A study done by one of the think tanks came up with the number that America spends about 17 percent of its total defense budget protecting the flow of oil out of the Middle East. So you can add that to the deficit. That is over $100 billion a year that we spend of our tax money to protect the flow of oil, not only for us, but for the rest of the world.

We need to build a domestic energy system not based on carbon-based fuels, but rather the future energy, all of the clean green technologies, nuclear and others, that will provide us with the energy security we need.

In doing so, each and every one of those, if we spend our tax dollars on buying American-made systems, will come back, just as you say, and build our communities stronger along the way.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We had a group in Cleveland, Ohio, do a study a few years back that, if you added in that cost, the 17 percent of our military budget that protects the oil lines, supply lines for oil all over the world, the actual cost of a gallon of gas would be another $1, $1.50, because of the subsidy. It's another subsidy to make oil come here.

All we are saying is pump that money back into the research. Somebody in this country will come up with some synthetic, some magical something or other that will replicate diesel fuel. It will happen if we put the money into it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. It is actually already there. It is called advanced biofuels, algae-based fuels, everything from cosmetic oils to fuel for the Navy ships. So we can do these things. But, again, it is how we deploy our resources.

We have about 5 minutes, and we are going to do a lightning round between the three of us. I am going to turn to Mr. TONKO.

□ 1720

Mr. TONKO. I would just encourage us here in Washington on the Hill as we develop policy and debate budgets to keep in mind the history that should be replicated, sound history, history that had a proven track record, like that of the global race on space.

Some of us are old enough to have been youngsters or adolescents when that message, that very noble vision, of President JFK and his offering in an inaugural address that we are going to win the race on space, the global race on space, and land a person first on the Moon. And it was more than that poetry of landing the first astronaut on the Moon, that happened to be an American, and his quote of ''one small step for man, one giant step for mankind.'' It went well beyond that. It was this opening of the gates to technology that then invaded every sector of our economy, all aspects of life. And it was that technology investment that grew because of the soundness of a plan that enabled us to win a global race.

Now, that was done with passionate resolve and a thoughtfulness and a clear vision. We need to embrace that sort of American spirit, that pioneer spirit in this present moment and repeat good history, sound history, that grew our economy. I think we can do it and I believe we can do it, and Make It in America is the way to make it all happen.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Give him a minute of my time. He's from Pennsylvania. He can't help it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I look up and find another colleague here. We have just a few moments left.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate the gentleman from California. I come from a region of the country, western Pennsylvania, bordering my friend from Ohio, and I was listening to the debate, and I just wanted to talk about this same issue.

This is the key to our recovery and our continued leadership and innovation in this country because, as we have seen in western Pennsylvania and all across this country, the American worker is going to compete and win on a level playing field against anybody in the world any day of the week. We just want to make sure that we have a tax policy that is in place, a trade policy that is in place, and a manufacturing and jobs policy that is in place that is going to allow the American worker that level playing field to compete and win against the rest of the world.

Mr. GARAMENDI. As a great example, your colleague next to you there has a piece of legislation that calls for fairness in the financial markets, the value of the dollar versus the value of the Chinese yuan. Mr. RYAN, you have put it out there. You say it has to be fair. Wrap it for us.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is clearly currency manipulation. Here is the deal: Chevron, $19 million refunded from the IRS last year. They made $10 billion. Valero Energy, 25th largest company in America, $68 billion in sales last year; they got a $157 million tax refund check subsidized by the taxpayer.

If we are going to do this, we need shared sacrifice. We need everybody to contribute, especially those people making a lot of money, to help us reinvest. These folks are benefiting from an old-age industry—that we are running out of oil. It only makes sense. It went into the ground for 4 billion years. We pulled it out in 150 years, and we are burning it. Something is happening. It is an old industry and we are subsidizing it. We need to be Americans who invest in the next great technology to lead the world.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And indeed we will. Over the weeks and months ahead, we are going to talk about the Make It in America agenda, the legislation that has been introduced by the Democratic Caucus here in the House of Representatives. There are about 25 pieces of legislation, ranging from the ones that we talked about here, using our tax money when we buy solar equipment, make sure it is made in America. A bus, if you are going to use our tax money, make sure where it is made. Innovation, the innovation economy, all of those things. This is legislation that we have, infrastructure financing and all the rest. We are going to talk about it piece by piece.

I thank my colleagues for joining us. I have the sense that behind me we are about to be gaveled that we are out of time. I want to thank the American public for listening to the Make It in America agenda.

AMERICAN JOBS AND THE NATIONAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. GRIFFIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the American people for watching today.

I wanted to talk with my colleagues here today about jobs, how we create jobs in America, and what we are going to do about our national debt. We have a spending problem in America, and we have heard a lot from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. They have been talking about jobs bills. I heard someone say that we haven't passed any legislation or taken up any legislation in this House that addresses jobs. Well, that puzzles me. Maybe they have been absent, but it seems to me since I arrived here in January, we have been focused on jobs, and I just want to give a few examples.

Number one, this week we have been working on energy legislation that will open up drilling, open up drilling in parts of the country where right now it is prohibited. Those will be jobs. Those are jobs, good-paying jobs in the energy sector. Not only will that allow for the creation of jobs; it will allow for our country to be more energy independent.

