

colleagues as they grapple with this profound loss. He will be dearly missed.

REQUEST TO CONSIDER H.R. 18, NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

(Mr. LATTI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATTI. Mr. Speaker, for more than 40 years American taxpayers have been protected from paying for abortions on demand with their tax dollars. Alarming, President Biden's budget proposal calls for the Hyde amendment to be removed. This radical, immoral policy makes it legal for taxpayer dollars to support and enable the abortion industry.

Nearly 60 percent of Americans agree that taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund abortion. This is not a partisan issue. One of the most basic ways we can protect innocent life is ensuring that taxpayer money is not being used to fund abortions.

As a defender of the unborn, I do not support the removal of the Hyde amendment. I oppose all efforts to mandate taxpayer funding for abortion.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 18, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded in section 956 of the House Rules and Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the request unless it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

REQUEST TO CONSIDER H.R. 18, NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

(Mrs. HINSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HINSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues to consider the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, legislation that would preserve the longstanding Hyde amendment.

For the first time in over 40 years, the administration's proposed budget does not include Hyde protections, protections that have long ensured taxpayer dollars are not used to fund abortions.

Mr. Speaker, Hyde protections have saved 2.4 million babies. Reversing this longstanding pro-life policy is wrong. The right to life is the most fundamental of all of our rights. We must defend those who cannot defend themselves.

I will always lend my voice to the voiceless and fight to ensure that Iowa taxpayers are never forced to fund abortions against their will.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committees on Energy

and Commerce, Ways and Means, and the Judiciary, be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 18, and I ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

REQUEST TO CONSIDER H.R. 18, NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

(Mr. PALMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 18, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. This bill codifies the Hyde amendment which ensures that taxpayer dollars aren't spent on abortions.

For over 40 years, both Democrats and Republicans have understood the value of this important protection which has saved more than 2.4 million lives. The right to life precedes all other rights and is fundamental to everything I believe.

I urge my colleagues across the aisle to embrace life and support H.R. 18. As President Biden said in 1994, "Those of us who are opposed to abortion should not be compelled to pay for them."

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 18, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

□ 1700

CONGRATULATING AMBASSADOR DAVID FRIEDMAN

(Mr. GARBARINO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARBARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in acknowledgment of Long Island's own David Friedman, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

In a few days, there will be a dedication ceremony to rename a local street in his honor, but I would be remiss if I did not state for the Record Ambassador Friedman's tremendous accomplishments in support of our ally, Israel, during his tenure.

Whether it be countering the anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel or recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, he has been a leading example on how best to represent our Nation abroad.

Most notable, of course, was his leadership in advancing the Abraham Accords, the greatest development in normalized relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors in over 40 years, and

the movement of the U.S. embassy to its rightful and lawful place, Jerusalem.

I implore my colleagues to stand with me in a commitment to affirming and building upon the advancements that Ambassador Friedman made to strengthen U.S.-Israeli relations, and I congratulate him once again on his achievements.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INDICATOR SPECIES

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, environmental protection of species revolves around the use of indicator species. But what has been lost in recent years is the impact also on humans and their needs.

The indicator, for example, for farmers in California is very grave in the great Central Valley and up at the Klamath Basin.

Up on the Klamath, you have one environmental management plan that says more water is needed for salmon, for example, under a biological opinion, and another management plan that says more water is needed to be stored in the lake for suckerfish. You can't do both at the same time, and the result is the salmon are not more plentiful and the suckerfish are not recovering as a species.

But the rural areas in Klamath and Siskiyou Counties are being cut off from their main economic driver. The farms up there are suffering badly because of water that has been taken by the Federal Government that does not belong to the Federal Government.

The stored water in that lake was created for agriculture solely, and yet it is being used as more or less a slush fund for Federal agencies that want to take this water and somehow try and make a difference in the river. This has got to come to a stop, because we need agriculture in California.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AFTER THE PANDEMIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. CAWTHORN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, what is the American businessman to do

when the American worker will not come into work?

For the past nearly 7 months, this President has held America's small business owners hostage and declared a de facto strike on the American economy.

Following the end of this COVID pandemic, the Biden administration has been granted the political gift of a lifetime: take a staggering American economy, still reeling from the economic collapse, and simply let it return to normal. If the Biden administration had done nothing, zero, if they had sat on their hands and twiddled their thumbs, if Joe Biden had taken more naps, then experts say our economy would be in a much better place than where it is right now.

Instead, the Biden administration's efforts place the American economy in a financial choke hold that threatens to obliterate hundreds of small businesses in my district.

It was John Adams that said: "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

Let's cast our eyes over the facts, shall we?

Back in April, economists predicted over 1 million new jobs to be added to our economy. Biden added just over 250,000. In May, economists adjusted their expectations, acknowledging this administration simply cannot deliver the type of job growth past administrations could.

Even with adjusted expectations, the Biden administration still fell short of the mark. There is no debate that the Biden administration of free handouts has dramatically undercut efforts to restart our economy. His massive increase of unemployment benefits has kept workers at home and left store owners scrambling to keep up with the growing consumer demand.

In my own district, business leaders in Asheville, Hendersonville, Franklin, and Macon County, have spoken with me about the difficulty in getting employees back to work. Who can blame them? Biden is literally paying American citizens to stay home instead of getting them back to work.

Who would fault an American husband or mother when they decide to stay home with their family and earn double their salary while doing it?

The Biden administration knows that their policy of handouts harms and is hurting business owners, but the game has always been about creating a welfare class, not empowering our economy. It is disgusting.

