

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, in these tough economic times, our families need all the support that we can provide them. Whatever we can do to assist those who seek more education and training to better prepare themselves for this tougher, tighter job market and rising unemployment and under-employment rates, we need to do.

That's why today, Representative TOM PERRIELLO and I, joined by a number of our colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee, are introducing the College Learning Access Simplicity and Savings Act. We want to put more students in class. It will make our ability to assist students to gain access to our institutions of higher education much easier. Students and their families can benefit from additional and more simplified tax credits for higher education expenses.

Last year, legislation that I offered simplified the student financial aid forms. Now, this legislation will take on the 1040. Today, higher education provisions are needlessly complex. It takes IRS an 86-page brochure to explain to families how to use the existing tax credits for higher education. The complex process is so challenging that 1 in 4 eligible taxpayers don't claim any of the benefits available. It shouldn't take a certified public accountant to become a CPA, or a teacher, or an engineer. This legislation would consolidate some of the existing provisions into a single, unified, easy-to-understand, higher education tax credit that is both more generous and easier to use.

Our bill joins the Hope Tax Credit (currently up to \$1,800 per year) with the above-the-line tax deduction for qualified tuition and expenses (currently tax deductible up to \$4,000). We replace all of this with a new \$3,000 tax credit that is usable for undergraduate education and the first 2 years of graduate school, up to a lifetime limit of \$12,000. Up to half of this new tax credit would, for the first time, be refundable. This ensures that working folks, families that are struggling to become part of the middle class, will no longer be excluded from this higher education tax credit.

This bill is, of course, no substitute for a substantial increase and an acceleration of those Pell Grant increases Congress has already enacted. But tax relief, done in a refundable form, can work hand-in-hand with Pell Grants to ensure more opportunity.

We are justifiably concerned with the federal deficit, but there's a real oppor-

tunity deficit we need to be concerned with also. When our students are not able to achieve their full, God-given potential, a deficit occurs, and it is that deficit, that opportunity deficit, that this legislation seeks to address.

I respectfully call on our new President-elect to consider inclusion of this legislation in the economic recovery legislation that this Congress must adopt as soon as possible. Investing in American students is an investment in America's future. Putting Americans to work means ensuring that they have access to all the education for which each is willing to work.

It was Thomas Jefferson who urged public support of higher education, wanting the youth of all our states to "drink from the cup of knowledge."

Today, there are students who are thirsty for that knowledge, but they confront a number of challenges. Mr. PERRIELLO and I, and our colleagues, hope to address those challenges, and we hope we will have the opportunity to see this legislation enacted into law in the next few weeks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WE HAVE TO PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. We've heard the economic reports, over 10 million Americans out of work, 7.2 percent unemployment. Some say that unemployment could go to 10 percent. We could be looking at 12 million Americans out of work.

The productive capacity of this Nation is not being used. It's withering. We have to put America back to work. Our program actually is pretty simple. Jobs, jobs, jobs. Put people back to work with good paying jobs.

How do you do that?

You go back to that old time religion of FDR reflected in the New Deal. He rebuilt America. There's over \$1.6 trillion in infrastructure needs that are unmet, that can't be met by local or State governments. The stimulus package that we hear discussion about does want to do something about addressing infrastructure. That's significant. We should support that.

But we also have to look at our experience, and we don't want to be TARPed again in this Congress; because this Congress voted for a \$350 billion bailout of banks. I didn't vote for it, but the House and the Senate voted for it. And it resulted in the banks using the money, not to help people

stay in their homes, but in using the money to buy other banks, take over other banks. They hoarded the money.

There is a credit freeze. We cannot—we must take notice of that. I know Chairman FRANK, BARNEY FRANK, is going to do that with the next tranche of TARP money, try to make sure money goes to keeping people in their homes. That's a positive step in the right direction. But Congress must take note of its experience in the bailout when we're fashioning a so-called stimulus package because we want to make sure that the money gets to the people who need it the most and it gets to people quickly.

Now, some say that you can do that through tax cuts. Well, actually, with people being afraid of the economy getting worse, they're holding on to their money. Look at the Christmas retail returns. Sales are down dramatically. People don't want to spend if they have it.

So how do you get the economy moving again?

Tax cuts, tax carry forwards, giving businesses that made bad choices a chance to get more money so they can hold on to it?

No, we have to prime the pump of the economy. And the way you prime the pump of the economy is that you create millions of jobs. Putting people back to work, rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our water systems, our sewer system, that's infrastructure. But there are some broader issues here we have to look at.

The banks have shown that they can't be trusted with the American economy. That's generally been the case, but now it's out in the open, \$350 billion later.

In 1913, the money power of the country was taken away from the people. By constitutional privilege it belongs with the Congress, but it was given up in the Federal Reserve Act. The Federal Reserve is no more Federal than Federal Express. But yet it has the power to determine the direction and use of money in our economy. If we could take that power back and put the Federal Reserve under Treasury, we start to be in a position of being able to control monetary policy on behalf of the United States people.

We also have to address the issue of the fractional reserve system, which is how banks create money out of thin air. And then, as they do that, they've created the conditions where we've had this kind of Ponzi scheme collapsing, banks and the hedge funds working together. So we have to halt the banks' privilege to create money by ending the fractional reserve system. Past monetized credit would be converted into U.S. government money, and banks would act as intermediaries, accepting deposits and loaning them out to borrowers. Fine.

But then, with the ability to control our fortunes, we then, once we control money again, we spend the money into circulation on infrastructure; not just

the fiscal infrastructure, but also on health care. We not only can address housing needs, rebuilding America's infrastructure, but we can also get people the health care they need in this country. We can enable children to stay in school or to go back to school.