We have taken up all sorts of legislation regarding health care since I have been here. We voted to repeal and to work on some legislation to replace the Obama health care law. Well, I talk to small businesses, business owners, all the time, and they tell me that the Obama health care law hurts them; that because of the increased price that they have to pay, that they can't hire as many people. That is a piece of legislation that directly addresses job creation.

There was a provision that a lot of small businesses will tell you about; it was a 1099 provision that was included in the Obama health care law. We repealed that. We were fortunate enough to convince the Senate to pass it and the President to sign it.

I am joined by my colleague from Indiana. I want to say this, and then I am going to turn it over to him. Every time that we deal with our spending problem in this House, every time that we deal with our debt problem and our deficit, every time that we try to get

our fiscal house in order and make this government live within its means, the way folks back in Arkansas do, where they live within a budget, every time we do that we are creating a better environment in this country for job creation.

So don't let anyone tell you that there is the issue of the spending and the debt and then there is the issue of the jobs. They are all one issue. They are all one. If we want to see the kind of innovation and job creation that we are accustomed to in this country, if we want to see it continue, if we want to continue to be the leader in innovation and technological advancement and job creation, we better deal with our spending problem, or we are not going to see that kind of job creation.

Furthermore, if we don't deal with the debt, and we have a debt crisis, we are going to see job losses that will make what happened in September of 2008 pale in comparison.

I want to yield to my colleague from Indiana.

Mr. ROKITA. I thank my friend from Arkansas, TIM GRIFFIN. I know we are going to talk about Medicare, and we are going to talk about the debt ceiling, but I want to thank you for rising to address what has happened on the House floor this very last hour, because what you say is absolutely the truth. And if we have to, my friend, the gentleman from Arkansas, as new Members keep speaking truth to power, then we will do that.

But the fact of the matter is every time, every time the government confiscates the property of the American people, which is their money, you are exactly right, you take away their freedom, their property, their ability to invest that dollar as they see fit. And when that private sector money is in the hands of a small business or a large business, an ice cream shop or an oil company, they have a better opportunity and know better what to do with that dollar in terms of investment, in terms of growing the government, than any government bureaucrat or anyone on the floor of the House ever can.

I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, why every other industrialized nation on the face of this Earth understands that when you pull a lump of coal from the ground, when you take some oil from the ground, when you exploit in the best sense of that word our natural resources, you create wealth.

□ 1730

You raise the standard of living for all involved. Why is one party in this country so masochistic that they can't understand that?

Thank you for your time.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman from Indiana.

I was thinking about some of what I heard, Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago. I think that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle believe that if you leave the lid on a full cookie jar, that means you're out of cookies. I would say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, just because we have banned drilling and exploration for natural gas and for oil on the east coast and the west coast and Alaska and the gulf, just because we've banned it doesn't mean we're out of it. Just because you leave the top on the cookie jar doesn't mean you have run out of cookies.

You have got to actually take specific steps to develop energy. We are an energy-rich Nation. I happen to believe in an all-of-the-above policy. I think we ought to be pursuing renewable energy, wind, and solar. But at the same time we ought to be pursuing natural resources that we can use right now. Natural gas. We have a lot of it in Arkansas, and we would love to continue developing it. It's interesting to me that at a time when this administration put obstacles up to energy development in the gulf and elsewhere around the United States that would help us be more energy independent, at the same time they were encouraging energy production in foreign countries. It makes no sense.

I now yield to my friend from Indiana, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. STUTZMAN. Thanks to my colleague from Arkansas. I appreciate his comments and what he is saying, and I agree with him wholeheartedly. I can tell you as a small business owner from Indiana, coming from a family farm background and having a small trucking operation, all of the talk here on this floor and in Washington doesn't make a lot of sense to a lot of Hoosiers. Growing up in the agricultural industry, it's hard work. And I know that my granddad and my father and other family members, my brothers, they're all willing to work hard. But I can tell you what: When the government makes it difficult, it's tough to go out there and say, I'm going to keep doing it. When the government comes in and says, We're going to make it harder for you to do your business, you start thinking twice, Do I really want to do what I love to do.

Who creates jobs? Is it the government? I know some in this town believe that the government creates jobs. Well, how do they create that job? They take your dollar, my dollar, they collect it in taxes, and then they put it in a pot, and then we have this large entity we call Congress and bureaucracies, and our Federal Government decides we're going to pick and choose what type of jobs we're going to create. We're going to take those dollars that we've collected from the hardworking taxpayer and create a job.

Well, that's not creating wealth. The folks in my district who build cars, they build steel, RVs, and medical devices that help enhance the quality of life. Agriculture. Boats. We're one of the largest manufacturing districts in the country. That's where wealth is created. That is where jobs are created. The government doesn't build any of that stuff. And they shouldn't. They can't do it as well as what the private sector can. But what the government does is spend money. That's why our jobs are looking somewhere else—because of the threat of higher taxes, the threat of regulation.

We've got the EPA that comes in. Most of the folks that come into our office since I've been elected to Congress—this last year, I would say 90 percent of them come in and start talking about the regulation that the EPA and the enforcement attitude that the EPA has on our small businesses. How can any small business grow to be a big business if they're going to continually be hampered by our own government? FDA, OSHA mandates. We're going to be talking about Medicare. What is that going to look like in the future? And taxes.