With those thoughts in mind, I now recognize one of my fellow North Carolina champions, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and my fellow North Carolinian, Mr. CAWTHORN, for having this Special Order.

My comments will echo his. Look, the pandemic is over. Thank goodness.

Our economy should be seeing robust growth. Instead, businesses cannot fill the record number of jobs available.

In fact, the number one issue that I hear, not only from business owners and managers, but from all constituents, is that folks will not come to work, businesses cannot find workers.

Last month, despite 9.3 million job openings, there were only 69,000 more new hires than in the month before. How is that possible with unemployment at 6 percent?

Simply put, President Biden and Democrats have insisted on continuing to pay people more to stay home than to work.

Despite consistent warnings from Republicans and economists, the so-called American Rescue Plan continued expanded unemployment benefit programs enacted in the heart of the pandemic.

In my home State, in North Carolina, these expanded benefits are worth \$650 a week. That is about \$50 more than the Progressives' preferred minimum wage of \$15 an hour. You don't have to be an economist to see why small businesses can't fill job openings, and it is beyond time that Congress fix this self-inflicted wound.

That is one reason that Representative JODEY ARRINGTON and I introduced the Jump-Start the Economy with Jobs Act. This bill, which ought to move promptly in this Congress, requires an individual who is currently receiving enhanced unemployment benefits to recertify that they do not have a job offer waiting for them in order to continue receiving enhanced benefits.

If their former employer would receive a communication, and if they say we are prepared to give an offer to that person to come back to work, then they can't continue to receive unemployment benefits. How appropriate. That would tailor the program to those people that continue to need it because of a job dislocation they cannot resolve. Enhanced unemployment benefits should continue for those who truly need them and not for those who have a job waiting for them.

The extended Federal unemployment benefits implemented during COVID-19 had their time, but they should not be the mainstay now. They are, instead, artificially reducing the workforce.

Across the country, let's all be thankful, communities are opening up their economies and getting back to normal.

It is past time for this government to stop holding back the recovery and to stand up for small businesses, job generators, by ceasing to pay people to stay home.

A good first step would be to enact the Jump-Start the Economy with Jobs Act.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Thank you very much, Congressman BISHOP, for those words. I echo the sentiments of both JODEY ARRINGTON and DAN BISHOP of wanting to jump-start this economy again.

With the fact that there are 9.3 million job openings in this country right now, we do need to change something to be able to actually fill the hire rate that has not increased at all. In fact, last quarter it only increased by 4.2 percent.

My friends, we will have artificial inflation if we do not do something to act quickly, and I believe the Jump-Start the Economy with Jobs Act is a great idea.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize another North Carolinian, a lion of our mountains, my dear friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD).

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, Congressman CAWTHORN, for organizing this.

Last month, the NFIB, or the National Federation of Independent Businesses, reported that 48 percent of small businesses currently have unfilled job openings, and that is an all-time high. Right now—you have heard the number mentioned—9.3 million jobs remain unfilled nationwide.

This sluggish recovery is a direct result of the Federal Government paying people not to work. Essentially, the Federal enhanced unemployment benefit constitutes a "stay-at-home" bonus for millions of people.

Instead of following the lead of dozens of other States, North Carolina's Governor refuses to end this very backwards incentive.

That is why I introduced a solution that would help. It is called the Back to Work Bonus Act. First and foremost, my proposal would end the \$300 Federal unemployment bonus on day one.

Second, the bill would allow a new worker to receive a \$900 back-to-work bonus only if they get back in the workforce and stay on the job for at least 4 weeks.

Now, to be clear, someone would only receive these dollars if they not only accepted the job offer, but fully went back to work.

Third, I want to highlight that this legislation is a specific solution to what we hope is a temporary problem, using already appropriated funds that would expire on August 14.

Look, we simply can't continue to pay people to stay at home. For workers that stayed in the workforce throughout the pandemic, we need to cut their taxes, so they get to keep more of their hard-earned money.

We need to get the economy booming again, like it was during the Trump years. We need to stop the overspending in Washington that causes inflation to soar and eat away at a family's buying power.

But above all, our number one priority needs to be getting folks back to work as quickly as possible. There are just too many opportunities out there, 9.3 million of them, to be exact. So let's get America back to work.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Congressman, thank you for introducing that bill.

If you think about it, \$387 is the amount the average American receives from their home State in weekly unemployment benefits. You add to that the \$300 boost that the Federal Government is putting on, on top of that, and it is no wonder why people aren't going back to work. They get to stay at home with their families while making \$17.17 an hour. That sounds like a good deal to me.

But I genuinely hope that we can find some way out of this, because there is a real spiritual poverty created when you don't actually work for your living.

It is now time for me to recognize a dear friend of mine from a Carolina that is not as good a North Carolina, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for offering this Special Order. It couldn't come at a better time and a better place in history.

Mr. Speaker, Americans have been subjected to one of the most testing years we have ever seen. Just as they are starting to get back on their feet and the great economic engine that is the American economy is starting to turn over, this administration and my Democratic colleagues are proposing to shut down the engine that we had running so robustly for the last 4 years under President Trump.

Six trillion dollars in spending, with no offsets, is downright irresponsible and unfair to the American taxpayer. We are not going to get this economy on the right foot by expanding our Government even more.

Growing inflation concerns have already begun to hit our constituents where it hurts the most, at the gas pump—have you tried filling up your car lately? It has hit you in the grocery stores. It has hit you in the checkbooks.