We really have the opportunity to take control of our own destiny again. But we can't go back to the same old same old. Trickle-down economics, the trickle never gets down. The invisible hand of the marketplace is in the pockets of the American taxpayers.

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The invisible hand in the marketplace is in the pockets of the American taxpayers. Let's rebuild America. Let's reclaim our economic destiny, and let's do it as a Congress—united, working with the new administration.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY AND HONORING BRIGADIER GENERAL RED BROWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, this weekend, a very important event will take place at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. My friend, fellow Texas Aggie, constituent, and citizen soldier Colonel James "Red" Brown will be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. This American hero deserves to have tribute paid here today on the floor of the United States House of Representatives for his outstanding and devoted service to this country. Red's experiences and accomplishments are far too extensive to be able to cover during my limited time, but it is clear he is an example of true patriotism.

Newly promoted General Brown received his commission in the United States Army in May of 1980 from the ROTC program at Texas A&M University. He is a graduate of Armor Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms Staff Services School, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

He had served as a company battalion and brigade commander. Colonel Brown, soon to be General Brown, had also served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Military Affairs in Bosnia-Herzegovina during Stabilization Force Seven, as well as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations of the 49th Armored Division for 3 years.

Just a few of his awards include the Bronze Star for bravery and gallantry as well as the Combat Action Badge awarded in Iraq, three Army commendation medals, several Meritorious Service medals, and the Legion of Merit.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he commanded the 56th Brigade Combat Team, which was comprised of six battalions with 31 companies and over

4,000 soldiers. When his 56th Brigade was sent to Iraq, it was the largest deployment of troops from the Texas reserve since World War II.

It was a great honor for me to be there at Baylor Stadium in December of 2005 to be part of the massive homecoming, welcoming these brave servicemembers when they returned home from Iraq.

During their commitment in Iraq, Colonel Brown and his men conducted convoy escort and route security missions throughout the country. As you will recall, that was quite an historic year for Iraqis and for those all over the world who value freedom, because thanks to the heroic efforts of then Colonel Brown and his 56th Brigade and so many others there in the United States military, the Iraqis elected their first true representatives to lead a democratic form of government. Though terrorists tried to instill fear among the locals with prevalent threats of persecution and death, the Iraqis were determined to venture to the polls and to participate in democracy because the hope they were given by the supportive American servicemembers, such as Red, was greater than any fear.

I have hanging in my office a photo, very dear to me, of Colonel Brown and of other members of his brigade, proudly holding an Aggie flag that I had taken over when I had visited there. It is framed and signed by all of those in the picture there in Iraq.

My friend General Brown has dedicated his life to and has risked it for the service of this great country. There are countless people across the world who will never know the benefits and inspiration they've experienced as a result of General Brown's sacrifice. His sacrifice did not stop while he was on active duty.

As a civilian, he is also heavily involved in service to our local area—serving on the board of directors of the Boys and Girls Club of East Texas, the Lindale Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Council of the Lindale First United Methodist Church. He was even elected to the Lindale School Board where he has served also honorably and as president of the board. I know he doesn't do it for recognition or for praise because I know his heart, but General Red Brown deserves to be honored and thanked for his unwavering example of patriotism and selflessness.

So congratulations are extended on the promotion to Brigadier General. No one is more deserving of such an honored promotion.

May God bless General Red Brown, his wonderful wife, Jane, and his delightful, beautiful children Hannah and Crystal for being such a great blessing to this Nation.

Madam Speaker, I would like to yield at this time to the gentleman from New Jersey, who is a dear friend. It's hard to find anybody more insightful in this body.

Mr. SCOTT GARRETT from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman for that and for the insightful comments. Maybe I should just begin with the gentleman from Utah for his comments with regard to the economy and the stimulus.

The gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Thank you. I appreciate that pass-off very quickly here.

The comments of Congressman GOHMERT about General Brown, I think, are appropriate as a beginning for this entire discussion about the stimulus. As he has been sacrificing his all for this country, it is our job to try and make sure that there is a country that is worthy of that sacrifice and that commitment that he will have.

I just want to talk very briefly because we have some great experts here on the economy of this country who will say something.

Just on a personal approach, I am one of those who was a product of kind of a "yours and our" family. My father, who was a newlywed with a young son—my oldest brother—during the Depression, lost his job during the depths of that Depression, and my mother was a recent widow with two young sons under 5 with no job at the same time. My father went for 2 years during the depths of the Depression without a full-time job. I realize the difficulty in talking to him of what he went through and of what the family went through. Indeed, he was saved by the creation of a government job during that time period.

I came around about 20 years after this event, and my father always cautioned me at the time that the government job that saved him was a temporary job, that when the government decided to close the program, the job went away at the same time, and he was back to the same issue of finding a job that had been created on the economy, an economy created job.

So, as we deal with the stimulus issue, I recognize that this stimulus package that we have without any details—it's just a concept still floating around—that is taxpayer-funded can have a profound effect on individuals and can have a profound effect on the economy, but if it is to be successful in the long term, it must be successful in encouraging and in stimulating private-sector jobs in the economy. That's the long-term solution.

One of the former leaders of this body once said, "Between invention and innovation, you have to have investment, and investment only happens if there is an expectation of return." If we do not include as part and parcel of our attempt to reinvigorate this economy an aggressive tax reduction policy, not only for individuals but for business, we do not promote that expectation of return. An aggressive tax reduction policy for the business sector will provide stability to the business and will encourage them to reinvest real money into real long-term jobs that will not be dependent on the taxpayer largess to take place.