We hear our colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about the way government can grow business. The best way is to get out of the way. Right now, America has the highest corporate income tax in the industrialized world. Look at the other countries, whether Japan, Greece. All these other countries are finally figuring out because of just natural economic laws that you can't spend more money than you take in. Why would we want to raise taxes even more when people are starting to say, I'm out of here. I'm tired of doing business here. I don't think my dollar is safe in this country. And they're going to start taking their money overseas. That's why our jobs are leaving.

I believe it's important that we have a flattened tax policy—one that is fair to everybody across the country, one that is not going to pick and choose winners.

I appreciate what you're saying because jobs are not created by the government, they're created by Americans just like Henry Ford. The government didn't subsidize Henry Ford in creating the combustion engine. They didn't go out and subsidize Henry Ford in creating the Ford Motor Company. How many other small businesses started? So many American businesses started in a garage or somebody's shop and grew into some of the greatest companies in the world. But our government now wants to go in and make it more difficult for them and for small businesses.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

My colleague from Indiana was just talking about competitiveness. The question is, How do we compete? What is competitiveness? Well, we have to start with the premise that the private sector is the primary job creator in this country. They're not just the primary job creator—they're the primary innovator. They are the primary source of technological advancement. And that leads to jobs. So the question is, Do we want businesses to be attracted to our country or do we want them to flee our country? That's the question.

That's the question of competitiveness. I want to live in an America that is attractive to job creators.

You can talk about big business; can you talk about small business, you can talk about mom-and-pop shops. You don't even have to define each size business; they're all job creators. We've got in my district, the Second District of Arkansas, we've got all sorts of job creators. And I love them all equally. We've got small businesses, we've got Hewlett Packard, we've got Caterpillar. They all create jobs. When businesses look for a home somewhere on this planet, we want them to look at the United States and say, That's where I want to do business. I can do better there. My labor will be rewarded there. The taxes are not so burdensome there. The regulations don't crush my business there. That's where opportunity is. That's the America that we're trying to create.

□ 1740

The gentleman from Indiana referenced some of the conversations he has had with constituents. I have them every day. They come in my office and they say, This agency is not working with me; it's working against me. This part of government is an obstacle. Can you help me? Can you help me break through so that I can just do my business and create jobs and make a living?

That's ultimately the America that we're talking about.

Since we're talking about competitiveness and we're talking about jobs, that ultimately, as some of us were talking about earlier, leads us to a conversation about debt.

I would now yield to my friend and colleague from Arkansas (Mr. WOMACK).

Mr. WOMACK. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas. I appreciate his leadership and his friendship and his service to our great State, the great State of Arkansas.

I am thrilled that we're having the conversation that we're having here, late in the day, regarding these types of issues that in my strongest opinion are impacting our ability to create jobs; and that's the prize that we all keep our eye on here in these Chambers is what can we do to strengthen our capacity to put people back to work, because I think at the end of the day that's exactly what people elected us to do last November is to come up here and change this climate, change this culture and put the entrepreneur back in charge, because that's where job creation comes from.

A couple of points before I go to some notes that I brought specifically for this afternoon's presentation, and that is that this cloud of uncertainty that continues to hover over the economy of the United States of America is influenced by a number of things, but let me just take two or three of them.

The threat of higher taxes, and not just the threat of higher taxes but the relationship of the threat of higher taxes to the issues of the deficit and the debt. I made these comments not too long ago on this very floor, that in private business, in business in general, your debt is usually tied to your assets, the assets of the company. Most businesspeople get that. But in government, your debt is tied to your capacity to increase taxes. So this debt and deficit issue that we continue to struggle with as a country and the prospect of that debt continuing to rise—and not too long from now we're going to have a vote on increasing the statutory limit on debt—influences, I think contributes to, this cloud of uncertainty that leads a prospective entrepreneur, a prospective job creator, to not do what that person would like to do, even with trillions of dollars sitting on the balance sheets of corporate America, the hesitancy to create these jobs influenced by the threat of higher taxes.

And then I think also, fundamental to this cloud of uncertainty, as I call it, continuous overregulation by this government, that the prospective job creator cannot compute the input costs associated with more government regulation. Notice I haven't even mentioned the impact of the health care law, ObamaCare, as we call it. It's hard to compute the input costs of this health care law. And then more recently, the threat of higher energy prices and a flawed, if not almost nonexistent, energy policy of this administration.

Just think about it. You're a prospective job creator, you've got an idea, you're a creative person, you want to live the American Dream, but standing in your way between your dream and your capacity to do something creatively and resourcefully, to put people to work, to contribute to society, are things like higher taxes, more government regulation and red tape, the impact of when I hire these people, the impact of ObamaCare, and then on top of all of that, the price at the pump and higher energy prices. I just don't see why the other side cannot understand why we're not creating jobs, why we continue to hover at the 9 percent level on unemployment.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we passed on this floor a budget for 2012, and in that budget immediately, before the ink was dry, we were being criticized because of what we were trying to do and what I believe is the reasonable approach to solving our Nation's fiscal problems, and that is finally delving into something that nobody ever wanted to touch, and that's the entitlement programs, the mandatory spending side of the house, where most of the money is.