This oncoming crisis is putting hard-working Americans on rocky footing, and this President is proposing to pull the rug out from underneath them. Another cash infusion will do nothing more than kick those Americans while they are down by driving prices up even more. Enough is enough.

Businesses are opening up, construction projects are expanding our neighborhoods and cities, and there is a light at the end of the tunnel and the light is a bright one. Don't shut the door on that light by throttling the demands of everyday items.

Ultimately, there are a variety of reasons for these rising prices, many of which are industry specific. However, it is important to remember that big government spending is only going to make this problem worse.

I was elected to Congress to take care of the American people. I was not elected to bankrupt this country. I was not elected to burden them even more. It is clear that the American economy wants to make a comeback. The only question is, will bureaucrats, will politicians, will government get out of the way.

□ 1715

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, Congressman NORMAN was elected to take care of the American people, but right now the Democrats in Congress—although it is hard to call them Democrats because right now I believe that they have a socialist agenda, which is sabotaging America's jobs recovery with a crippling tax hike that targets our small businesses, the backbone of our economy.

Their plans raise small business taxes to the highest point in a generation, halt new projects and small business growth by doubling taxes on investments, and Democrats supercharge a second death tax, if you can believe that, where they want to tax you more. It would hit farms, machine shops, and other small businesses.

With all that in mind, I now yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest threats that emerged from this pandemic is an expanding government unwilling to relinquish control and restore Americans' God-given rights.

We see it all across our country. President Biden and liberal Governors tout the "follow the science" talking point while failing to follow the science themselves, keeping in place pandemic restrictions while knowing full well that our economy can fully reopen.

While the left virtue signals, pushing radical policies like vaccine passports and critical race theory, American families are still struggling to make ends meet. Tens of thousands of businesses have closed their doors for good, and our children have fallen behind because they are denied in-person learning.

Some Federal agencies are still not operating at pre-pandemic levels. We have American veterans who cannot access records they need for treatment and benefits they earned because of career bureaucrats who can't be bothered to go back to work. This is wrong and completely avoidable.

Here, in Congress, we see the hypocrisy of the left on display. Speaker PELOSI lifts the mask mandate for the House floor, but keeps the people's House closed to the public. We have Members of this body not showing up and voting in person. The people that we represent go to work every day, and they expect us to do the same. Americans have never been and never will be a nation ruled by fear and control.

Reopen the Capitol Building, reopen our country, and restore freedom and power to the American people.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I can see why Pennsylvania loves their Congressman so much.

When I think about what is going on in Congress and I see that Democrats are prioritizing wasteful spending over hardworking Americans' paychecks, I realize that the Democrats' socialist agenda won't produce long-term

growth or greater economic security for American families.

A majority of Americans say they fear for an impending crash following the injection of Federal stimulus money during the pandemic. This is an unsettling thought for those who are trying to deal with dining room politics.

With all those thoughts in mind, I am very pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEHLS), my dear friend and America's sheriff, who represents Texas' 22nd District.

Mr. NEHLS. Mr. Speaker, it is time to get the American people back to work. The vaccine has been available for all Americans for weeks. Cases across the country are drastically decreased, and businesses are opening back up. Thank God.

Why, then, is the Federal Government still paying people not to work?

Why, then, are we still considering multitrillion-dollar proposals when there is billions upon billions of previously appropriated COVID relief money that hasn't been touched?

Inflation is higher than at any point in over a decade. Americans are paying more for goods they need to survive. Businesses that are open and want to expand their workforce can't find the employees willing to come to work because the government is paying them to stay home.

And amidst all of this, the Biden administration is proposing tax increases on job creators. It doesn't take an economics Ph.D. to conclude that raising taxes on job creators amid record levels of inflation and this underperforming economy will lead to economic disaster.

Small business owners in this country are trying to rebuild and get people back to work. Raising taxes on them will only hurt them and the Americans they want to hire.

The Biden tax-and-spend model is failing our country. We need to get back to the free-market approach that we had under President Trump: Slashing regulation, reducing taxes, and increasing economic freedom.

That is the light at the end of the Biden economic crisis tunnel. But to get there, we need Democrats to stop playing politics with the future of our country and work with the Republicans.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES), a dear friend of mine who represents the Fourth District.

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, we should be experiencing one of the greatest economic booms in our history as we emerge from COVID, yet prices are climbing, consumer sentiment is plunging, and there are more than nine million open jobs without workers to fill them. That is the most ever.

In my State of Kansas, we have 3.6 jobs available for every job seeker. Subsidizing people not to work and spending without restraint is stalling out this recovery and causing inflation.

In May, core inflation rose at its fastest pace since 1992. That is because Democrats' untargeted spending has acted like kindling for inflation. There is too much money chasing too few goods. Recent surveys show that 70 percent of Americans are concerned that President Biden's spending plans could lead to inflation. But if you have filled up your gas tank recently or entered a grocery store, you know that it is already there.

Instead of working to quickly reopen and prioritize getting America back to work, upon entering office, President Biden took his eyes off the ball and squandered the recovery that President Trump had handed to him. In the first five months of 2021, the current administration has added 500,000 fewer jobs than the last 5 months of 2020. President Biden should be concerned about his economic crisis.

Biden's slow-growth agenda calls for \$6 trillion in government spending with \$3 trillion in new taxes. That would crush small and midsized companies, resulting in far fewer jobs down the road.

One of the most antigrowth policies in President Biden's agenda is his plan to revert America's business tax rate to one of the worst in the world again at 28 percent, a move that would return us to the old tax code that incentivized jobs to be shipped overseas.

