protect those subsidies and those tax breaks and instead to make real cuts in what we believe are some real priorities for us. So budgets are all about choices and priorities.

I want to particularly talk about not just the spending cuts and where else we might be able to take spending cuts. We're interested in everything being on the table and looking at the Department of Defense, for example, which some Republicans agreed with us on.

But one of the changes that they are making—and many of us refer to this as the Ryan budget, but right now it is actually the Republican budget. This is no longer your colleague from Wisconsin's ideas, but it is really the Republican budget that was passed. It was announced by the Republicans last night and will be on the floor potentially next week. And there are dramatic changes for our seniors in this country. Dramatic changes.

We have said to our seniors and our future seniors that when you get to be 65, there's going to be security for you in terms of payment for your health care. They have changed that for future seniors. There will no longer be guaranteed benefits for future seniors. They will instead be offered a voucher. It will not be the whole cost of buying private insurance. They have said that. It will be support for the premium, not the whole thing. And then seniors will have to go—and I think PAUL RYAN mentioned this yesterday—shopping in the insurance marketplace for the best insurance they can get.

When I think about that, maybe that sounds okay. You know, you go shopping. You've got a voucher in your pocket. It sounds like a coupon. You can go to the store, and you're going to be able to get 80 percent of costs paid.

However, this is health insurance, and what we already know is that the insurance industry was not inclined, before the Affordable Care Act, to cover insurance for sick people. They didn't want to cover sick kids. We had to pass a law that said you can't discriminate against children. You have to let them buy health insurance and cover that illness. And they certainly don't want to cover sick adults.

Well, when I go talk to a group of seniors, and I can be at a senior center or any number of places we've all visited as Members of Congress, and we'll have a group of 50, 100 people, and I ask, Do any of you take any medications?

And they all laugh: Of course, I take medication.

Do any of you take two prescription medications?

Of course.

Do any of you take three or four?

These are a healthy group of seniors. They look healthy to me. You know, they're out and about and they're listening to a Member of Congress. And I ask, Well, how are you going to go out and buy insurance that's going to be affordable for you?

What we know and what seniors tell us is that they know that if they go to a voucher program and they're no longer guaranteed, they will no longer have guaranteed benefits, that their voucher will become less helpful over time as expenses go up, that there will be no controls on how their taxpayer dollars will be used.

So let me just close, if I may, by saying that seniors know that privatizing Medicare—and that's what this is, it's privatizing Medicare—will limit their benefits, will be obstacles to care and on certain reimbursements, that copayments for primary care or copayments for specialty care could be quite significant, that there could be exclusions for certain services that they need, that there could be discrimination based on income and age and illness, and there's more uncertainty if they face a serious illness going forward.

So I just wanted to show two charts that maybe we will want to talk about as we go forward. One of them is, to just follow up on what I said about choices, here we are faced with a choice that the Republicans have made, which is to give tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. It's going to cost about $800 billion, and instead they are going to dismantle—this is the case of Medicaid, which is really about seniors in nursing homes, frail elderly in nursing homes, costing about $771 billion. That's a decision they've made.

We can talk more about how we've bent the cost curve, if we can use that language, on Medicare. We have already taken some serious action.

I'm happy to have further conversation with my colleagues about what this Republican budget means to seniors across this country.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you.

I would like to yield again to Mr. TONKO, who has another illustration he wants to give us.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative YARMUTH.

I will do this quickly because I know time is ticking away.

We all mentioned the concern about Medicare and how they're going to privatize it. Well, here it is, the end to Medicare. This is the buyer beware chart. This shows the Republican proposal in 2022 dollars and the Medicare model in 2022 dollars. And the voucher simply isn't going to cover much. They're suggesting 32 percent. So that leaves a $12,500 price tag to be assumed by—you guessed it—the senior. Dig into your pocket. Under the current Medicare model, it leaves you with a $6,150 price tag.

□ 1750

So it's going to more than double the commitment from the senior citizen. This is the ''buyer beware'' chart. The happy shopping spree isn't so happy. Representative YARMUTH, I just wanted to point that out. The bar graph shows it plain and simple: buyer beware.

This is an attack on middle class America. It's an attack on the system that has worked well for so many decades, and certainly it is a priority that is not ours. It is theirs. We are for the working families of this country, and we will continue to fight that fight.

Mr. YARMUTH. Again, a perfect illustration of the choices that we face as a country as we move forward over the next decades.

