Way in 1986, Joyce was called ''one of those rare phenomena that comes along only once in a lifetime.'' Joyce helped provide Christmas presents for needy children, acquired an acre of land for local Boy Scouts, and organized the area's first recycling drive, just to name a few. She was the first woman to become a United Way President in Galesburg, Illinois. Through her leadership, she has inspired others to answer the call of service.

When Maytag Corporation shut its doors in 2004, she was the first person to offer displaced workers the helping hand they so desperately needed. And as a member of my staff, she has assisted local families with everything from retirement security to workers rights, and even going to bat for them with our friends at the Internal Revenue Service.

For her service to the labor movement, the city of Galesburg, the 17th Congressional District, and our entire Nation, I salute her. Joyce, congratulations on your retirement. You will be missed not just by the staff, not just by me, but the entire people of the 17th District.

Once again, Joyce, congratulations, and best of luck on your retirement.

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

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

LET'S IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS THAT PRODUCE RESULTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JENKINS. I know many Americans are struggling to pay their monthly mortgage payments. Unemployment is on the rise, yet more than 90 percent of homeowners are still able to scrimp and save enough each month to pay their mortgage.

Congress and government agencies have thrown billions at this crisis, yet we have little to show for it. And President Obama even said in his speech last night that the recovery plans will require significant additional resources from the Federal Government, probably more than what is already set aside. He left the door open to come back and ask for more taxpayer dollars to bail out the bad decisions of others, yet we have seen little positive impact from the initial expenditure.

Congress should not be in the business of rewarding bad actors, and I'm concerned that is exactly what H.R. 1106, the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009, and the President's plan for the housing crisis will do.

One piece of H.R. 1106 is a cram-down proposal. While the goal of the proposal may be admirable, when we see re-default rates of 55 percent within only 6 months, is that really solving the problem?

Lenders from the Second District in Kansas have told me this cram-down proposal may force an increase in interest rates. How does this increased borrowing cost benefit that young married couple looking to buy their first home? Not to mention, as I read in Business Week yesterday, many times loan modifications can result in higher monthly payments.

I understand exactly the sentiments shared with me by my constituent, Craig Grable from Wathena, Kansas. He sent me a letter telling me he pays his mortgage on time each month. He is angry that folks who have bought houses they could not afford are being rewarded by those housing plans.

□ 1645

He said, ''If the market recovers and he sells that home for a profit, he basically is keeping my tax dollars, and that is not right.''

Folks around the country like Craig who made their payments on time should not have to pay for the risky loans made by irresponsible lenders and speculators who got into loans they could not afford. At a minimum before anyone is given government assistance on their mortgage, there needs to be a clear set of eligibility standards including income verification, proof the borrower has not intentionally defaulted on the mortgage in order to benefit from government assistance, and assurances that the Federal Government is not subsidizing vacation homes.

Craig ended his letter to me saying, ''This nonsense has to stop.'' And I agree. Action without results is futile. Let us implement solutions that produce results.

IT'S TIME TO TALK TO IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the urgent need for the United States to begin direct talks with Iran about its nuclear program.

Time is of the essence. The United Nations reported last week that Iran has more enriched uranium than the world knew and is now capable of building an atomic bomb if it continues with its enrichment program. Iran also recently put a satellite into orbit showing that it has the ballistic missile capacity to deliver a nuclear weapon against an enemy.

The Iranians insist that their nuclear program is for peaceful domestic purposes only, but their nuclear program has raised fears in the Middle East and made that region an even more unstable and dangerous place.

Mr. Speaker, Iran's advanced nuclear program shows that the Bush administration's policy of refusing to talk was a dismal failure. It called Iran part of the ''Axis of Evil.'' Then for nearly 8 years the Bush administration's approach consisted of saber-rattling and threats of war, and look where that's gotten us. Absolutely nowhere.

As someone who strongly opposes nuclear proliferation, I urge that we launch a vigorous diplomatic effort aimed at getting Iran to behave more responsibly. We must begin that effort immediately before their nuclear program gets even more advanced. In the days ahead, we can look for every possible opening to begin face-to-face talks.

This diplomatic effort must include a strong partnership with the international community. The U.N. Security Council, for example, has demanded that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment program. So we must work with the members of the Council to put peaceful pressure on Iran to do just that.

I think that President Obama described the situation best last August when he said, ''My job as President would be to try to make sure that we are tightening the screws diplomatically on Iran and that we have mobilized the world community to go after their program in a very serious way.''

So, Mr. Speaker, the President followed up on that, as we know, on his first day in office. In an interview with an Arabic language television station, he said, ''If countries like Iran are willing to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us.'' This received a positive response from President Ahmadinejad, who said that Iran was ready for ''talks based on mutual respect.'' Who knows what he really meant, but I think we should take him up on this, call his bluff. Let's test him to see if he was serious. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said, ''We won't know what we're capable of achieving with Iran until we're actually there working on it.''

Mr. Speaker, Iran is currently suffering from tough economic times, high inflation and international isolation. It is also threatening its people miserably. We could take advantage of Iran's problems by offering incentives and help with their problems if they agree to pull the plug on their nuclear ambitions.

During the past administration, there was a great deal of talk about bombing Iran's nuclear facilities, but we all know that would have led us into another disastrous war in the Middle East, and thank heavens we did not do that. But refusing to engage with Iran hasn't worked so far. It's time for a new policy that stresses international cooperation, conflict resolution, and humanitarian assistance.

With President Obama's leadership and willingness to talk and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's abilities, we can push the restart button, the restart button on our relations with Iran. We

must now seize every single opportunity to do so because it appears time might be running out.