I just want to make a couple of these comments as it concerns Medicare, because I heard back from my constituents. A tele-town hall meeting the other night, the first phone call I got from Bella Vista, Arkansas, was a gentleman worried because he had heard that we were attempting to take his Medicare away. In 1965 when that program was created, baby boomers were teenagers, and now 10,000 baby boomers a day enter qualification for Medicare. When Medicare was created in 1965, the life expectancy of a human being was around 70, a little younger. Today it's close to 80 years of age. Medicare spending is growing at an unsustainable rate of 7.2 percent every year. Seniors are already facing access issues.

Think about this. Under the current system, one in three primary doctors are limiting Medicare patients. One in eight are forced to deny Medicare patients altogether. If the Medicare program is allowed to continue without any change at all, the Congressional Budget Office projects it goes bankrupt in 9 years. Basically, if we allow Medicare to maintain the status quo, Medicare collapses.

So we're leading. Our conference is leading. We're taking mandatory spending and entitlement programs and we're deciding that we're going to throw our cards down on the table. We're going to do something about it.

The plan that we voted to approve just a couple of weeks ago preserves, protects Medicare for those 55 and over, not just those drawing Medicare but those nearing retirement, people that have planned their lives around that program. We don't change that for those people. That needs to be said. It needs to be repeated over and over again. But again we get demagogued about it because, at the surface level, it sounds like we're trying to just take it away. Let me repeat again. Those 55 and older, not affected by the proposed reforms that we support.

Starting in 2022, new Medicare beneficiaries would be enrolled in the same kind of health care program that I have, that my colleague from Arkansas has, and my other colleagues who have spoken here tonight. Future Medicare recipients would be able to choose from a list of guaranteed coverage options and they'd be given the ability to choose a plan that works best for them. It's not a voucher system. It's premium support. No money changes hands between the government and the individual. It's modeled after what Members of Congress and Federal employees already have.

The reforms are designed to decrease the fraud within the system and requires congressional oversight by requiring transparent pricing and minimum benefit and quality standards and instituting more competitive forces. My friends, that's what the free enterprise system is about, and I believe if it has worked for 235 years of this great country, it should be also the way forward.

Let me finish by saying this. Like my colleague from Arkansas, he and I came in as freshmen together on January 5 in these hallowed Chambers. We didn't come here to do nothing. We didn't come here to kick the old can down the road, to ignore the facts. We came here to act with dispatch and

make a difference for our country. That's why I'm pleased to join my colleagues here of our great freshman class in providing this information to the American public. It's not only what we were elected to do; it is our moral duty to do it and to do it as soon as we can and to do it with the sense of purpose that I think defines the 112th Congress.

□ 1750

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Thank you to my colleague from Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a great point, and I think what we've been talking about here over the last few minutes is that the jobs issue is not separate from the debt issue. We have to deal with the debt in order to create an environment in this country that attracts business and where jobs can be created.

I want to take just a second here. We've heard a lot about Medicare and about the debt; and I think it's important to emphasize here, as this chart shows, that of our yearly spending, well over half is what we call mandatory spending. That is spending that doesn't have to be renewed every year, spending that's in the books, in the law. It just happens. That includes Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The bad news is, if we do nothing to this big chunk here called Medicare, we do nothing, Medicare goes bankrupt.

This next chart shows that in just a couple of decades, the entire Federal budget at this point right here, the entire Federal budget will be consumed by Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

What does all this tell us? Well, it tells us a couple of things. Number one, we have to do something to reform our system so that we don't have a crisis; and, number two, it tells us that if we don't reform Medicare, it goes away. It no longer exists.

I tell folks all the time when they say, well, you're going to try to end Medicare as we know it, and I say, whoa, whoa, whoa, Medicare as we know it ends itself in just a short number of years. It ends itself. And I say to my friends when they mention something like that, I say, well, if someone really wanted to harm Medicare, they wouldn't propose a bold reform to save it. They would just quietly do nothing because if you quietly do nothing, you kick the can a little further down the road, Medicare goes bankrupt. With no action, Medicare goes bankrupt.

What would that look like? Well, it would look a lot like the President's plan. I don't believe that the President wants to harm Medicare, but I'm certain that he's failed to take the steps necessary to save it. What would a plan look like that harms Medicare? It would look like the President's plan, a plan, a budget that doubles our debt in five and triples it in 10 and does nothing to save Medicare. It's silent on that and on Medicaid and on Social Security.

I would like to yield now to the gentleman from Arizona. Thank you for joining us.

Mr. QUAYLE. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for yielding and for talking about these important issues, and one thing that I do want to talk about is something you just said: kicking the can down the road. We can no longer afford to do that because every year we do not address and solve the problems related to our mandatory spending, they add close to $10 trillion each year to our unfunded liabilities. Those are the liabilities that are going to be put on the backs of our children and our grandchildren. So kicking the can down the road is no longer an option.

Now, I want to get back to something the gentleman from Arkansas talked about earlier, and that is about making America competitive in the global marketplace. We live in a global economy. Nothing is going to change that, but what America has to do and what we have to do here in the House is to make America the most competitive country on the face of the Earth. We need to make America the best place and the safest place to do business, and that's what we were charged to do when we came in in this 112th Congress, and that's what we've been doing from day one.

Because when we came in here, we said we were going to do two things. We were going to get the American people back to work by creating jobs and pro-growth economic policies, and we were going to rein in our out-of-control Federal spending. And we've been doing that.