We know we have fiscal problems. We know we have very difficult choices. The Republicans have chosen to put the cost of balancing the budget on seniors, on low-income families, on working families, and to completely spare oil companies, millionaires and billionaires, hedge fund managers, and anyone else who has made the most of America, who has done the best, and who needs the least help. The Republicans leave them without any role to play.

Just in the few seconds remaining, I would like to ask Representative MOORE if she has any closing comments.

Ms. MOORE. I think that budgeting is not just about numbers and figures; it's about values.

I think that the Republicans have made it very, very clear that they want limited government. They particularly don't want government enriching the lives of individuals. You would think that they would want to protect some things that are not individual things, like clean air, clean water, food safety protection, but they are eviscerating all of these programs as well: research for cancer, the creation of green energy jobs, the Community Development Block Grant programs.

Mr. YARMUTH. I want to thank my colleagues from the Budget Committee for joining me, and thanks to the American people for paying attention to this very important process we are in now.

I yield back the balance of my time.

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND THE FUNDING OF U.S. ARMED FORCES IN THE FACE OF A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to address the House tonight and to talk about the issues that are burning across the country. Before I get into the economic discussions, my colleagues from across the aisle, my good friends, have brought up many things that are worthy of discussion. Before I get into that, I'd like to talk a bit about our Constitution.

I think that, if we as a Republic are not aware of the importance of the Constitution, then we tend to diminish it; we tend to walk away from it; we tend to not give it the credibility that it deserves, and that is highly risky for every one of us but especially for those people with very little or no status.

The Constitution is basically the agreement, the contract, between our government and the people. The Constitution is the only thing that limits the power of government. It is the instrument by which we, the people, have our rights guaranteed to us, and any time we begin to diminish or to say that the Constitution is not valid, then we put at risk our own freedoms.

One of the ideas of the Constitution is that it was replacing something previous to it. The Articles of Confederation were what our Founding Fathers originally came up with. Very soon, they realized it had great, deep flaws. One of the flaws that they found is that interstate commerce, going from one State to the next, did not act like it was inside the same country at all. Instead, the commerce was stopped at one State line, taxed as it went through that State, stopped at the next State line, and products became so expensive that they could not move to market because of the taxation, because of the accumulated taxation from one State to the next.

The Founding Fathers recognized that to be a problem. Almost immediately, they convened the Constitutional Convention, and one of the prime articles that they were talking about in that Constitution was the Commerce Clause. They felt it was necessary to address that in order for the country to be prosperous, for it to move forward.

James Madison later wrote in his Federalist Paper No. 56 what were to be the objects of Federal legislation. He was addressing that question of ''where are we to go with legislation?'' He said that those which are of most importance and which seem to require local knowledge are commerce, taxation and the militia. So he was visualizing a very limited role for government, a very strict role for the Constitution. One of the elements of that Constitution was to be the commerce between States. In article I, section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution, it is delineating the powers of the government, and one of those was to regulate. Clause 3 states that the Congress shall have the power ''to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.''

So that's the limit of the Commerce Clause. Early on, our Founding Fathers had actually had a very limited definition of that, but that Commerce Clause definition has been expanded over time so that, if you will Google ''commerce/U.S. law abuse,'' you will begin to see the ways that our government has begun to extend its reach over our lives by redefining what the Commerce Clause was actually about.

Now, one of the cases that has been mentioned is that some criminal with a gun somewhere was within a couple hundred feet of a school, and that's something that should not be tolerated and shouldn't be allowed; but the government's attacking of that used the Commerce Clause to go through a circuitous route to say that the presence of that guy with a gun in his pocket, while at or near a school, affected the education of the young people and that ending the lives of the young students would affect the commerce of the United States.

So we're trying to get a guy who can't carry a gun on school property, and we're going through this tortuous explanation that somewhere down the line it's going to affect commerce. Now, there are many reasons for not allowing someone to have a gun on school grounds, but to use that sort of convoluted reasoning is one of the threats that we all face, because if the government can go through convoluted reasoning on one thing, it can go through convoluted reasoning on anything.

As we research the Constitution and as we talk to people back in our States, we begin to realize that we in Congress have been extending the powers of the different clauses. We're using them in ways that were not designated initially. We're basically doing a rewrite of the Constitution.

