Florida's Third District, Mr. TED YOHO. He is a small-business owner himself who understands taxes and the regulatory burden that businesses face.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the sheriff in a neighboring county, for bringing this and putting this on tonight. I think it is great that he is doing this because we need to highlight the successes that we have had.

All across the country, America sees the benefits of lower taxes from the GOP Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. We are hearing about the tax cuts that benefit hardworking families and those that are benefiting the business community to grow our economy all across the Nation.

But here in Florida, the average family of four is saving \$2,069 due to the Federal tax reductions. That is \$2,000 they didn't have before that they can use for retirement, college, unplanned expenses, or to invest back into the Florida economy.

In addition to the personal cuts to Federal taxes, businesses across the country are giving their tax cuts back to their employees in the form of bonuses, retirement benefits, family leave, and increased pay.

□ 1945

We see this in millions of jobs across the Nation. I have never seen this be-

fore. I am 63 years old. I remember the '86 tax cut when Ronald Reagan and the Republicans did it then. This has been so much more significant, and the impact on the economy is multiples of that.

In Florida's Third Congressional District alone, there are several businesses—ranging from large corporations like the Walmarts and Wells Fargo to the small mom-and-pop businesses, such as The Flood Insurance Agency in my district—who are giving back to their employees in our local community. The Flood Insurance Agency in my hometown of Gainesville, Florida, gave \$1,000 bonuses to each of their 17 full-time employees. \$1,000. That is \$17,000 reinvested into our community because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that the Republicans passed and President Trump signed into law.

Additionally, CenterState Bank, which is headquartered in Davenport, Florida, but has branches in five cities across my district, gave out \$1,000 bonuses to non-officer employees. These bonuses went to roughly 700 people across the State of Florida. Let me do my math: 700 times \$1,000. I believe that is \$700,000 being infused into the Florida economy because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Cintas, which has a location in Alachua, Florida, gave all employees of over a year of employment \$1,000 bonuses and gave \$500 bonuses to all employees who have worked there less than a year. While \$1,000 may seem like crumbs to some in Congress, as we heard that day of the vote—they are just mere crumbs—we find that that is not the truth when we get out to the district.

These bonuses are invested in the people of Florida, not to mention an investment of over \$700,000 into the Florida economy. And this is just from three businesses listed above, not including Walmart raising wages for 67,500 employees—that is just in Florida—or the bonuses Lowe's gave to 21,000 employees, just in Florida.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is benefiting all Americans. Individuals know how best to use the money they earned, not government, whether by saving or by reinvesting in their community. By lowering the tax burden on working Americans and businesses, we have incentivized hard work and investment. When this happens, tax revenues rise and people thrive, not only because of a lower tax burden, but also because businesses now have the means to reinvest in their employees and in their community.

When that money goes back to the people, they know how best to spend that, not government. It was interesting: As I was touring through our district, as we often do when we go back home, I have never had this happen—this is my third term in Congress—I was at an event, a ribbon-cutting, and I had two unsolicited people come up to me, and they thanked us

for the Republicans' Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This happened on multiple occasions.

One individual came up to me, again, this was unsolicited—we know, as Members of Congress, that this doesn't happen often—but he goes: I want to let you know that because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act I am receiving an extra \$120 per paycheck, and I get paid twice a month. That is \$2,880 in crumbs he is getting.

Another individual at the same event came up and said—and they didn't know each other. This was so neat, because he came up to me and he said: I just want to let you know, because of the tax cut, I am getting an extra \$500 a month, \$500 a month times 12 months. That is \$6,000 a year. He was excited. I was excited for him.

A local trucking company we went by in the small town of Starke, he had out on his billboard: Beginning January 15, all drivers, all employees, get a 15 percent pay raise. And when I talked to him, he said it was because of the tax bill, the tax reform, that we did. These are, again, unsolicited.

Another individual called me up, he has got an air-conditioning and heating contract company, he told me that he gave out an extra \$74,000 in bonuses due to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. And I had a family member who sometimes isn't user-friendly—he is retired—and he called me up and said he was receiving an extra \$120 a month, and he thanked me.

Again, some from the other side of the aisle claimed that this tax bill was nothing but mere crumbs, mere crumbs, and only benefiting the wealthy. The examples I just read off are from the Joe-lunch-box type, people out there working every day, five days a week, just the average moms and dads who, at the end of the month, are sitting around their dining room table wondering if they are going to have more month than money at the end of the month. They are realizing that they have extra crumbs at the end of the month, and they thanked me. They came up to me, they thanked me. They thanked the Republican Party. They thanked President Trump for signing this into law. And they thanked us for the extra crumbs.

As I was leaving, one of the individuals—and I had to laugh at this—says: When the next election comes up, just remind your colleagues on the other side that it is the economy, stupid. And he smiled, and that is all he had to say.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman putting this on. Great job.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from central Florida, TED YOHO, and I have had those same conversations with constituents back home. The gentleman is absolutely right. They don't think it is crumbs. It is very significant in their lives. And I can tell you, as a freshman, I was very proud to be here at a very historic moment. And I think this Congress can be very proud

of what was accomplished through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act because it is truly impacting on people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this time to thank all of my colleagues from Florida who joined with me this evening to highlight the successes of this historic tax reform.