Since day one, week by week, we have been addressing our problem with out-of-control government spending. Sometimes it was millions of dollars here, other times it's billions, and still other times it's been trillion dollars of savings to be able to make our country prosperous again. That right there is the charge of my generation and our generation to return America's prosperity. That's what we're doing here in the House. That's what the Republican House majority has been doing since day one of the 112th Congress.

One of the things that we did just a few weeks ago was we passed a 2012 budget plan that sets our fiscal course on the right path. It sets us up so that we will have that prosperity, so that the crushing burden of government spending is not passed on to future generations. Immediately, practically before the vote was even cast, we heard from our friends on the other side of the aisle that we were starting to end Medicare as we know it. Funny thing how short their memory is, because Medicare as we know it was actually ended by the previous Congress when they passed ObamaCare.

And Medicare as we know it was ended in two different ways. First, they took over $500 billion out of Medicare to fund their government takeover of health care, and the second thing and the most dangerous thing that they did was they established the Independent Payment Advisory Board. What this is, a lot of people don't really know what it is, but it's a bureaucratic 15-person panel that will actually determine how we are going to provide health care to our seniors. Now, these are not elected officials, these are appointed by the President, and they will be making decisions on how to reduce our Medicare costs by actually preventing certain treatments to our patients, to our seniors. This will get in the middle of the doctor-patient relationship, which is one of the most important relationships that there is. We need to have the trust between our doctors and patients and not taking dictates from a 15-person panel of bureaucrats here in Washington, D.C.

The great thing is that there's really no oversight. Now, Congress can go in and say, well, we don't agree with the independent advisory board, but you know what it takes, it takes an act of two-thirds majority in the House to override one of their decisions. Now, I've only been here 4 months, but I can tell you, two-thirds majority is almost near impossible.

So this is what we have to do: we have to educate and tell everybody and get the facts out to the American people because, like the other gentleman from Arkansas said, after the 2012 budget was passed, I, too, had a teletown hall and one of my first questions was from a caller in my district who was on Medicare and asked, Are you really getting rid of Medicare for me because I rely on it. That's when I had to tell her the facts that, no, absolutely not. Those who are in or near retirement, their benefits will not change because they have planned for those benefits to be there. However, we are going to save Medicare from the implosion that will occur if we do nothing because in 9 years, 9 short years, Medicare will be bankrupt and the 2012 budget that the House Republicans passed will save Medicare bankruptcy, put us on strong fiscal footing going forward, and return America's prosperity to future generations.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Thank you so much to the gentleman from Arizona. I appreciate you making those clear points.

I want to go to the gentleman from Indiana who has risen.

Mr. ROKITA. Thank you. I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas. I want to associate my comments with the ones just made by the gentleman from Arizona. They're excellent. I think they accurately stated, along with the other gentleman from Arkansas, why we're here as new Members: to grow this economy, make this in the 21st century the best place on Earth to grow a family, to grow jobs, to grow a business.

□ 1800

But you can't have that discussion if we're also not going to talk about how

big this government is, how much bigger it's going to get and who has to pay for it. The ''who has to pay for it,'' my good friend, is not necessarily us. It's our kids and our grandkids who are simply going to be left with the tab so that some of us can have more on our plates now. These were reckless promises made by politicians who came before us on this very floor, on that other floor and all around this town. The simple fact of the matter is they can't possibly be paid for.

What I'd like to do, as I continue to work with you on the floor tonight and rise again a little bit later, is, as a member of the Budget Committee, simply put on the floor some facts and figures so that we understand where we are as we go about talking of solutions.

We are $14 trillion, rounding, in debt right now—this hour, this day. If you look out into the future and you see our new red menace, the tidal wave of debt that is about to come crashing down on us, the total bill is nearly $100 trillion. The total cost year over year of waiting, of kicking that can down the road, as we've heard tonight, a road that's quickly coming to an end, is over $12 trillion. It's more expensive. Let's break it down, because I will be the first to admit on the floor of the House here tonight, sir, that I can't count to $1 trillion. I can't count that high. I can't comprehend what $1 trillion means, not to mention $14 trillion, not to mention $100 trillion.

$1 trillion is one thousand billion. $1 billion is one thousand million. Well now, maybe we're getting somewhere in breaking it down.

Let's break it down by hour. In the hour we're spending in talking with the American people about this serious problem, this country will borrow in this hour over $170 million—just in this hour. For every dollar this Federal Government spends, we are borrowing 42 cents of it.

Let's put it in terms of days. We've heard about Tax Day, that day every year when we find that Americans can finally keep what they earn, keep their own property and start working for themselves; but we also have a Debt Day now. Debt Day this year is July 27. Every day this Federal Government operates on and after July 27 it is operating on borrowed money.

Let's put it in terms of speed. Let's say we're driving down a highway and our historical debt is a car. It would be going down that highway at historical speeds of 65 miles an hour, and that's probably bad enough if the car is debt, but it has gotten a lot worse recently. Let's say there is another car coming up in our rear view mirror and that we look and it's coming up fast. Maybe the license plate reads—but we may not be able to read it—''hope and change,'' and it's coming up and it zooms right by us. How fast, sir, do we think that car had been going if the debt car that we'd historically been riding in had already been going 65 miles an hour? Would it be 70? 100? No. That car that just passed us by, that new debt car that we're currently spending on, is going over 7,000 miles an hour.