I submitted from my office a bill, H.R. 346, the Health Care Choice Act of 2011. In that, we visualized that it would be good for people to be able to shop for insurance across State lines. New Mexico has significantly higher-priced insurance than does Texas. I live in Hobbs, New Mexico. That's 3 miles from the Texas border. It seemed practical that we would allow people to drive to the State line and buy insurance across that State line, but it is currently prohibited, so I put a bill in that said, simply, we can go across State lines. On the surface, that seems to be good and noble. It seems to fit the parameters of competition—and competition is always good for consumers—but in closer looking, we realized that what we are doing is the same extension with our bill that we are complaining about in others, saying that the Federal Government can declare that a State's right to regulate its own insurance is improper. So it is my full intent not to pursue our bill because, after looking, I, myself, believe that it does not fit the constitutional requirement that we have.

So that is one issue that I wanted to speak about today. Next, I'd like to talk about the bill that we just passed off the floor today, which funds our troops in the face of a government shutdown.

I served in Vietnam in 1971, -2 and -3. I was there at the choice of my government. I was not a volunteer. I drew a very low draft number; ended up going through flight training, and was flying combat missions in Vietnam at a time when our Nation began to choke off the funds to the troops in combat. I can remember that the missions here in the U.S. were being choked and starved for fuel so that training could not be accomplished in the full curriculum that was established before us. Instead, we were having to divert money to fund the troops overseas because there wasn't enough money going there.

I have a real problem with our using our soldiers as pawns in this particular case, so I voted against the last continuing resolution. I was one of 54 Republicans who voted ''no.'' Yet, in this case, this continuing resolution said: Let's take the troops off the table. Let's have this discussion about where we're going to fund and what we're going to fund, but let's not leave soldiers in combat while we're discussing how much we're going to fund or not fund the government. That, to me, is the only thing that we should be doing.

□ 1800

Of all the people we should not hold as political pawns, the troops who are facing very difficult circumstances in Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Libya should not be asked to put their lives at risk and face declining amounts of fuel, declining amounts of ammunition, body armor or whatever.

And so the suggestion today, even though I voted against the last continuing resolution, I gladly voted for this one because I do think our negotiations here should not include them, our troops, our soldiers in combat, young men and women who are there doing the same thing that I did in 1971, 1972 and 1973.

It's my belief that the comments from the other side from the Senate, from Senator REID, who's the leader of the Senate, that they're going to summarily dismiss this bill, that they're not going to consider it, and from the White House that he wouldn't sign it if it got to his desk, is in my mind reflective of people who have not been in harm's way themselves facing declining funding. If we don't want the troops there, then get them out. But don't hold them hostage to this funding battle that we're having here on Capitol Hill.

So I voted for the continuing resolution today that would remove the troops, remove our soldiers from this discussion. I'm saddened to hear that the White House says they're not going to sign it, that they don't care. I'm sad to hear that our Senate says it does not care. If the government shuts down, then those young men and women—they're not going to be able to get out of the combat zone. It's not like we're going to withdraw them. But we're going to leave them there without being able to even pay their paycheck. And I think that's the wrong thing for us to do.

One of the things that I heard from our friends across the aisle just now was that there are many corrections for the problems that face us. And I keep this chart handy and I use it frequently to show the depth of the problems that we face.

This is basically the economic situation facing our country. We spend $3.5 trillion in the revenues to the government, that is, the accumulated taxes that each one of us pays, or $2.2 trillion. Now, your household could not

function like that. But there are greater and worse stories.

We're spending in excess of $1.3 trillion this year, $1.3 trillion more than we bring in, each year that we do that—I just draw this as a schematic where you show the deficit running over and it runs into the debt barrel. The accumulated debt of the Nation is $15 trillion, and if you think about if we could devote all of our revenues to paying off the debt in the debt barrel, it would take 7 years to do that.

But beyond the debt barrel, we now have debt that is running over. And you see that green sludge that we've depicted on our chart, running over the edge. It's reached the top of it. And that's debt that we really owe, but we are afraid to admit to the American people. That's Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Those three programs have an accumulated cost facing us of $202 trillion, but we don't include that in our debt calculations. If you look on any government Web site and ask about the debt, it will acknowledge the $15 trillion, but will not acknowledge the $202 trillion.

Now, if this were your family, and let's say that you made $50,000 a year, and you were believing that if I could devote the full $50,000 a year for a hundred years and not pay off my debt, you would think that it's time to reorganize what you're doing. That's the discussion that's going on in the country: should we or should we not take on significant reform of the government? Should we look and have a forensic audit of our government to consider what things we should do and what things we should not do?

