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?

But it turns out, no, you are not. We have got to stop doing this.

So there is actually some other really interesting ones.

So how many out there did we watch on the cable news shows after the function of the canceling of the Keystone pipeline?

Now, as Republicans, we all talked about the jobs lost. On the left, they are talking about the environmental benefit of stopping that pipeline.

Well, first, let's deal with the reality. Those hydrocarbons are going somewhere. They are going to be cracked somewhere, turned into distillates or fuels. And they are refined in southeast Asia or refined in Louisiana or Texas. They are going to be refined. So let's just do the math on the transportation.

It turns out the Keystone pipeline has dramatically less carbon impact than sticking it in the rail, sticking it into the rail pipeline attachment, or sticking it in rail or pipeline and putting it on the coast and shipping it out to southeast Asia. Just the shipping part.

If you actually cared about the actual math of the environmental impact of the Keystone pipeline, you would have supported the pipeline, but that wasn't the virtue signaling that came from the environmental community. And being someone who genuinely cares a lot about the actual math, you know, as those of us who try to do the math of what is the actual impacts in global warming, and what is actually the folklore, what is make-believe, what is real, we got to stop doing this.

And I know we love the political wedges, saying, well, they supported this and we supported the union workers.

How do you get some people around the table to use a calculator, and say, well, it turns out, whether you like hydrocarbons or not, the pipeline turns out to have a less environmental load than canceling it does because now we are going to stick it in railcars, now we are going to ship it to other parts of the world?

And I haven't even done the math on other refineries from other parts of world that have dramatically less environmental standards when cracking carbon chains.

So here is another one. This one actually is both hopeful, but we are going to have to start to think a little more creatively. So here is my setup. Half of the noncarbon-emitting electricity in the United States—actually, I think it is slightly more than half—comes from baseload nuclear.

We have a massive amount of our baseload nuclear that is coming off line. If you actually do the math of the amount of nuclear that is coming off line, our renewable baseload cannot keep close to keeping up. So there are a lot of charts. And I have done this on the floor before, showing that as all this nuclear comes off line, carbon emissions in the United States on electrical generation is going up.

Even though we have all this renewable, this wind, this photovoltaic, these things, geothermal hitting the market, it doesn't produce enough power to keep up with the nuclear coming off. And the argument for much of the nuclear is, well, think, they have to do uranium mines, think of this, think of that.

Well, what if I came to you and said, baseload nuclear is absolutely critical to the reliability of the grid and all of those other things, and it is noncarbon-emitting, and we have the technology today?

I have done a whole presentation on this in detail. Basically, we can extract uranium from sea water now. We do this. We have the technology.

But it is even better than that. We have a Nobel Prize physicist who has been writing papers, articles, saying that, within a decade, they believe high-pulse lasers—and, look, I have done my best to read the scientific articles a couple times. Some of it is beyond even—you know, when you are having to read an article and have a dictionary close by to look up some of the technical. But his premise is we can use high-pulse lasers to break up and make inert spent nuclear fuels.

So his theme is, say, in 30 minutes I could take something that would have lasted a million years, and in 30 minutes I can make it inert. If this is true, it is the virtuous cycle on nuclear energy. And you all know, because this place has actually helped fund it, the new compact nuclear reactor design that is dramatically safer, dramatically less intrusive, and much more efficient.

So think of that. I can extract my uranium from rain water, the new nuclear reactor design, and now we have a way of instead of sticking it in Yucca Mountain, we can actually break up that spent nuclear fuel.

This should be exciting. There should be people on the left and the right going, it is worth sticking some money into this type of technology. But it doesn't fit our political folklore around here of, well, we can't have nuclear because of this.

But we claim we give a darn about science and technology, when we have some of our smartest people in our society saying, we think we have a solution.

Why don't we actually invest in those solutions instead of investing in the things that we keep doing around here, where we are investing in technology that is already decades out of date?

So part of my fixation is—the reason I bring this chart is there was a Member, I think, just last week that was on the floor, and she alluded—someone from the left—that the economic growth basically led to more greenhouse gases, more environmental impact. But that is not actually the math.

We are still working on some of the data for 2019, but if you look at 2018 and what we are preliminarily seeing in 2019, you know, greenhouse gases, the environmental impact, went down, even though GDP went up dramatically.

□ 1815

Why? Because what we did in the tax reform created this huge incentive to invest in the latest technology.

Mr. Speaker, you can go buy that new technology, and you could 100 percent expense it. It turned out we were able to create a moment where economic growth took off, jobs took off, and the working poor got dramatically less poor.