That's the challenge we're up against, and the only help that we've gotten from the other side in tackling this challenge is name-calling and demagoguery. It's old tactics. Yet I'm hopeful, sir. I'm hopeful because, every day that we get to talk about this and every day over the last couple of years that we've gotten to talk about this, we are educating our fellow citizens more. We are doing a great job. We are winning the argument. I think, at this time, we are ready to tackle this debt problem if we talk honestly and directly with the American people.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Thank you for that. Thank you to the gentleman from Indiana.

I think the point that you're making is that we first have to identify the problem, and the problem is a spending problem. We don't have a revenue problem. We have a spending problem. We are spending too much money. We have made promises that the government can't keep. Saying that we just need more revenue is like a gambler who's sitting at a slot machine, saying, ''I don't have a gambling problem. I just don't have enough money.'' We have a spending problem, folks, and that's why we have to talk about all of the different programs, and I have been one who has been willing to say we've got to look at everything at a time like this.

I want to yield to my friend from Illinois, but before I do, I want to point one thing out. You mentioned demagoguery. We're trying to responsibly address the spending problem in all parts of the budget, including Medicare, so I just want to run through a couple of attacks, a couple of misrepresentations that I've been hearing. Then I'd like to hear from my colleague from Illinois, but let me point this out.

The first thing that I heard was that our plan in the House is a voucher program, that premium support, which is the core of our Medicare reform for those under 55. For those 55 and over, there are no changes, but premium support is the core of those under 55. I stood here on the floor, and I said, This is a program much like the one Members of Congress have, much like the ones that Federal employees have. The gentleman from the other side of the aisle said, It's a voucher plan.

Is it or is it not? It's not a voucher plan, but you don't have to take my word for it.

What's interesting is that, back in 1999, President Clinton recognized that we had a Medicare problem, a spending problem within Medicare. So what did President Clinton do? He appointed a Medicare commission. Who led that commission? One of the co-chairs was a Democrat Senator from Louisiana, John Breaux. John Breaux was an advocate for something called ''premium support.''

So the plan that we're advocating, that we've passed in the House, was not created by a few in a back room last week or a couple of months ago. It's based on something that the Clinton Medicare commission discussed in 1999. I just want to point this out.

This is an excerpt from an op-ed written by Senator Breaux. He says, ''What exactly is a 'premium support model,' and what does my particular version do? 'Premium support' means the government would literally support or pay part of the premium for a defined core package of Medicare benefits.''

Look at this. This is the Democrat Senator, Clinton's co-chair of the Medicare commission. In 1999, he says, ''This is not a voucher program but an alternative to the current system. My plan combines the best that the private sector has to offer with the government protections we need to maintain the social safety net.''

It's pretty clear it's not a voucher program. No matter what you've heard, it's not a voucher program. I've said repeatedly that it's the type of plan that we have, and others have said, no, that's not true. Well, Senator Breaux thinks it's true. He says, ''I've proposed a premium support Medicare plan, modeled after the health care plan, serving nearly 10 million Federal workers, retirees and their families.'' So there is a lot of misinformation out there, and I ask folks to get the facts.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. DOLD. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas, and I thank my colleagues for coming down this evening to have this important discussion about the direction of our Nation.

I can tell you I've had an opportunity to talk to a number of Congressmen, several of them in the freshman class and who come from different backgrounds. By ''different backgrounds,'' I mean that they don't come from the traditional political realm. They come from business: those who have met a budget, who have met a payroll and who have created jobs.

□ 1810

There's no question that some of the big issues that we face today are about jobs and the economy. How do we jump-start the economy? How do we create more jobs? I think that certainly the Federal Government is going to play a role, and the role the Federal Government can play is to create an environment that allows the private sector to grow and to thrive.

We have heard tonight about our debt and our deficit. The deficit that we face right now is significant. We're doing about $1.5 trillion in deficit spending. The gentleman from Indiana talked about our debt and how fast we're mounting this debt. When I talk in my town hall meetings and I ask people does anybody have any idea what $1.5 trillion really means, I tell them that my daughter, who is 9, she knows what 1.5 is. She says it's a little bit more than one and not quite two. And I say, You know what, Harper?

That's exactly right. But when we say $1.5 trillion, it works out to be about $3.4 million a minute. Another way to look at it is $58,000 a second. We can't even say it fast enough. $58,000 a second is what we're spending in deficit spending right now.

Now, the chart that was up just a little bit before talked about the pie and what we were spending. The big thing that we're looking at in terms of the discretionary spending, our discretionary spending went up 84 percent over the last 2 years, 84 percent. Now, I know household incomes across my district and across America did not go up 84 percent, but let's be fair. A significant portion of that was the stimulus package. So if we strip out the stimulus and say that we're not even going to include that, discretionary spending over the last 2 years went up 24 percent. That's still a heck of a lot more than families that have tightened their belts all across America have dealt with over the last several years.

There is no question; we have a spending problem in Washington. We've had a spending problem in Washington for a long time on both sides of the aisle. And I'm here to say that we are prepared to say things have to change. I'm not here pointing my finger in any direction, but saying I know that my colleagues and I on both sides of the aisle are prepared to roll up our sleeves and get something done.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Would the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. DOLD. I absolutely will yield.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Would you agree with me that there is no way to address the debt issue without entitlement reform, and that entitlement reform must include Medicare?