Biden's budget even acknowledges that a real recovery isn't their priority. It only forecasts a meager 2 percent GDP growth by 2023, with it dropping even lower until 2029.

The American people should contrast Biden's tax-and-spend agenda with what Republicans have done and are fighting to do. In 2017, we put the American people first by passing a progrowth tax code while removing massive amounts of government regulation. That created an economic atmosphere that enabled wages to grow for historically disadvantaged workers, brought the unemployment rate down to the lowest in 50 years, and allowed more people to find jobs in America than at any point in our history. The income gap was even shrinking as lower income wages were increasing faster.

We need to get back to that. It is not hard to see the impact that common-sense, progrowth policies can make. Our focus should be on filling available jobs and rebuilding our economy, not to line the pockets of progressive special interest groups with millions in Federal spending, as Biden's agenda would do. It is hard to ignore that, across the country today, the six States with the lowest unemployment rates all have Republican leadership.

Mr. Speaker, President Biden and Speaker PELOSI need to prioritize economic recovery, not unrestrained government spending.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I think Congressman ESTES touches on a great point. Under Republican leadership, under the last administration,

business applications were at record levels. The TCJA encouraged business creation, as the amount of business applications reached its highest level ever, of over 880,000.

Now, you contrast that with what is going on in America today. There are many people who own restaurants in my own district, who are having to literally pay people \$50 just to turn an application in, and then they never show up for the interview or even for work.

Because of how bleak things are looking, I am very happy to yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. McCLAIN), the most loved and the most feared woman in all of Congress.

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, for more than 40 years, Joe Biden has been a staunch supporter of the Hyde amendment. So have the American people. Just this past January, polling found that nearly 6 in 10 Americans oppose using tax dollars to terminate innocent lives. That number includes a majority of Independents and nearly one-third of Democrats.

For decades, congressional Democrats joined Republicans in a truly bipartisan effort to ensure tax dollars of hardworking Americans do not pay for abortions. Unfortunately, President Biden is trying to shatter years of congressional bipartisanship with a radical budget that has no Hyde amendment protections.

The President ran on unity, yet his first budget proposal immediately divides. This Congress must take back its congressional responsibility and craft spending bills which protect the lives of the unborn, just as past Congresses have done since 1976.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 18, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair has previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 37 minutes remaining.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, it really has felt like our small businesses, our middle class, our communities have really taken one punch after another.

First, we were handed mandatory shutdowns of our restaurants, our small businesses, and our churches, while Walmart and Lowe's and other big box retail stores were allowed to remain open. In some places around the country, we were not even allowed to leave our homes unless it was for a purpose that the government deemed essential.

Like all Americans, I am extremely excited and pleased to see that most of

the economy in our communities have reopened. But we can't help but observe that it seems like the reopening is occurring because of the independence and resilience of the American people, despite the best efforts by some to keep us shuttered indefinitely.

It is baffling that during this time when our neighbors have the opportunity to finally get back to work, Democrats are pushing policies to hurt them.

Oh, you are trying to find employees for your diner so you can reopen?

Well, they are paying those employees more to sit at home.

You have a corner store in central South Dakota?

Sorry, but President Biden canceled the Keystone XL pipeline and instantly caused your customers to lose their jobs.

You want to go back to work, but have two children at home?

Well, unbelievably, the Biden education plan included zero requirement that your son's or daughter's school reopens.

You were excited for your hotel to be busy this spring?

Well, the CDC was still advising Americans not to travel, even if they were vaccinated.

Your bait shop along the Canadian border has been struggling since the border closure?

Too bad President Biden and Justin Trudeau decided that couldn't be solved at the G7 last week.

You need gas to get to work, to get to your job site?

Well, it costs you \$50 more this year than it did last year.

Mr. Speaker, this is a staggering laundry list of policies that individually would be an enormous impediment to our success, but together it is a brick wall. Without urgent changes to these antijobs, anti-small business policies, our communities will continue to struggle to reopen completely, and more families will feel the negative impacts of the Biden-Pelosi economy.

As a small business owner myself, I know what these men and women are going through. I know that they were the ones who built their business, not the government. And despite opposing efforts, they won't let the government take it away from them either.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I believe we are created to work, and I believe we are created to work hard, and the right to work and the determination to build with one's hands is as foundational to the American ethos as it can be.

We were not set in this universal orchard to stand still as trees. There is no substitute under the heavens for productive labor. It has been said that a firm work ethic is the process by which dreams become realities. It is the process by which idle visions become dynamic achievements.

This administration seeks, though, to strip employment from the men and

women of America, to replace work with welfare and service with subservience. I reject that notion.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), my dear friend.

□ 1730

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the most important issue facing our country today: the reopening of the U.S. economy.

For 16 long months, the U.S. economy has been held hostage by government, both elected and unelected. What started as a 15-day shutdown to allow hospitals to brace for the coming wave of COVID cases has ballooned into over a year of shifting goalposts, evolving science, and political power grabs.

Since the pandemic began, over 200,000 small businesses, which the President once claimed were the backbone of the U.S. economy, have been shuttered for good. This has left their owners jobless and futures uncertain.

Those whose businesses did survive the long lockdowns still face harsh restrictions. For too long and in too many cases, we have seen restrictions on controlling how many customers they can serve, how their employees can conduct business, and, by default, how much revenue they can bring in.

Worse, the reopening of our economy has been prolonged even further by the misguided attempts from the political left to provide relief.

