

executives, some of whom are no longer with the company.

Every day in southern Nevada, families face tough decisions about their economic futures; can they afford to stay in their home? Are they going to be able to provide for their children's future?

I find it insulting that the CEO of AIG said that his decision to give out these bonuses was "difficult." Difficult is trying to figure out how to keep a roof over your head when you've lost your job. Difficult is providing for your children when your hours at work have been cut back. Difficult is not deciding if you are going to dole out hundreds of millions of dollars to irresponsible Wall Street executives.

I urge Congress and the administration to act quickly to recoup the taxpayers' money.

NORTHERN IRELAND

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on March 7 and 9, the young Government of Northern Ireland was put to the test. Two British soldiers and a policeman were killed by fringe groups trying to change peace to chaos, trying to reach the future through a return to the past. They failed, and the people of Northern Ireland became stronger.

The people voted for peace and acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement. The people voted for their First Minister Peter Robinson and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, who jointly condemned the murders.

The people of Northern Ireland grew stronger when thousands of Catholics, Protestants, Unionists, and Nationalists marched together saying "No going back."

As Americans, as fellow lovers of freedom and democracy, we are with the people of Northern Ireland. We are both nations of law, and can only survive when the law is upheld.

God be with the families who have suffered a loss. And God bless the people and the peace of Northern Ireland.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 257 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 257

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of March 19, 2009, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules relating to a measure addressing excessive compensation paid to employees of corporations in which the Federal government has a significant interest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maine is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. For the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time to myself as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, people across the country are rightly outraged by the egregious nature of the AIG bonuses. It is unconscionable for AIG to pay out \$165 million in bonuses to the same top executives who mismanaged the company to the point of failure.

It is fundamentally wrong to be rewarding the very same people who ran AIG while it was losing billions and billions of dollars with risky schemes that directly led to the staggering \$170 billion bailout last year. It is a stunning example of greed and shamelessness, and it is gross mismanagement and misuse of taxpayer funds that borders on criminal.

People in Maine, my district, and around the country are angry. I have heard from hundreds of my constituents sharing their outrage. One resident of Wells, Maine, in the straightforward way that my constituents do, wrote to me in this manner. He said, "Let AIG fail. Let those greedy, blood-sucking executives find out what it means to lose their life savings. You need to tell those that want our tax dollars, these are the conditions, clear and simple. And if you don't want to use it for what we want, you will get nothing." He went on to say, "It has become a sad day in our history when we have to lose our retirements, and then have to give billions to those that have caused the problems, and then, in turn, they give it to themselves as bonuses."

Another Mainer wrote, "I am writing to you because I am absolutely appalled that we, as citizens and taxpayers, have given billions of dollars to AIG, only to have that company give us all the proverbial finger and pay out \$165 million in bonus money to their staff. AIG's conduct, given their own monetary losses that are in the billions of dollars, is criminal."

The small businesses in my State of Maine are doing what businesses around the country are doing; they are diversifying, they are freezing wages. They are using their own resources, adopting cost-saving measures, whatever it takes to stay in business and keep people in their jobs.

Like so many businesses around the country, a businessman in Portland recently chose to dig into his own pocket and use his own money so he wouldn't have to lay off his employees. And just last week, I met with the owners of a small machine shop that had been growing. They came to me with questions about how they could better use the money in the recovery package to stay in business just to stay afloat. They weren't looking to line their own pockets, they were asking for help to keep people employed and keep their business afloat. These are the types of people who are stung the hardest by the AIG bonuses.

Families and businesses in Maine and across the country are struggling to make ends meet and stay in their homes. And they are helping each other out of a shared sense of responsibility. Meanwhile, on Wall Street, we see executives who seem to think they live by a different set of rules and who refuse to take responsibility for the damage they have caused. It is a perfect example of why we have, and will continue to have, a commitment to transparency and oversight in government.

When the House passed TARP last year before I was here, this type of abuse is exactly what the American people were afraid of. We knew there was a chance of waste, fraud or abuse, and now it has come to light. We are here today to fix it. We will continue to forge ahead to fix our struggling economy.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Ms. PINGREE, for yielding the time and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What concerns me about this scandalous AIG bonus issue is that the Obama administration was asleep at the wheel. Two weeks ago, the President's press secretary was asked, is the administration confident that it knows what happened to the tens of billions of dollars given to AIG? The response from the President's press secretary was, "It is confident."

Yesterday, we learned that the Obama administration asked the Senate Banking Committee chairman, Mr. DODD, to insert a provision in last month's so-called economic stimulus legislation that had the effect of authorizing AIG's bonuses. First, that gentleman who I just referred to said that he didn't know how the bonus authorization had made it into the legislation, but the next day he said yes, he authorized it after being asked to do so by the Obama administration.

Was the administration complicit? I think this is an issue that Congress needs to investigate. Yesterday, I made a motion on this floor that would have allowed debate on H.R. 1577, a bill introduced by my colleague, Representative PAULSEN, and the rest of the Republican freshmen, to deal with the