It was the first couple of years in modern economic times when income inequality shrank, and it shrank because there was opportunity. People's labor became valuable. And, oh, guess what? Our environment got cleaner while growing the economy. We have the proof. We have the data.

Isn't this the Holy Grail that both the left and the right claim they care about? Except the difference is it didn't require a command-and-control economy. It just required really good technology and the incentive to invest in that technology, and it made a difference.

The other argument we come to the microphone and talk about is that there are incredible technology disruptions on the cusp. If we could get our heads around them, then we could make some amazing things happen. If we don't get our heads around them, then it is going to create economic disruptions. It is going to hurt a lot of people. We need to understand these.

Over the last couple of years, I have done some presentations on something called synthetic biology. The reality is it is incredibly hopeful for humanity. It also has some really scary stuff. Mark my words, we will know in about a decade whether I am right. I believe this piece of technology here will be the single most disruptive technology of our lifetimes.

Here is one: What if I came to you tomorrow and said that we can take plants and make them from the mid-20s to 52 percent more efficient in their growth by tweaking?

Now, I am not a plant biologist, but I have gone out of my way to read every article of the University of Illinois and those who are producing.

Mr. Speaker, you remember your high school biology class? Let's see if I can get this right. You had a plant cell, and it really, really, really wants a carbon molecule to turn it into a sugar to grow. But a quirk of nature, it grabs an oxygen molecule. It now has to spend all this energy to purge that and then turn around and grab the carbon so it can grow.

What happens if every time it grabs the right molecule to maximize its growth?

Okay, it looks like we would now know how to tweak commodity crops and other crops to always grab that carbon molecule and grow.

Now, I need the thought experiment. I need the people around here who all believe we are geniuses to think this through.

What happens tomorrow to the value of farmland? What happens to our trade relationships with the world where it is our agriculture muscle as a country when other countries are now able to grow 40 percent more soybeans on the same land, same water, same fertilizer?

Think about the value of agricultural land. What is the value of agricultural debt?

This is coming. This technology is here.

Are we preparing, thinking what it means? What type of opportunity does this mean? Because the world already produces more food than it needs. Our real problem is distribution.

What happens if tomorrow much of the agriculture in the world could produce 40 percent more on the same piece of land?

There is also a quirky piece of math to think about, and that is world agriculture is estimated to produce about 2.2 times more greenhouse gases than every car on Earth. Mr. Speaker, if you were an optimistic utopian, then this technology is functionally equal to removing every car off the face of the Earth. Yes, that is the positive. But you also have to be ready to deal with the disruption it means economically. And it is coming.

But yet have we ever had a hearing? Have we ever had a discussion? Have we ever invited the scientists to think about and talk us through and have us start to plan economically about what it means?

Or are we just going to do what this place does, which is to avoid difficult discussions until it kicks us in the head?

Let's talk about healthcare a bit. Obviously, that is my fixation. I come here every week and try to talk about ways we can change.

Before we do this, here is a simple thought experiment. Well, it is not a thought experiment. It is the facts. ObamaCare, the ACA, was a financing bill. It is who gets subsidized, who gets to pay. Our Republican alternative is a financing bill. It is who has to pay, who gets subsidized. Medicare for All is a financing bill. They don't actually change what the underlying cost of delivering healthcare is. They just shift around who gets to pay.

This debate here has to become what we pay. What technology and what models are we going to adopt that change the cost of delivering healthcare?

What happens if I come to you, Mr. Speaker, and say that 5 percent of our brothers and sisters have preexisting conditions, that they are suffering, and that they are also over half of the healthcare costs of this Nation?

Wouldn't it be much smarter, much more caring, much more empathetic, and much more compassionate to fixate on that 5 percent who are suffering and say that we are going to do everything we can to push technologies, to push the caring, and to push disruption in biologics to cure or minimize the suffering of the 5 percent? We are living examples of this.

Do you remember, Mr. Speaker, only a few years ago the cost curve we were all looking at in regard to hepatitis C? Do you remember, hep C, you carry the virus in you for sometimes decades and decades and decades, Mr. Speaker. Then, all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, you need a liver transplant.

We were looking at numbers that were going to essentially bankrupt the VA with all the liver transplant costs. Then what happened? A cure was delivered. It was really expensive at the beginning, but it was dramatically less expensive than somebody having a failed liver.

We are living in the time of disruptions, and we should promote those as a Congress and help many of us who are panicked over the debt but also really care about eliminating suffering.

It is one of the reasons I have an absolute fixation. If you really wanted to help people of color, Mr. Speaker, and my Tribal communities—I represent some of the populations with the highest diabetes in the world, some of my Native Americans—how about an Operation Warp Speed on diabetes?