The example I hear the most from constituents and businesses back in George's First Congressional District is the increased unemployment benefits. Under these expanded benefits, many Americans have been able to receive more money not working than they did actually working. This is a poor incentive to get people back into jobs, especially as our economy continues to see record-high job openings.

Businesses coming out of their long hibernation will continue to struggle to find employees as long as this benefit is in place.

There are not enough taxpayer dollars in the world to give these businesses the relief they need, but we can remove the Federal Government as an obstacle to returning to normalcy.

We need policies that incentivize Americans to find jobs and allow businesses to stand on their own. Ultimately, we need to put an end to all COVID business restrictions nationwide.

It is hard to say what the long-term impact of prolonged shutdowns will be, but it does not take a Harvard economist to know that losing 200,000 jobs in small businesses alone does not spell good fortune.

The sooner we get Americans back to work and our economy back to full capacity, the sooner we can return to normal or, at the very least, stop the damage from continuing.

To borrow a quote from President Trump, we built the greatest economy

in the world, and we will do it a second time.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, when we started looking at the American Families Plan, we realized the tax hikes it would increase would raise capital gains and dividends tax from 20 to 39.6 percent, almost two times the normal price. It would impose capital gains taxes at death, which creates a second death tax, although I can't believe that we would ever need to tax anyone more than we do now. It would expand the 3.8 percent Obamacare surtax to hit even more small businesses' income than it already does.

Lastly, it would increase the IRS' auditing power, including monitoring bank accounts, because the very first thing that we need to reopen our economy at a better pace is to give more power to three-letter agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD), my good friend.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, as a Nation founded on a history of rugged individualism, the American people are resilient and self-reliant. They will flourish and prosper absent the intrusion and heavy-handed weight of the government.

Apart from national defense, safety, and security, the less our government does, the better, especially here at the Federal level.

In fact, our country would be far better off if we had just paid this President and his administration to stay home, and they did nothing over these past 5½ months. It is sadly true that the less this government does to us while pretending to do things for us, the better off we will all be.

Incredibly, this administration's disastrous economic policies have produced fewer jobs in their first 5 months of the year than the Trump administration produced in the last 5 months of 2020 when the government restrictions and lockdowns in the name of the China virus were far more widely and strenuously enforced.

Unfortunately, at present time, we have employers, businesses, and job creators literally competing with their own government for employees because of the enhanced \$300 a week Federal unemployment benefit.

Every business owner that I talk with in my district tells me that this is a major, ongoing problem. Every business has up signs saying: "Help Wanted," "Employees Needed."

We even have this problem in my home district in the city of Charlottesville, in Albemarle County, with the Postal Service. They can't get people to come to work for the starting wage of \$18 an hour for a mail carrier because they are getting paid \$17 an hour to stay home and not work.

However, the tone-deaf, economically illiterate Democrats, especially those I serve with on the Education and Labor Committee, they tell businesses they simply need to raise their wages so far above what the Federal Government is

paying folks not to work—again, \$17 an hour in my home State of Virginia—that folks will finally refuse the free income not to work and return for a higher paycheck—this as businesses are struggling to recover from the government shutting them down for a year, again, in the name of the China virus.

We need to fully reopen our economy, end all restrictions, open our schools so parents can go back to work, and stop sending confusing and harmful messages, like requiring masks on public transportation.

In this very House, it was only a couple of weeks ago that we were pretending that even in a Special Order, speaking to an empty Chamber with no one near you—within how many feet?—you needed to wear a mask to keep us safe because we wanted to appear to the American people back home that we were doing something, the theater of wearing masks just a few weeks ago.

That is continuing now on public transportation. What kind of a myth and harmful message does that send to folks?

We need to stop paying folks not to work, reopen our economy, and turn the American people loose.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK).

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this important issue. I think it is something that America needs to talk about, and I am glad we are talking about it on the floor of the people's House.

During the COVID shutdowns, more than 600,000 businesses shut their doors. This is 200,000 more businesses than typically close in a year due to natural market influences.

Unsurprisingly, many of these most severe lockdowns across the country were implemented by liberal Governors who caved to fearmongering and hostility to former President Trump.

To be clear, I recognize the dangers posed by this virus. However, reactionary and overreaching shutdowns significantly worsened the impacts of COVID on our Nation.

One of the most glaring examples of these negative impacts has been on our children who missed a year or more of in-person education because their schools were closed.

The resilience and creativity of many teachers to adjust to these tragic circumstances are admirable. However, the reality is that these closures resulted in deteriorating mental health among students and less effective educational environments for children across America.

Importantly, these shutdowns disproportionately affected children with disabilities, minority students, and students facing economic hardships.

America is beyond ready to reopen. Today, more than half of Americans have been vaccinated, and broad mask

mandates are clearly no longer necessary for most communities. The science overwhelmingly demands that the restrictions continuing to burden our communities be lifted, and efforts by liberal politicians to extend these mandates only serve to reveal their ideological motivations.

I urge our national, State, and local officials to follow the science, unshackle our economy from these burdensome and unnecessary restrictions, and reopen our country.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, when we start thinking about what is going on here in our country with unemployment, in the week ending May 1, 2021, about 16 million people collected unemployment. Now, that is a staggering statistic when you realize that over 6.6 million of those people would not have been eligible to receive unemployment benefits in a traditional environment. But because of the trumped-up and boosted-up unemployment benefits the Federal Government is sending out, we are basically incentivizing people by giving them \$34,000 a year to not go to work, thus creating more and more inflation. There is no production so, therefore, there are too many dollars chasing too few goods.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. MOORE).