Mr. DOLD. There is no question in my mind. But the big issues that we face at this point in time have to be dealing with the mandatory spending, of which entitlement reform—and I had a town hall meeting just this weekend where somebody said that he doesn't like the idea of calling it an ''entitlement,'' seeing that he's paid into a system all of his life. He likes to, prefers to call it ''earned benefits.''

The long and the short of it is that the mandatory spending that's going on needs to be addressed. What we've done in this budget is try to address what's going on in terms of the mandatory spending. There is no question that it's going to spiral out of control. It's growing at a rate of 7.2 percent each year. It's growing by leaps and bounds and will eventually take over the entire Federal budget.

So we have to talk about Medicare. We talk about saving Medicare, which is critically important. In Lake County, part of my district, trying to find a physician that's willing to take additional Medicare patients is very difficult to find. The Mayo Clinic in Arizona is recently saying that they're not taking any more Medicare patients. This, to me, is alarming.

What we need to be doing today is trying to come together to have a fact-based conversation with the American public so that we can solve the big issues of our time. I'm fearful that I may be the first generation of Americans that leaves our country worse than the one I received from my parents and grandparents; and that, to me, is absolutely unacceptable.

We have to talk about how do we grow revenues. We're going to grow revenues on the backs of the private sector. We have to address the mandatory spending that's going on here in Washington.

And everything must be on the table. That means that defense has to be on the table. It means that agriculture has to be on the table, every single department. But what we do need is we do need to have a willing partner on the other side of the aisle that is willing to come to the table and have this discussion about what it is that we need to do to put ourselves on the right course.

We know that the attack ads have come in. They're saying that Medicare as we know it is going to end. Well, that's true. It's going to end because it's going to go bankrupt if we do nothing in 9 years. I believe that we have to strengthen Medicare for future generations.

The plan that's been put in place says to those seniors, those that have paid into the system for years and years, that we must keep our promises. So for those 55 and older, there are no changes. For those 54 and younger, many of them don't even believe that there is going to be a social safety net for them. I believe that we have to strengthen it. We have to strengthen it so that it is there for future generations.

So what we want to do today is make sure that we are coming to the table to have a fact-based conversation about the problems that we face. And I know that we have to have that serious conversation now. I came to Congress to be part of a solution.

The other night, I was tucking my 9-year-old into bed and she asked me quite simply, Why are you not here during the week, Daddy? And I had to tell her, It's because I am trying to make the country a better place for you and your brothers and sisters. She said, Is it working? I said, I certainly hope so. We're going to do everything we can to make sure that the next generation has a better and stronger America than the one that you and I know today.

So it is time for us to have this conversation. It is time for us to step up. And I certainly want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas for putting this time together. I look forward to coming back up again and having some more conversations about it. But the time is now. We cannot wait any longer.

Certainly taking time away from my business, from the employees and other family members, and one of the reasons that I decided to run—and I see my other colleague over here, a small business owner, one of the reasons he decided to run as well—is that the Federal Government was making it harder and harder for me to put the key in the door and open up my business each and every day. That's not what we want to do. They should be making it easier for us to put the key in the door. They should be making it easier to be able to provide benefits to those people with whom we work.

So with that, I appreciate the gentleman for the time.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I just want to point out that the gentleman from Illinois mentioned some of the nonsense, some of the attacks that the other side has been making on those of us who are trying to save Medicare and responsibly deal with the budget. The Union Leader newspaper took a look at some of the attacks and said, ''Ending Medicare''—the idea that we're trying to end it—''is a big scary lie.'' And PolitiFact, which is a Web site that takes a look at political attacks—it determines how much validity there is—it gave our colleagues on the other side, it gave their attacks the ''pants on fire'' rating—as in, ''liar, liar, pants on fire''—on their Truth-O-Meter. So there's a lot of misinformation out there.

I would like to now yield to my colleague from Pennsylvania.

Mr. KELLY. I appreciate that.

To my friend from Arkansas and the rest of my colleagues that are here tonight, I have to tell you, it's only been about 4 months since we all came here, and I think we all came for the right reason. We came for a cause and not a career.

I have got to tell you, the reason I am here tonight is because I had a telephone town hall today, and the folks that called me were seniors. The disturbing part about the conversations were that the most vulnerable folks out there, the people who lived within their means for the longest, made the most sacrifices, did the most to keep the promise that America holds for all of us, are the ones that are being attacked now. And they are not being attacked with facts; they are being attacked with fear.

I have friends who are Democrats, but I would ask them to please, if you can't confuse them, then try to convince them. If you don't have the right facts, then quit using fear. And if they're going to use fear to make these people not able to sleep at night, to make it uncomfortable for them to lay their head on the pillow at night, the same people that have done so much to make the country great, if you are going to continue to lie to them and tell them, Those Republicans are going to take away your health care; they're going to take away Medicare; they are going to take away Medicaid; they're going to ruin Social Security for you, please, please, play by the rules. Play by the rules. Do what's right. Do what's right for America.