Just the idea that we owe a hundred years' worth of total tax revenues to pay off one piece of what we had promised tells us that we're in a nonsustainable capacity.

Now, the chart in the upper right hand of the poster here is the alarming piece. We all remember when Ronald Reagan was President, he came up with an idea and he was the only one worldwide who described it. I remember at his funeral in the taped presentation by Margaret Thatcher, she said, Ronnie said he could collapse the Soviet Union's economy by escalating their expenditures for defense weapons. And he could get their cost of government so high that they could never pay it, and they would collapse.

So they began to spend more than they brought in, the accumulated debt began to weigh down on their economy, and they actually collapsed.

Now, the opponents of what we're doing, the opponents of reform, say that it's us, as Republicans, making up the charges. This chart says our economy is simply going to quit in 2038—exactly like the Soviet Union did. It's going to collapse for the same purpose, that we're spending far more than we're bringing in. We have an accumulated debt. We have an accumulated unrecognized or undiscussed debt that is $202 trillion, and our economy will cease to function. This is coming from the Office of Management and Budget Web site.

This is the White House. They're the ones saying that what we're doing is not sustainable.

Now, our friends on the other side of the aisle said that we could do something to cure Social Security, that is, we should pass along a tax increase to those people making above $106,000. It's interesting to hear that when our friends on the other side of the aisle had the House in their control, they had the Senate in their control with a majority that would not allow filibuster, and they had the White House, and they did not once bring up or pass a tax increase for Social Security.

I find it amazing that it's so simple now that they're not in charge for them to talk about it; and yet when they were in charge, they couldn't talk about it.

The reason that we're facing the problems that we are today with this continuing resolution is that our friends across the aisle did not last year pass a budget and did not pass the appropriating bills. And so they simply passed a continuing resolution and they could not get that passed through the end of this year. It was within their power to not have this discussion at all on a continuing resolution. All they had to do was fund the government through September 30 and everything would have been fine. We would have had no cause to change anything.

It's because they passed a bill that would only fund the government through March, through the early part of March, that we're in this situation. So I'm curious while they say that the solutions are so easy, that they're so necessary, that they didn't find it necessary before December 31.

And, in fact, as they're talking about the need to increase taxes, out the other side of the mouth they actually decreased taxes. They stopped the tax increase that was going to be automatic for American citizens.

So my feeling is that I'm hearing discussions which are not sincere, which they had within their ability to change but did not.

The idea that we are making draconian cuts in our requests, the Republican request for this continuing resolution, you hear that word often, that they're draconian cuts. I always let people decide for themselves. The cuts that we're talking about, we spend $3.5 trillion. The Republicans have suggested cuts at a maximum of $61 billion. And so what would that decrease $3.5 trillion to? I think it's important to assess that in order to decide if the cuts are draconian.

Our cuts, $61 billion, take $3.5 trillion down to $3.44 trillion, and I always ask people is that draconian. And I've never heard one person in any town hall say that's draconian. They're in fact alarmed that that's all that either party is able or willing to do about the accumulated debt, about a deficit that is $1.3 trillion, about the inflation that is now rushing our way. And they're saying it is enough, stop it, do something about it.

Do a forensic audit of the entire government and begin to defund those things that don't make sense, the things that are no longer effective, the things that are duplicative. We've got duplicative agencies across the spectrum of government. Sometimes more than 100 agencies do the same thing. That's a hundred different overheads doing the same thing.

Now, if our government was a business, it would be broke; and the truth is that our government is broke and is going to be broke worse. And, in fact, we're all seeing the effects on our personal lives.

□ 1810

You hear many times that those oil companies are driving up the price of gasoline to $4 now. It's the evil oil companies. I believe that it's exactly opposite.

In order to fund the $1.3 trillion deficit that we don't have the revenues to produce, we find that our Federal Reserve is printing money. It is in the printing of money that you devalue the money that is in your pockets at the current moment. If we could create Monopoly money out of thin air, then it depreciates the value of what you have in your pocket.

If only oil were going up in price, you could maybe make the argument that it's the evil oil companies. Maybe you could say it's the instability in the Middle East. Maybe you could say whatever. But when we see the price of vegetables skyrocketing, when we see the price of gold skyrocketing, the price of silver has gone up almost 30 percent in the last month, 30 percent, and you would have to say, well, is there a greater demand for silver? Is there some new manufacturing program that is now using silver that didn't before? That is, did demand drive the price up? And you say, no, silver is not used for one thing today that it wasn't used for a month ago.