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I certainly appreciate his leadership on this and giving us an opportunity to speak about small business issues in our country.

Mr. Speaker, as restrictive government mandates on Americans have relaxed, our economy has begun recovering from the worst of the pandemic. Many businesses have reopened their doors, and there are now millions of new returning jobs and available jobs across the Nation.

Unfortunately, I hear from businesses large and small across my district that Big Government is getting in the way of the return of our booming prepandemic economy.

It is a bizarre paradox, but under the Biden administration, we are simultaneously facing an intense labor shortage and widespread unemployment at the same time, when our economy should be thriving back to prepandemic levels. Sadly, this is a common story in every corner of our country.

It is clear that the primary driver of this problem is federally subsidized unemployment benefits. In many regions, particularly in rural areas, would-be job seekers make more staying at home than reporting to work.

Recently, I was speaking to a friend of mine, and he called an unemployed driver that he was going to hire. The unemployed driver's response was this: I am going ride this mule until it drops.

Basically, what he was saying was: I am going to take this free money until it goes away.

Many small businesses are facing that very same issue. Some businesses

have even offered cash bonuses to interviewees, but small businesses cannot afford this.

There are plenty of examples back home in my district. For example, in Houston County, there are 124 unemployment claims and over 2,000 job openings as we speak. In Coffee County, there are 57 unemployment claims and 570 job openings, with many more coming. In Dale County, there are 47 unemployment claims yet 350 job postings.

It is very simple. Small business cannot compete with government handouts. I am glad that many red States, including my great State of Alabama, have ended all federally funded pandemic unemployment benefits. I hope our numbers will improve as a result.

Removing these payments that were meant to be short-term is necessary to advance our economic recovery. But this is a real problem that betrays the Biden administration and congressional Democrats' fundamental misunderstanding of what powers an economy.

Mr. Speaker, the best welfare program in the world is a job, not government. I know that many of my Democratic colleagues agree with me.

Let's get Americans back to work by empowering workers and removing incentives to stay home. Only then can we truly reopen this economy.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I am disheartened to know that with this Federal unemployment stimulus that we are sending out around the country, although it might solve some short-term financial woes, it is creating a spiritual poverty in the hearts of men and women across this country that I believe cannot be described.

When you start to think about how devastating it would be to one's morale and one's own honor and one's own self-esteem to think that you don't actually create anything, you don't actually build anything, you are not truly benefiting society, it makes me shudder to think about how I would feel about that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN).

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for hosting this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce you to the newest resident of western and central Kansas. She greets every store's patrons at the business front door and every farmer at the farm gate. She is in the newspaper, on the radio, and all over social media. She goes by Help Wanted, and you have probably met her, too, as she has made herself quite popular under President Biden's policies.

It has been more than a year since the pandemic shut down the country. America is finally getting back to normal. Businesses across the country are ready to reopen and welcome back customers. Unfortunately, President Biden's bonus, the monthly unemployment checks being distributed on top

of the already existing unemployment checks, is paying a premium for potential workers to remain at home rather than finding work.

The data doesn't lie. There are nearly 8 million job openings in America right now, a new record. Businesses in the Big First of Kansas—agriculture, hospitality, food service, manufacturing, construction, and healthcare—cannot find workers, leading to reduced hours or closures to accommodate the staffing shortages.

□ 1745

Help is wanted at the North Central Kansas Hospital, short 50 employees and regularly turning away patients as the hospital is unable to properly staff and serve them.

Help is wanted in McDonald's in that same north central Kansas town, closing early each night.

Christina, the owner of hair salons in Garden City, Hays, and Dodge City, Kansas, wants help as she temporarily shuts down one location, only opens another for a few days a week, and shortens hours at all three.

Help is wanted at the ethanol by-products plants in south central Kansas, unable to find workers even after offering a salary of a \$35,000 plus health and retirement benefits.

And PureField Ingredients, a food ingredient manufacturer in Russell, Kansas, wants help as they are staffed at only 30 percent of their normal levels.

Mr. Speaker, hear me say this: If you can get to work, you should. Do it for our local businesses and our State's economy. Do it for your family. Most of all, do it for yourself.

I recently joined fellow Kansas Republicans in urging the Kansas governor to opt out of the enhanced unemployment benefits. Additionally, I co-sponsored the Help Wanted Act, which addresses the severe labor shortages caused by the Federal unemployment policy and the Get Americans Back to Work Act, which would shorten the extension of the pandemic unemployment checks.

It is time to take off the masks, get our kids back to school, get our businesses open, get people back to work, and get the country back on track.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT).

Mrs. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I am so excited for Congressman CAWTHORN's leadership on this issue tonight. I thank him for making time to address the American people.

Mr. Speaker, there are three people who come to mind when I think of people who cannot even give their money away:

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, do you remember when her donations were returned to her by Members of Congress

because they didn't want to be associated with her?

Harvey Weinstein. And Joe Biden.

Those three cannot even give money away. In fact, by July 3, 25 States across America will have rejected President Biden's Federal unemployment benefit bonuses.

I meet with organizations every day that request funds for worthwhile endeavors. Sadly, America is \$28 trillion in debt and can't afford to spend the money on many of these worthy causes. But leave it to Joe Biden to try to spend money in a way that actually hurts our economy and is rejected by Republican and Democrat governors across our entire country. That is a special level of basement incompetence.