Across the Nation and back home in Florida, we have seen the incredible impact of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. More than 500 companies have announced pay raises, bonuses, increased 401(k) contributions, or even lower utility rates. Direct bonus announcements have reached over \$4 billion across the Nation. Mr. Speaker, that is \$4 billion in direct bonuses to employees all across this Nation. That \$4 billion is going back into our economy and into the hands of hardworking Americans rather than to the IRS. Folks, this is just the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, and as my good friend from central Florida said, these are not crumbs. These are loaves of bread for countless Americans who have been living paycheck to paycheck, unsure about how they would be able to feed their families. These reforms, which are the largest in over 30 years, are helping grow small businesses and breathing life back into the American Dream for so many.

So I want to, again, thank my colleagues from the great State of Florida for joining me this evening to shine a light on these great successes for Floridians and for all Americans.

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

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity. I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to follow my colleagues on the Republican side as they were talking about the tax bill that passed the House of Representatives, the Senate, and was signed into law last December.

I always like to start my discussions here on the floor by some sense of purpose, some sense of what, at least, I, and I think many of my Democratic colleagues are trying to accomplish and the many different ways that this might be accomplished. But this is a statement of values. It comes from Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the Great Depression. It could easily apply to the Great Recession in 2008 and '09, and it even applies today, and certainly applies to the tax cut that took place in December.

Let me read this to you. He said, Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide

enough for those who have too little." A statement of value. A statement of purpose.

Having listened to my colleagues talk about the great tax cut, I think we need to understand exactly what it was all about and the implications of that tax cut and what it means to America, not just to the working men and women that was so well discussed by our colleagues. And indeed, they did get a benefit from the tax cut.

However, I think we need to understand the size of that tax cut. It is estimated that that tax cut will reduce the revenues to the Federal Treasury; that is, to the American Government and all of the programs that it does—funding the military; funding Social Security and Medicare, Medicaid—keeping in mind that about 60-some percent of the Medicaid money across this Nation goes to seniors who are in nursing homes and care facilities; keeping in mind that that money is used to subsidize farmers out there, to provide conservation programs, to educate our kids, to train our workers.

So the tax cut really drained from the Treasury about \$1.6 trillion, \$1.8 trillion over the next decade. That is a pretty good sum of money. Where did it go? Who benefited from it? Did the working men and women, the people who, it was so eloquently stated, are sitting around the kitchen table trying to figure out what to do at the end of the month? Certainly there is a benefit there, but do keep in mind that that benefit ends in just five years, six years from now. So it is not a permanent benefit, but it is a benefit that is of importance.

But where did the money really go? We sometimes call this the great scam, because it is sold one way but the reality is different. The top 1 percent and American corporations received 87 percent of that \$1.6 trillion. The top 1 percent and America's great corporations.

Presumably, the corporations were going to bring jobs to America. Let me give you two examples. But first, where did the remaining 17 percent go? Well, it went to all the other Americans. It went to those small businessmen and women who were discussed a moment ago, mom and pop sitting around the table. They got 17 percent of the \$1.6 trillion.

The top 1 percent of Americans and American corporations took the rest of the pie, 83 percent of it. So what are we to make of this? Well, we can make that, wow, this wasn't how it was sold.

And what did the corporations do with it? Well, out in California—and I am from California—there is a company called Apple. Keep in mind that they do research in the United States. They develop the various software and apps and so forth. The manufacturing is done over in China, for the most part. Some of the assembly comes back to America.

They were able to repatriate from their overseas earnings, as a result of this, over \$100 billion. That \$100 billion

is going to be used over the next several months and probably year or so to create jobs in America? No. No. That money is going to be used to buy back stock, which will have the very nice event of enriching those who own Apple stock.

Do any of you out there own Apple stock? Well, if you do, it is good. You are going to get some cash. If you do own Apple stock and you don't choose to sell your stock, guess what? The stock price is going to go up because there are fewer shares around and the earnings per share can remain the same.

□ 2000

It is a great scam. And, oh, by the way, the executives benefit by the stock price going up. So maybe there is something to be said for that.

Another company, Pfizer, big American pharmaceutical company, got about \$5 billion to \$6 billion of reduced taxes as a result of this tax scam. Did they create jobs with it? No.

The day that they announced that their taxes were going to be reduced by that much, they eliminated their Alzheimer's research program, saying that they would rather spend their money on buying back stock than engaging in pharmaceutical research to deal with the most expensive element of the Medicare program, Alzheimer's, and similarly, Medicare.

Oh, and, by the way, every family in America is affected by dementia and Alzheimer's either directly or indirectly.

So, there you go, the great tax scam.

Now, let me talk about another thing. You may not have known this, but this is infrastructure week in America. Now, the President is off tweeting, as he did on Sunday, which is the beginning of the week, that he was concerned about China. He was concerned about a company called ZTE, which is a big Chinese telecom company that manufactures smartphones or not-so-smart phones.

It seems as though those phones can be used for espionage, and that is why our military will not allow military members to own phones manufactured by this company and not allow these phones to be sold on military bases around the world, because, guess what, China is able to use them, we believe, for espionage purposes, that is, to gather all the information that comes off the smartphone.

So this is infrastructure week, but, apparently, the President, in his tweet, said he is concerned about the lost jobs in China; and, therefore, he has ordered the Commerce Department to end the restrictions on this Chinese telecom company so that that company can buy some things from the United States and can then have a lot of jobs in China. Gee, Mr. President, I thought it was about making America great again, not making China great again.

But I digress. Do you recognize this picture? This is a picture of the Interstate 5 bridge just north of Seattle, and