When you look at all the prices across the spectrum increasing, you have to acknowledge that the problem is not that companies are driving prices up but, instead, the value of the dollar is decreasing. That's because we printed almost $2.6 trillion in money last year. We created it out of thin air. That then depreciates the value of the currency that you have in your pocket, in your bank account. And it's that reason that we're seeing inflation begin to skyrocket. The price of gas, food, oil, everything is going up because the money in your pocket is worth less. That's going to continue as long as we do this.

Another problem with the country's economy when it spends more than it can bring in and when the accumulated debt is so high, our bankers begin to worry. The same as your bankers would worry if you were living this way personally, they would worry that you

could pay your house off. They would begin to call you in and speak with you. Our bankers for the United States Government have been primarily China, Japan, and U.S. companies buying our Treasury bills. That's the process by which we loan money to the U.S. Government.

But because of this accumulated position, the Chinese have begun to say, Wait, we're not going to buy so much of your Treasuries any more. We're going to decrease our holdings. So they have begun to sell Treasury bills rather than buy them. The Japanese have got their own problems, and so now they're not willing to buy much debt from us. This year, the largest single private buyer of U.S. Treasury bills said, No more. We think the risk is too great that we'll never get paid back. We think the risk is too great that this system is not going to work.

So this year, right now, our Federal Reserve, which is an arm of the government, which receives its money from the government, is, in fact, lending money back to the government. So we are giving money to the Federal Reserve. They are turning around and loaning it back to us with the other hand.

Now, if you were doing that, your banker would say you are having to counterfeit, you are creating value where there is no value, and I think I might call your note.

We are in the process of finding that the note is due. We see that the country has a course in front of it that simply discontinues our economy, that simply we fail exactly the way that the Soviet Union economy failed. And we're having discussions on the floor of the House about cutting this from 3.5 to 3.44. This 1.3 would go to 1.24. And we are saying that those cuts are draconian. I will tell you that we are not even approaching the cuts that need to be made.

In these programs alone, Medicare and Medicaid, we are told annually that the fraud—not the waste, but the fraud—is about 20 percent. Yet we can't find it within ourselves here to address that problem. We're afraid of what the ads might look like on TV if we actually began to take this on.

I watched ''60 Minutes'' a couple years ago, and the fraud was discussed by a guy from Florida. He is from Miami. He had been arrested for fraud. He was selling $400,000 worth of medical things to Medicare patients every month. He didn't actually have any inventory. He was just billing the government, and they were paying him $400,000 a month. No inventory. He had a storefront because he said, Oh, yeah, those guys from Medicare drive by, they see if you had a store. So I had a store. And he said, I put my name on the door. I didn't actually have any inventory. I was never open. I never actually did anything.

He said, I actually made it into a little game. He said, I charged the same woman every month for four prosthetics just to see. He said, I don't know if she needed any, or one, or none. He said, They never caught it. He said, I did it month after month. He said, So, yeah, you got me and you are going to put me in jail for 12 years. He said, At 400,000 a month, I can stay there awhile. He said, The main thing is I still have my mailing list, and I am going to rent my list to someone else while I am in jail, so I am going to make a lot of money in jail, too.

So even if he is going to jail, the fraud continues. That's 20 percent. That approaches $90 billion for one program and $60 billion for the other. We are talking about cutting a total of 61 up here.

Americans are fed up. They're afraid of the future. They're afraid of what they see being unleashed here. They're frightened that we are printing so much money to try to make the scheme work. And they're saying enough is enough.

Now, I believe that we can make cuts without cutting programs that are essential to people, and I do not think that we should do things which harm those neediest in society. But there are many, many programs where we can make the cuts and we should. The outcome if we don't is extreme. The outcome if we don't is the loss of the economic status of this Nation.

The Soviet Union broke into small pieces, small countries. You are seeing States right now nervous and anxious about the future of the Federal Government, so they are beginning to say, We are going to take that function on ourself. We are not going to trust that the Federal Government can fix this. They, themselves, are in terrible shape.

The biggest shame of all in this is that, in a time when we're struggling to balance our budget to just make ends meet for our Nation, the government is conducting the greatest war on our jobs. The government is raising taxes high enough to push companies out of this country.