We have got 9.3 million unfilled jobs. And I hear it back home, businesses can't get people back to work because they are making more to sit at home on the couch. They would rather watch Dave Portnoy eat a slice of pizza. But then, again, maybe that is not his viewers. Maybe it is more of the folks sitting back, watching Joy Behar and "The View" cackle and demonize our country and all of our worthwhile efforts to restore dignity in this Nation.

The Biden regime is literally incentivizing laziness. But then again, they set that example on a regular basis, calling it quits in the middle of the day. When is the last time the President hasn't called a "lid" before his afternoon snack?

In my home State of Colorado, many corporations are offering bonuses that small businesses can't afford. We are seeing massive signing bonuses, from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for utility and HVAC workers, and that is simply unsustainable.

According to the Colorado Restaurant Association, more than 90 percent of restaurants are having issues finding workers. I am one of them. I have had employees say, "I cannot work more than 2 days a week. I cannot exceed 12 hours of work because it will cut into my benefits." That is un-American.

Joe Biden is quickly becoming the greatest threat to small businesses since Fauci's fraud. While small businesses across my district and across America are struggling to find workers, struggling to stay open, Joe Biden is struggling to stay awake.

I am calling on this administration to end these excessive Federal COVID payouts and stop disincentivizing work.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman MADISON CAWTHORN for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her always incredibly accurate and fierce comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), another similarly fierce Congressman.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate my friend, Congress-

man CAWTHORN, holding this because it is important.

You know, to some people, it is just about, "Well, it is the economy. It is an inconvenience." Well, that is for rich people, like the billionaires that donated to the current President's campaign. They sure didn't help the former President.

Well, what are we talking about? We are talking about a President that is so out of touch. As he has said, "I keep forgetting I am President." It is very unfortunate.

But if you go back to his days as Vice President, you find what this President, the current President, was doing in the previous administration, and these policies are now coming back.

It ran up the price of oil and gas—natural gas, propane. It ran up the price of gasoline. And unfortunately, for the working people in America, for those that haven't been in Washington for 50 years or so—like the current President—they are getting strangled with debt. They are getting strangled with increasing prices because it just so happens, we don't have a lot of electric 18-wheelers. We don't have a lot of massive electric engines that are pulling countless numbers of cars down the train tracks.

That means every time this President takes another step to raise the price of oil—which raises the price of gasoline—he is economically crippling people that are working, people that are on Social Security, people that have fixed incomes. They are getting hammered. Yeah, it is an inconvenience to the mega wealthy that donated to the President, or people like here in Congress that are millionaires, but it is devastating.

And I go back to when President Biden was Vice President, and a lady from Panola County told me, she said, "I am 80 years old, and my gas is getting so expensive, I am afraid I am going to end up in a home like I was born in, where the only energy we had was a wood-burning stove."

And I said, Oh, ma'am, I am so sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but if Biden and Obama have their way, you are not going to be able to even have that wood-burning stove you had when you were born. You are going to be at home without any kind of energy. And that is where this President is now wanting to go back to.

We enjoyed the days of cheaper gasoline, cheaper energy. America was vibrant; and people spent and they went out to eat and they bought clothes, and it generated jobs. And this President is killing those. And he is devastating the people on fixed incomes. The people that are working and poor, he is devastating them—the people that he is supposed to care about.

Well, it is time for this administration to think about somebody besides themselves and their mega-billionaire donors. It is time to think about the American people and the damage that this administration is doing to them.

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congressman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, as I continue to consider that the Democrats' plan must be to destroy our economy by incentivizing laziness, by incentivizing people not going to work, I shake my head and say, No, that can't be true. That is just one mistake that they made.

But then when I start to look through all the points that I have outlined—of the ridiculous tax increases on dividends, the tax increases on capital gains, the tax increases on small businesses, the tax increases which will increase the cost of living for the middle class, I am sure that they are trying to destroy our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), the most powerful and the most humble man in Congress.

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman CAWTHORN for his leadership on behalf of working families, small business—of which he is one—for getting this economy going again. I thank him for allowing me to be part of this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, when President Biden promised to focus on climate change, I didn't realize he meant changing the climate of the U.S. economy by cooling off the jobs recovery. The President inherited a strong recovery, life-saving vaccines, a reopening economy, and trillions of dollars in COVID stimulus.

Yet, in his first 5 months of this year, America is nearly 550,000 fewer jobs than in the last 5 months of 2020 under President Trump—550,000 fewer jobs. Inflation is running twice as high as wage growth. In fact, for Americans, their pocketbook, their paycheck has actually declined in buying power since President Biden took office.

America's jobs recovery ought to be surging, but instead, April/May reports were just disastrous. Main Street businesses, Congressman CAWTHORN, as you said, they are struggling to find workers.

Labor force participation is back in the 1970s. Inflation has hit a 13-year high, and a lot of Americans are fearful about the impact of rising prices and slow growth economy when the sugar high from all this COVID stimulus goes away, which is exactly what President Biden's budget admits will do.

This President is sabotaging America's jobs recovery, with crippling tax increases and antibusiness policies that hurt working families and Main Street businesses and drive U.S. jobs overseas.

Treasury Secretary Yellen, the other day, conceded that just as you heard tonight, these lavish Federal employment bonuses really are hurting Main Street and hurting hiring. Thankfully, half of American States, including one blue State, have opted out of these benefits to help reconnect workers and help our economy survive.

A recent analysis of the Ways and Means' staff shows that Congress has

already approved, for an average family of four, where both parents are out of work, we have already approved over \$109,000 in stimulus checks, unemployment checks, and child checks.