Remember, Mr. Speaker, in the next 30 years, in today's dollars, inflation-adjusted dollars, we have $121 trillion of debt coming at us. Sixty-seven percent of that is just Medicare.

The single biggest thing you could actually do, Mr. Speaker, the single thing, the biggest thing to deal with future debt that buries and destroys the future for my 5-year-old daughter, believe it or not, is a cure for diabetes because 31 percent of the Medicare future is just diabetes.

One of the most loving and compassionate things we could do as conservatives and liberals is say that we are going to do—call it whatever you want, Mr. Speaker. I want to call it operation warp speed because we are close to the cusp of major revolutionary treatments for type 1, the ability to do stem cells to the pancreas. There are some incredible journal articles out just in the last 6 weeks on that.

Some of that can also be used for type 2. Type 2 is more complicated because it is both the autoimmune but also lifestyle and having a discussion of, as a people, as a society, are we going to continue to fund really unhealthy foods? Are we going to continue to do farm supports in a way where we grow only a handful of crops instead of being able to have a wide variety of different things?

These are really disruptive concepts, and they would be really compassionate and loving for everyone if we took really, really, really seriously what diabetes means to this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, if you really want to deal with the reality, don't come to these microphones and give a speech about how COVID affected certain populations much more dramatically and then, in the next breath, not talk about the fact that the curve is absolutely sympathetic with those same populations having diabetes. The math is the math.

Mr. Speaker, if you really give a darn about people, let's solve that because it is the single biggest thing you and I could do to take on future sovereign debt.

The other one that drives me insane, because this is the one you and I could have the most impact on in the shortest period of time, Mr. Speaker, 16 percent of U.S. healthcare costs, so about $528 billion every single year, is people not taking their pharmaceuticals properly.

I forget to take my hypertension medicine, and I have a stroke. I don't take my statin for my cholesterol, and all of a sudden, I have to get a stent. Someone doesn't maintain use of technology and stay on their insulin properly.

We have lots of data now. This is a really well-vetted number. Sixteen percent of U.S. healthcare is our not taking or taking improperly our pharmaceuticals.

Well, it turns out there is a technology solution to that: the little pill cap that talks to you.

How about for grandma, who has to take some pills in the morning and then in the evening, we have the technology that drops the pills and talks to her. It turns out this technology could save not $100 billion but a few hundred billion dollars every year.

Mr. Speaker, you talk about wanting to have an impact on healthcare and make people healthier and deal with those 5 percent of our brothers and sisters who have chronic conditions that are 50-plus percent of our healthcare. There are things you could do tomorrow that would have an impact on society before the year is over.

We made a proposal last year or just before the pandemic of super-high-value pharmaceuticals. Why don't we put them in sterile blister-pack-type containers and make them recyclable?

I had a number of Members here, particularly one who is my friend on the left, who came to me and said: Oh, that is yucky.

But I remember 10 years ago, when my mother was in hospice care, and one of the nurses there—she was a family friend—took me in the back. We were talking, and she showed me this barrel. She said: You know, there is probably $10,000 to $20,000 of pharmaceuticals in there that I am throwing away from our patients who have passed away in the last few weeks.

That got me thinking: Is this rational?

Besides the fact that the small molecules end up in your water supply, Mr. Speaker, the biologics, but is that rational?

These are just little, incremental, creative things. We know we have technology now—the thing you can blow

into, Mr. Speaker, that instantly tells you that you have the flu that could bounce off your phone with its medical records and say that you are not allergic to this antiviral and instantly order that antiviral, and you would be healthier.

But that process is illegal under the laws that we passed here. The Social Security Act says you are going to need a doctor, Mr. Speaker, the reimbursement from HHS, our State licensing rules.

Are we ready to stop living in virtue signaling, stop living in folklore, and start looking at the actual math?

Yes, we are going to get lobbied like crazy from groups that we are disrupting their business model. But wouldn't it be neat to say: This isn't Republican, and it is not Democrat. It is technology.

Let's make a difference. It is doable, and it is here.

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

INFLATION THREATENS FUTURE OF AMERICA'S ECONOMY

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the threat of inflation on the future of America's economy.

In other places around the Capitol at this time, people are discussing a new infrastructure bill. They are talking about a new 2022 budget. People talk about the importance of not raising taxes on the poor. Earlier this year, they rejected a possible gas tax hike because it would have fallen disproportionately on the poor. But there is no surer way to penalize the poor of this country than to inflate the currency.

□ 1830

Look at where we already are on other commodities: aluminum, lumber, soybeans.