President Obama said in his State of the Union message that we must address the fact that we are overtaxing corporations. He said we are one of two of the highest in the world. And since then, Japan has decreased, so we are left alone in that.

We are overregulated. We are regulating companies out of existence. Every time we kill a job through regulation—I would point to the timber industry, which has been killed by regulation. I would point to the jobs offshore where that rig had its problems this year off the coast of Louisiana. I think that BP should be accountable, and they are paying the bill for what happened, but we should not have killed those jobs. Because every job that we kill lowers the 2.2 and it puts people on welfare and unemployment, and the 3.5 increases.

We cannot cut enough spending to get 3.5 to 2.2. We, instead, must go and re-create the jobs that our government has systematically killed and rebuild our economy, rebuild the manufacturing base so that when we put people to work they begin to pay taxes and we begin to not have their cost in government. In that case, we're growing the economic base. We're growing the revenues of the government and, simultaneously, we're cutting the cost of the government.

The only thing that makes sense for us in rescuing our economy is for us to grow the job base. And at a time when we are alarmed at what we're seeing economically, then we find the government most hostile to new jobs.

Just recently, within the last week, we have been in discussions with the Fish and Wildlife Service, who, out of the blue, decided to list a lizard as endangered in our State. They cannot declare that it has different DNA from the lizards that are not being put on the list. In other words, it's just a variety of a lizard, not all lizards. They can't show a DNA difference. So over some small minute difference they are going to possibly shut down all of the oil and gas wells in southern New Mexico. That means more people on welfare, more people on unemployment. It means fewer people paying taxes.

Up in the northwest part of the State, the EPA recently put out a ruling that would cause three of the five generators in one generating station to shut down.

□ 1820

So at a time when we are facing rising utility costs, we are facing rolling blackouts. We are going to put three generators off-line. Since they are doing that they are going to require less coal, and now then 200 coal miners who live on the Navajo Indian reservation, making $60,000 a year, are going to no longer be working and paying taxes. They are going to be drawing unemployment and be on Medicaid, be on welfare, TANF, and food stamps.

One would say that our government will not and cannot kill industries, and yet they killed the entire timber industry. New Mexico used to have 20,000 jobs in timber, and today it has none because of the spotted owl, a regulation that could have been done differently but instead was used to stop all the logging in every forest in New Mexico.

We believe that's wrong. We believe that we can keep the species from going extinct and create the logging jobs again. So we have submitted a bill that would do that.

I would draw our attention also to the fact that 27,000 farmers in the San Joaquin Valley in California were put out of work because of a 2-inch minnow that could have been kept alive in holding ponds and put over in the river. But an extreme decision said that it's either the jobs or the minnow, and they chose the minnow.

We are putting our economic system at risk by systematically killing industries and jobs in this country, and that's the reason you have the frustration that is expressing itself in tea parties across the Nation taking to the

streets and saying our government is too strong, it's too powerful, it's time for us to live within the restraints of the Constitution.

So as I wrap up here tonight, we again talk about the need for the Constitution to limit the government, to limit the government's ability to come in and affect your freedoms and your life.

This country has been, in the past, the destination for anyone who wanted freedom to build their dreams here. They could come and do it. We are beginning to choke off the ability for even our own citizens to find their dreams and make them come true here. We are doing it one business, one industry at a time through taxation, through regulation, but more we are doing it through the unstable currency that we are creating through the printing of money.

It is time for us to get our fiscal house in order. It is time to recognize that the future is at risk, according to the OMB and the CBO both. If we don't act now, then we will not have an economic future any stronger than the Soviet Union.

It's my hope that we will begin to act as Americans today, not as Republicans or Democrats, to look at the challenges that we face, to take them on and to address them in ways that the American people say ''yes.'' That is an appropriate action; that is a correct action.

It's my sincere belief that our best days are ahead of us because I believe the American people are going to insist that we take care of the economic mess that we, that we in Congress, have created over the last 70 and 80 years. We can't make promises that we can't keep with money that we don't have. We must correct it.

CONSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last week I came to the floor of the House to talk about the history of law and human rights, and I suggested that history is a work in progress. I believe that the law is going somewhere from the earliest civilizations with eye-for-an-eye systems of justice through today, when countries like ours lead the way toward more freedom and more human rights for all.

