FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized here on the floor of the House of Representatives and be able to address you about the matters of the day and about the important issues that are before us here in this Congress and in this Nation.

And I am continually impressed by the quality of the young people that are attracted to this city, both as visitors, vacationers, but also from people that will get their college degree or degrees and many of them with a 4.0 grade point average, active in all kinds of extra curriculars. The stellar cream of the American crop are magnetized to come to this city. I am impressed with them—their intelligence, their patriotism, their dedication on both sides of the aisle, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to add something that is a perspective that I think those of us that have been around this planet a little bit longer have to offer, and that is, first, that some of us have lived a lot of history that others had to learn by reading the history book. And we know how the history books have been truncated. And there's not time to learn all the things that happened in history.

Some of us learned a lot of history from the front page, from the radio, from the television, from the news, or from being in the middle of that history. And that all is part of the collective memory of this House of Representatives and the Senate on the other side. Some will say they probably remember more history in the Senate than we do here in the House.

□ 1410

Mr. Speaker, my point is this: You can have very smart people with very good principles, and the experiences of their life are supportive of them understanding the underpinnings of the greatness of this country, understanding the pillars of American exceptionalism, but sometimes the definitions and as it's presented is taken at face value because they might not have had years to see things go wrong when good ideas come before this Congress.

And I look back and think of the time in 1995—actually, in 1994, when Republicans took over the majority in the House of Representatives here after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness of being in the minority and not being able to advance legislation. There were many here on the Republican side of the aisle that were complacent with that, Mr. Speaker, but accepted the idea that the majority would maybe never change in their lifetimes, and they operated in the zone that had been delivered to them and they didn't go and charge the ramparts or the windmill, so to speak, because the ramparts, to them, were windmills.

Yet there were others that were visionaries, that saw the vision, that realized that America was going in the wrong direction, and they built a coalition here in the House of Representatives that I watched on C–SPAN night after night after night, step down here on this floor at the very spot, Mr. Speaker, and make arguments to the American people, make arguments to me that moved me, moved me in my head and moved me in my heart and helped me understand that it wasn't me alone that was seeing that America was going in the wrong direction, that we were overspending and we had this massive welfare system and that we were expanding the dependency class in America. This spirited people that we are, this unique people that we are here in America were being diminished, were being diminished by the growth of the nanny state and the growth of the dependency class in America.

So in 1994, the inspiration came from many people that were hearing the inspiring words that were spoken into this very microphone, Mr. Speaker, but also across the country. On talk radio, across the backyard fence, over a cup of coffee, at work, at church, at school, at play, at recreation, in fishing boats and golf carts across America, we had a national conversation about where America needed to go. And the result of that consensus of the national conversation was a massive change in the seats here in the House of Representatives and a new majority in the House of Representatives that came sweeping in in November of 1994.

And there were big changes. The freshmen class that came in and was sworn in here on this floor in January of 1995 were revolutionaries, and they brought a difference and they forced a balanced budget here in the House that was not expected to ever be reached. They cut spending until they forced a balanced budget. And they reduced welfare and put more people in a position where they could earn their dignity and a paycheck at the same time.

Now, as this unfolded, they brought forth, as they said they would in the Contract with America, that they would vote on a constitutional amendment to produce a balanced budget. That was a 1994 promise that was fulfilled in 1995. A vote on a balanced budget amendment here in the House of Representatives that passed the House of Representatives, was messaged right directly down the hallway to the United States Senate, Mr. Speaker, where the Senate took up the vote for the constitutional amendment to balance the budget, and it failed in the Senate in 1995 by a single vote.

How different, how different might it have been, Mr. Speaker, if one more Senate seat had gone the other way, if one more United States Senate race had resulted in a victory for someone who believed in a balanced budget amendment, believed in the Constitution, itself, fiscal responsibility—those American exceptionalism principles that I have briefly mentioned—but believed in requiring a balanced budget constitutionally. How different it might have been if the Senate had voted with a two-thirds majority, as the House did in 1995, and sent a constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget to the States, the 50 States for ratification.

Now, we know, Mr. Speaker, it takes three-quarters of the States to ratify an amendment to the Constitution before it becomes incorporated into our Constitution. We'll never know how many States would have ratified that amendment because they didn't get the chance to do so. Had that been messaged to the States in 1995, we can only ask the question: Would the States have ratified a balanced budget amendment? I think so. I believe three-quarters of the States, at a minimum, would have done so; and if they did not, I think it would have changed the politics within enough of the States so that they would have.

Imagine if this Congress here and now, today, this week, this month would pass a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution out of this House with a better than two-thirds majority—equal or better than—to the Senate where they need 67 votes in the Senate, if that constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget gets messaged to the States. Some will say look at the makeup of the State legislatures. Let's put it this way, Mr. Speaker: There aren't enough Republican majorities to pass and ratify a constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget. Maybe not, and not by an analytical judgment of this moment, Mr. Speaker.

But think of what happens in a State like my neighboring State of Illinois, for example, where Democrats control the politics and they insist on deficit spending and running themselves into the red. It seems as though the right of passage in Illinois is, if you are elected Governor, you go off to prison. But if we have a balanced budget amendment sitting on the docket of the Illinois State Legislature today, I don't think there's much of any chance that they would ratify an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to do such a thing.