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

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

ON H.R. 1105, THE OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL, AND THE NEEDS TO PROTECT PRIVATE PROPERTY AND PROMOTE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, last night Members on both sides of the aisle rose repeatedly and applauded the remarks of President Obama, who called upon the American people to show their resilience that they have on so many occasions in the past to rise above the difficulties that we face and to lead our country out of this serious economic crisis.

However, today in the light of day, this Congress has taken a very, very different approach to try to solve those problems: the big government approach.

Today, during the debate on the omnibus spending bill, I had planned to offer an amendment. My amendment would have protected the private property rights of citizens and also highlighted the philosophical differences between the Democrat majority and the Republicans. I would note that not a single amendment was made in order as a result of the vote on this nearly $500 billion spending package. Apparently, the majority believes that government knows best and the leadership of their party in this Congress are the only ones who know best how to dole out Americans' hard-earned money and property and they have no qualms about robbing Peter to pay Paul. Despite the lip service the majority gives about the spirit of the American people, the majority's policies clearly demonstrate that they believe something quite different, that the people cannot be trusted to make the best use of their own money and property nor can they be trusted to turn our economy around.

Republicans actually believe in the American people, and they have put their policies where their mouths are. Republicans unabashedly believe that Americans know best how to control their own money and have advocated for targeted tax relief to individuals and small businesses to help the economy by putting money back into the hands of Americans.

In addition, Republicans believe that the right of private property is a fundamental right that the founders of this Nation consciously sought to protect from overly zealous government bureaucrats. The need for private property protections is especially important in trying times like these when politicians get the idea that they know best the uses for Americans' money and property.

I have sponsored legislation to protect private property from aggressive government use of eminent domain powers, and that is what the amendment I offered at the Rules Committee to the omnibus spending measure would have done. My amendment would have prevented funds in this gigantic spending bill from being used to seize private property from one person to give to another. This seems simple enough, but the majority decided to block this amendment, which would have prevented the use of any of the funds in this massive nearly $500 billion spending measure from being used for that purpose, to take people's property for private economic development purposes. But the majority decided to block the amendment and not allow a vote on the House floor. In fact, the vote to stifle debate on this amendment occurred on a purely partisan basis in the Rules Committee.

It seems clear that the majority's solution to the current economic crisis is to spend other people's money. The truth is that we are beginning to see the results that this laboratory of big government spending is producing, and it is no surprise that the results are dismal. The government simply cannot operate as efficiently nor adapt as quickly as individuals and entrepreneurs.

The likely response by the government to its own failure will be more spending, as is evident from the trillion dollar stimulus package that Congress passed 2 weeks ago as well as the nearly half trillion dollar omnibus spending bill we voted on today. There is no end in sight to the unprecedented levels of spending we are witnessing, and that is precisely why we should draw a very clear line now.

House Republicans believe that instead of spending ease, we need a spending freeze. We may now see a budget deficit of $3 trillion this year alone. That's $3 trillion. Divide that by the 300 million people in the United States, and it's nearly $10,000 for each person in the country that the government will spend more than the government will take in, $10,000 per person more that will be spent on all these massive government programs than the government will take in. This is beyond unacceptable. We need reform, and it is clear that Congress must have this reform forced upon it.

That's why over 160 bipartisan cosponsors have joined me in an attempt to force the Federal Government to rein in spending and eliminate the deficit by amending the Constitution to require it. Earlier this year I introduced a balanced budget constitutional amendment, House Joint Resolution 1. This legislation has already garnered over 160 bipartisan cosponsors, and it requires that total Federal outlays cannot exceed total revenues. We'd have 5 years to bring this into line.

It is time we started the process of reforming the way this government spends money.

This is a simple concept but one that is lost on a congress determined to put political considerations above the common good. Simply put, this constitutional amendment would bind the hands of congress by cutting up its credit cards.

The time to act is now, and if President Obama is serious about his call to rein in spending, then he should join in our call for a balanced budget constitutional amendment to force the Federal Government to do so.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT JUSTIN BAUER AND HIS WIFE, KARI BAUER

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

Mr. KISSELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer a tribute to Staff Sergeant Justin Bauer and his wife, Kari.

Staff Sergeant Bauer and his wife, Kari, were both from the State of Colorado. Staff Sergeant Bauer joined the Army and was assigned to the 82nd Airborne and stationed in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Sergeant Bauer and his wife lived in my district, the Eighth District of North Carolina.

By the words of the sergeant's co-soldiers, he was a leader extraordinaire. He was a noncommissioned officer that exemplified what was meant to be in the leadership role of being a noncommissioned officer. His soldiers looked to him as a friend and a leader and, by all accounts, was an outstanding soldier in our Army.

I bring Sergeant Bauer's attention to the floor, Mr. Speaker, because Sergeant Bauer died in service to his country on January 10 in Iraq. He was a person that accepted the risk of his profession. His wife, Kari, accepted the risk of being a military spouse. And I simply want to honor his memory but not dramatize his memory because that would not be fitting to the soldiers that represent our great Nation.

And by honoring the sergeant and his wife, Kari, I also want to extend that honor to all of our military personnel that serve this Nation knowing the sacrifices that they make and that they may be asked to make the ultimate sacrifice and are willing to do that, for this is part of their job. They accept that.

Today I have a letter that I want to present as part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that we will be sending to Kari. But in this honoring of Justin Bauer and his wife, I also want to honor all of the military that serve this Nation and their families that make up the heart and soul of our Nation's spirit.