We were incredibly generous during COVID to help people get back on their feet, defeat this virus, and move back. But the time for emergency spending is over; the time for endless government checks is over. We cannot become the Olive Garden of never-ending government checks. It won't help people rebuild their lives. It won't help us rebuild the economy.

Unfortunately, because of these Federal bonuses on unemployment, we are seeing a record 9.3 million unfilled jobs. It is hurting Main Street businesses; they are struggling. And frankly, it will hurt families who are not going to be able to reconnect again when all these checks run out. And our job creators shouldn't have to compete with the Federal Government.

Instead of helping America get back to work, the Biden administration is pushing crippling tax hikes that will cost us millions of new jobs. I am proud to have led, on behalf of President Trump in a Republican Congress, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that reduced tax cuts across the board, or reduced taxes across the board, redesigned our Tax Code so American businesses could compete and win anywhere in the world.

It made America the most competitive economy on the planet, lifted millions of Americans out of poverty, and stopped U.S. businesses from moving overseas. But now, we face a big risk. President Biden's insistence on repealing the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will cost 6 million U.S. jobs. For that family of four, middle class, making maybe \$73,000 a year, it will rob their family budget of over \$20,000 over time.

The attack on American energy will cut jobs by 1.5 million U.S. jobs and repealing stepped-up basis on family farms will cost us another 1 million jobs over 12 years.

Congressman CAWTHORN's efforts to lead commonsense proposals, stop these crippling tax increases, and get the economy back on task is exactly what our country needs today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him for letting me join him.

□ 1800

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BRADY for his leadership on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I think with everything that has been said from all of these Representatives from all over the country, each of them representing nearly 730,000 people, I believe it is overly and abundantly clear that it is time to end the emergency spending. It is time to end the trumped-up unemployment checks, which are incentivizing laziness. It is time to end government-mandated joblessness in America.

There is a labor shortage in this country, and if we don't end it, we will

see inflation, the likes of which our country has never seen before, and I don't know if we will be able to recover from that.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

VIRTUE SIGNALING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I am going to try to do something that is a little bit different, and parts of it are going to be incredibly annoying. I am going to hurt some feelings, but my theme is actually very simple.

There are general solutions to so many of the things we consider problems, but we are going to have to deal with something, and it is a true problem around this place. And that is, I am going to use the word "virtue signaling" and sort of folklore.

We sometimes know what we know, but the fact of the matter is that technology, science, all of what we were told was wrong, yet we can't get it out of our heads, or, as a society, we care more about the symbolism than actually curing the problem. And I really do believe if we could embrace that thing called a calculator, math, thinking, science, there are some amazingly good things we could do.

But, first, we got to step up and admit that we have been making up a lot of crap. And that is me being slightly on the vulgar side. But it is a frustration I have where often I see our speeches behind these microphones, and we are virtue signaling because that is often what is expected from our voters. At least we think that is what is expected, but I bet you our voters would be elated if we would actually give them the truth and then show them the math.

I am going to show a couple of things to first set up my argument, and then walk through a couple things that I think are incredibly optimistic for our future as a country, but maybe even the entire world.

So, first off, let's just use this. I have done versions of this before, but it is important as a thought experiment.

Do you care about plastic in the ocean?

I think everyone in America cares about plastic in the ocean. Except we have a small problem. We do this virtue signaling of let's ban plastic straws. But the fact of the matter is, the data says that straws that come from North America don't end up in the ocean. We do actually an amazingly good job grabbing our waste and putting it in the landfills or incinerating or taking care of it. But if you

actually look at the real math, 90 percent of the plastic in the world's oceans comes from 10 rivers: 8 in Asia, 2 in Africa.

If you actually gave a darn about plastic in the ocean, what would you do?

You would actually go to those 10 rivers—8 in Asia, 2 in Africa—and either add value, use our technical assistance, use our foreign aid, and go and deal with the plastic in the ocean.

But, instead, we give speeches here, we award, we allot cities like D.C. that ban plastic straws. That is pure virtue signaling. It doesn't actually do anything, yet we parade around like we did something.

Instead, this body could actually have an incredible impact on plastic in the ocean. Go to the 10 rivers that are 90 percent of the plastic, and actually get our foreign aid, our technical aid, even some economic incentives to capture that plastic and stop sticking it into rivers that flow into the ocean. It is a simple example of the virtue signaling that actually warps real environmental policy.

Here is one that is going to drive some people crazy.

What would happen if I came to you and said the entire environmental impact of that cloth cotton bag you carry to the grocery store, you have to use 7,100 times to basically equal the plastic bags that are produced out of natural gas?

Yet we walk around with our little plastic bags when we walk into the Trader Joe's and those things, you know, proudly showing, hey, I care about the environment. But the math—that is not the science.

If we are going to make public policy, how does this body, and not only Congress, but our city councils, our county governments, our State legislatures, how do we stop making public policy that is virtue signaling, and the math is the math?

We have this incredible report, detailed. It came out of, I think, Demark. It was looking at the environmental impact. It turns out those crappy little plastic bags that are banned in so many of our cities were less environmentally impactful than the cotton bags we are walking around with, because those cotton ones you have to use 7,100 times to actually have the same environmental impact.

Another one that is going on around the country right now is let's ban natural gas for cook stoves and heating in homes. Except if you actually do the math of burning natural gas to make steam, to turn the turbine, to make electricity, it actually is environmentally substantially better to use natural gas in your home. And there are lots of really good studies and data on this.

But, once again, it is sort of this urban folklore, it is virtue signaling to say my city council is going to ban natural gas from people being able to cook with. Aren't I doing something wonderful for the environment?