This is not about Republicans. This is not about Democrats. This is about Americans. And this is especially about seniors. I am one right now. My birthday was just the other day. I am 63 years old. I don't think of myself as a senior. But you know what? The folks that I see after church on Sunday and who I have coffee with, they are seniors. They are in their seventies and they are in their eighties, and to have to sit there with them and tell them, We are not taking away your Medicare. We're the only ones that have a plan to save it.

□ 1820

We are not taking away your Social Security. We're the only ones that have a plan to make sure it's safe. If we can't be honest, if we can't look each other in the eye and say that we are here to fix it, that we are here to make America have the stability that it once had; if we can not tell our seniors, it's okay folks, we're not going to take anything from you, we're going to work together to get it fixed—and this is the thing that bothers me. After listening to those folks today on the phone, I am convinced that there is something seriously wrong within this House.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KELLY. I will yield.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. You know, you hit a point that seniors are thinking about. They're thinking that they're on a fixed income. They're looking at rising prices, whether it's at the gas pump—we talked today about solving American energy issues, but they're thinking about the rising commodity prices.

I brought with me a bank note, this is an official currency note from the Bank of Zimbabwe. If you look at it, and I know it's going to be difficult, but it's a $100 trillion bank note. A Wall Street Journal article said, How to turn $100 trillion into $5 and feel good about it. It's worth about $5 on eBay. They quit printing them in 2009.

It drives home the point that the policies of this administration are increasing the cost of commodities, the cost of fuel, devaluing our currency, and that applies to health care as well.

Seniors are concerned. They've got every right to be concerned. One thing about the Republican budget, and one thing that the gentleman from Arkansas is trying to point out, that we're trying to solve the problems of this Nation here in this body. This Republican freshman class is taking the bull by the horns to bring home the issue to the American people and let them know we're trying to solve these problems. So I commend him.

Mr. KELLY. I appreciate that. If I may, and I'm going to wrap up. We came here for a cause. We did not come here for a career. And if you cannot win the debate by using facts, and if you have to use fear, then shame on you. Shame on you. Go home. Go home. If you don't want to fix it, if you don't want to play by the rules, if you don't want to make America sleep safely again and sleep soundly, then go home.

There is a level of fairness that needs to be played by. And I will tell you this, I have never in my life been subjected and have watched seniors been put through so much, and it's not necessary.

If it's about your party, and if it's about trying to convince them, then doggone it, you're using the wrong message. Let's make sure that we fix it for the future, because it's there for our seniors, and it's there for our children.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Thank you very much for that.

I now yield to the lady from New York.

Ms. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleagues from South Carolina and from Arkansas for putting together this hour, which is of so much value.

I am here as a physician who's also a Member of Congress. I've had the privilege of taking care of elderly patients for 16 years in private practice and in hospital settings, and I have two parents whom I cherish who have been Medicare recipients for many years.

And the facts of the case, as our colleague from Pennsylvania has aptly pointed out, we have to go by the facts of the case. And as a doctor, that's what we always did, and approach them with compassion and sensitivity to be sure.

But the facts of the case are that we currently have roughly 10,000 Americans, baby boomers, now entering Medicare eligibility every day. On average, each of them will have contributed approximately $110,000 in payroll taxes over their lifetimes, and that's a lot of money. There's no question. But, Medicare will spend, on average, it's projected, approximately $330,000 on their care. As all of us can tell, unfortunately, that's not something that we can sustain. That's not something that our children and our grandchildren will be able to pay for. That is what is threatening the future for everyone, including our seniors and including all of us who will be senior citizens, Good Lord willing, by and by.

We know that in the Affordable Care Act measures were taken to control the cost of Medicare. One of the measures, in fact, took funding away from Medicare, roughly half a trillion dollars. So we know we need to do something about it.

The way the Affordable Care Act approaches it is to have the Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAB, which is a board of bureaucrats that's going to decide how money is spent on our seniors' care. I, as a doctor, and as a daughter, would much prefer to see us have that choice. That's why premium support makes sense.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. MCKEON (during the Special Order of Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas), from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112–77) on the resolution (H. Res. 208) directing the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of any document, record, memo, correspondence, or other communication of the Department of Defense, or any portion of such communication, that refers or relates to any consultation with Congress regarding Operation Odyssey Dawn or military actions in or against Libya, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE ECONOMY AND THE STABILITY OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity this evening for the Democratic Caucus in the House to address this budget and to go forward with a discussion on our stand on the issues and solutions that we're proposing is an important opportunity for us to be able to dialogue here amongst each other on the House floor and also to share that messaging with the viewing public.

Certainly, the general public out there is watching many of these proposals. They are concerned about the stability of the middle class. They're concerned about the economy, concerned about job creation.

We are now well into the 112th session of Congress. We watch as many weeks and months have passed without one single measure that would increase jobs in this country coming before the House. Nothing that deals with the economy, nothing that deals with the retention of jobs or the job creation situation has been produced here as legislation and voted upon on the House floor, a rather dismal track record when the clarion call, the message that resonated from the voting booth to these Halls of Congress on the Hill in Washington was very clear: Start growing the economy, stop shrinking the middle class, and people are concerned about the opportunities that will be passed by. As we walk through these very difficult times, it is about job creation and retention.

There's also a concern that there has been this very strong attempt to make the comfortable even more comfortable with the new Republican majority in the House. And we'll talk about that. Let's talk about it.

We have a situation where people will allow for corporate loopholes that cost