How are our young people going to buy that first house?

The cost of food, and even prepared food, is going up.

Why is that?

Take a look at the charts showing the amount of currency in banks. M1 currency, which is up by a factor of 5 times; not 5 percent, not 50 percent, but a factor of 5 times in the last year.

Look at M2, up 30 percent in the last year. Of course, the cost of commodities is spiraling through the roof.

America is a wealthy country because our dollar has been the envy of the world. But this Congress has not been acting like a Congress with the world's reserve currency. This Congress is acting like the Congress of a country such as Zimbabwe, and we all saw on TV what happened there.

It is time for the people who are not only negotiating the infrastructure bill, but negotiating the 2022 budget, to take into account what they are doing to the poor of this country or the middle class of this country as they inevitably stoke inflation.

Think of the people on almost fixed incomes, on Social Security. Think of all of the people on pensions, who are locked in at $15,000 a year, $20,000 a year, and think how their purchasing power will go down if we continue along this path, including the bloated budget proposed by President Biden himself.

We must rein in our spending. The poor and the middle class are the ones paying the price. I beg the negotiators to stand up to the people who think that printing hundreds of millions of dollars more in the infrastructure bill or passing this bill with an excessively high spending increase in the regular 2022 budget will not affect the average guy. It is going to affect the average guy. It is going to erode their savings. It will shrink the values of their pension or Social Security. It will be a true disaster for middle class and poor America.

QUESTIONS FOR VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS ON HER TRIP TO THE SOUTHERN BORDER

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to, first of all, applaud the fact that Vice President HARRIS is going to the southern border. I don't know whether she has done this on her own accord or with prodding from President Biden, but, either way, I am glad she is going down there.

I have been to the border several times this year. I think it is very difficult to learn all you should learn in one day. There are nine sectors to the southern border, and what you learn in El Paso is very different from what you learn in Yuma. It is very different from what you learn in San Diego. It is very different from what you learn in McAllen.

Nevertheless, I am glad she is going down there, and I would like to make some suggestions for her, which we will forward to her as questions she should be asking or things she should learn about the southern border.

First of all, Madam Vice President, the Migrant Protection Protocols caused the Mexican Government to hold asylum seekers on the south side of the border. President Biden has since walked away from the protocol. What effect did the nullification of this agreement with the Mexican Government have on the number of people crossing the border? And what effect will it have on the number of people from around the world who will come here in the future?

Secondly, we also had Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Central American countries that held people south not only of the Mexican border, but south of Mexico. What effect did President Biden's ending the Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Central American countries have on the number of people entering southern Mexico? And what effect will this have on people coming through Mexico from around the world?

Third, I want the Vice President to find out what type of drugs are coming across the border. Has there been a change in the fraction of marijuana versus fentanyl coming across the southern border? How lethal is fentanyl?

Fourth, I hear horrific stories from the border guards as far as women and girls being sexually assaulted on their journey through Mexico. What percentage of women and girls are sexually assaulted as they travel to enter the U.S. illegally?

Fifth, you will find when you get down there, Madam Vice President, that families consist of adults and children, find out how many times a family supposedly shows up and the Border Patrol suspects that the children are not part of the family, and what happens when DNA tests are given to children and the adults they are entering with?

Six, how much does it cost for the migrants to enter our country? And by that, I mean how much are they having to pay the drug cartels? I think you will find different numbers for the cost of a Mexican, a Central American, a Brazilian, and Asian. But you should ask these questions when you are on the southern border.

Seventh, got-aways are when people come in this country and have no contact with the Border Patrol. As the Border Patrol must spend time doing paperwork with the huge increase of unaccompanied children coming here, has the number of got-aways, increased from this time last year to now?

Eighth, I think you should look at some demonstrations with some dogs. How effective are dogs in looking for fentanyl and other drugs, and should we be purchasing more dogs in this budget?

Next, I ask you to look at the border wall which you will find is 30-feet high and 8 feet underground. Talk to the Border Patrol, talk to ICE, talk to local law enforcement, and see what they think of that wall and whether it would be worth expanding it or whether your administration was right to just cut it off with equipment just sitting in the open sun.

Next, Madam Vice President, you said you want to focus on the root causes from countries whose citizens are coming here. I ask you to find out what countries are sending its citizens here and which countries have sent a significant amount of people. I think you are going to be surprised that it is not just a matter of people coming here from Mexico or Honduras. They are coming from around the world, but you should report back on the number of countries you would have to improve to prevent the demand from going up further to come here.

Next, in the opinion of the Border Patrol, have you and the President's public comments during your campaign