We began this Congress with the reading here on the floor of the redacted version of the Constitution, not the Constitution with amendments. But that redacted version leaves out the historical struggle to create today's Constitution as a more thoughtful and a more inclusive document.

Mr. Speaker, America is one big corporation. The Constitution is the bylaws. We, the people, the board of directors, have the right to change our bylaws in the Constitution and redirect the American corporation towards our priorities.

The American Constitution is a benchmark in that living history. We have amended it from time to time to make sure that we are closer to achieving a more perfect union for all Americans.

I believe we should continue that process, and amend the Constitution in several ways, including giving all Americans the right to a high-quality education, high-quality health care, and a clean environment.

I think we need to guarantee equal rights for women. If, in fact, the Congress had adopted the Equal Rights Amendment for women many decades ago, today 51 percent of all jobs and 51 percent of all households that are headed by a woman where there is no man would provide greater stability for the work that they already do.

But tonight, Mr. Speaker, I want to put my beliefs about why the Constitution should be amended into further historical context.

This week's Time magazine makes my point in ways that I cannot muster tonight on the House floor. It has a picture of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, crying, and it says, ''Why We Are Still Fighting the Civil War.''

And no American who is watching this debate on the floor of the Congress between Democrats and Republicans should be operating under any illusion that we are simply not on a battlefield, we are simply in the halls of the Congress. But we are waging one hell of a fight to build a more perfect union versus building more perfect States' rights.

I wrote about these issues extensively, Mr. Speaker, in 2001, very extensively in my book, ''A More Perfect Union: Advancing New American Rights.'' In fact, my book's launch party was scheduled for the big Borders, World Trade Center, on September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, we had a scheduling conflict and couldn't make it.

So I want to talk tonight, Mr. Speaker, about the central conflict of American history, the debates over the role of the Federal Government between those who believe in States' rights above all and those of us who have a more national perspective and believe in creating a more perfect union. I think that's a more appropriate analogy for defining how the Congress is divided; not Democrats and Republicans, for some Democrats will vote for the continuing resolution offered by the Republicans supporting more and more cuts. It's really hard to tell where people stand.

But in Washington, either we are building a more perfect union for all of the American people, or we are building a more perfect States' rights. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to share a few quotes that I think help frame the debate.

In the early years of our Republic, Gouverneur Morris, a Pennsylvania delegate to the Philadelphia Convention, said, ''I cannot conceive of a government in which there can exist two supremes.'' In 1787, Mr. Speaker, Gouverneur Morris was concerned that a dual system of State and Federal control might not work very well.

In his book ''Dixie Rising,'' Peter Applebome writes, ''Think of a place that's bitterly antigovernment and fiercely individualistic, where race is a constant subtext to daily life, and God and guns run through public discourse like an electric current. Think of a place where influential scholars market theories of white supremacy, where the word 'liberal' is a negative epithet, where hang-'em-high law-and-order justice centered on the death penalty and throw-away-the-key sentencing are politically all but unstoppable. Think of a place obsessed with States' rights, as if it were the 1850s all over again and the Civil War had never been fought. Such characteristics have always described the South. Somehow, they now describe the Nation.''

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note a headline from June 24, 1999, from The Washington Post that read, ''In 3 Cases, High Court Shifts Power to States.'' Of course, in over a decade since then, we have seen case after case at the Supreme Court, bill after bill in this House, that have furthered that trend.

This afternoon I want to talk about the center of conservatism, the center of the Constitution, the legal basis by which Republicans and some Democrats stake out their anti-Federal Government agenda. Mr. Speaker, there are two central issues that have dominated this country from its beginning. The first is the relationship between the Federal Government and the States. That question has been with us since the writing of our Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787; through the Supreme Court's first major decision in 1793, Chisholm vs. Georgia, during the antebellum period of the 1800s through the 1860s; through the Civil War and postbellum first and second Reconstruction periods; and it remains active and very much a part of our discourse today.

□ 1830

The second issue that has plagued the U.S. is race. It is the central dilemma in our Nation's history, and it has haunted us since 1619, when the first African slaves arrived on our shores—before the Declaration of Independence, before the Constitution, before the Bill of Rights through to the current period of Second Reconstruction.

Throughout history, the question of how to properly balance the national and State governments has confronted America: Are we 50 nation-states that voluntarily participate in a national federation but can ignore or withdraw from that federation at any time—like when 11 States seceded from the Union, or when 22 States filed a lawsuit