But I do think, Mr. Speaker, that there will be hundreds of people all across Illinois that will decide that they want to step up and run for public office so that they can have the chance to vote to ratify a balanced budget to the United States Constitution in the State legislature. They would go out and campaign, and they would knock on doors, and they would talk to their friends and neighbors and say, I don't care if you're a Democrat. I don't care if you have some other interest. The best interest you can have is the long-term best interests of the United States of America. And it's becoming increasingly clear that the long-term best interests of the United States of America are to require that the budget

be balanced by the Constitution because this Congress has not demonstrated—and the President clearly has not demonstrated—that they have enough discipline to crank this spending down to balance the budget.

Part of the reason is we have elections every 2 years in the House and every 6 years in the Senate. So the incentive is be in a position to keep your job in 2 years or 6 years. There is not an incentive out there that tells the Members of the House and Senate that we should prepare the groundwork for our grandchildren, let alone children yet to be born. That's part of the dynamics. The other part of the dynamics is that this Capitol is full of bright, energetic people. A lot of them come to my office on a regular basis. A lot of them are honorable people with good intentions. But a lot of them are there because they want the tax dollars of the American people to go to their interests. And because there's a constant drumbeat of asking for more and more and more spending and the push for—well, I know that you are fiscally responsible and you want to balance the budget, but can you just make this exception because it's so important. It's so important issue after issue. You could be accused of voting against children and women and seniors and minorities and handicapped and combat-wounded veterans all together if we do anything other than increase the budget to the level that's hoped for and predicted by the President of the United States.

So when I stand up for fiscal responsibility, Mr. Speaker, I often get this statement which is, Well, you're a Republican. You Republicans spent too much money. And you have to admit that you are half the problem. Well, no, I don't, Mr. Speaker. First, I voted against a lot of that spending. I've been an original cosponsor of the balanced budget amendment offered by Congressman BOB GOODLATTE of Virginia since I arrived in this town. And I'm sticking with him and the principles that are that constitutional amendment that we passed out of the Judiciary Committee that hangs on the calendar of the House today.

But aside from that, speaking from a party-by-party standpoint, the truth is this: Yes, Republicans spent too much money, and in the middle of the Iraq war, we came within $160 billion of balancing the budget. Now, that's not particularly impressive if you dial it back a generation or two or three, but it's very impressive when you think of it in terms of the President's budget, which is a $1.65 trillion deficit in a single year.

So actual, real numbers come down to we came within $160 billion of balancing the budget at the height of the Iraq war, and had it not been for the Iraq war, we would have balanced the budget. If the equation is there, it's that simple.

□ 1420

But the President has proposed a deficit, an annual deficit spending budget, of $1.65 trillion. Now, I have said the deficit of Republicans is $160 billion and the President's deficit is $1.65 trillion, and on his deficit, Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that this is a 10-year accumulated deficit. This is 1 year, $1.65 trillion.

Now, yes, Republicans spent too much money, but for every dollar that they went into deficit, the President proposes $10 of deficit spending into the same equation. I can't see that that's a shared responsibility. It looks to me like it's 10 times the overspending on the part of the President versus one-tenth of that on the part of the Republican Congress here in the middle of the Iraq war. Those are the facts as they are established by the Congressional Budget Office. We need to stand on facts here, not on emotions, and we need a level now of fiscal austerity.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get to this point where we can send another balanced budget across to the United States Senate and ask them to pass it with a two-thirds majority and message it to the States. Give the States the chance to ratify it this time. If they had the chance to ratify the balanced budget amendment in 1995, I might or might not be standing here. I might have realized that, listen, government did its job, and I can go ahead and raise my family and run my business and live the American Dream. But it didn't happen.

It didn't happen, and some of us, out of frustration, stood up and engaged in public service and public life, and we were elected to positions in perhaps our State legislatures and then came here to this Congress. I have seen this country going in the right direction. I have seen this country going in the wrong direction.

I have seen the spirit of America be diminished.

How many people today remember Jimmy Carter's malaise speech where he essentially said to us, You have to lower your aspirations. Yes, you are Americans, but it means something different in the future than it has in the past—that America is no longer going be a country with unlimited resources and prosperity and aspirations and realized dreams, but that we'll have to wear a sweater and turn the thermostat down and drive at 55 and be limited by government.

We have some of that going on now. We have the nanny state being reestablished under this administration. Now, I would suggest that there are a number of ways to illustrate that, Mr. Speaker, but I would point it out this way: that the food retailers sat down, along with a couple of other interests—and this is something driven by the First Lady, I believe. They have identified that about 3 percent of the kids in America are obese.

You may have seen in the news this week about some effort to go in and remove obese children from their parents because obese parents are a bad influence on the diets of their kids, and kids that are overweight are a health risk, and they are more likely to have diabetes. Statistically, that's true.

Mr. Speaker, I don't need a nanny state that is going to go in and weigh my kids and weigh me and my wife or my sons and daughters-in-law and grandchildren and decide whether I am going to be able to manage my own children's lives. I need the nanny state out of my life, not in my life, Mr. Speaker. I don't need them deciding what my diet is going to be.

But this initiative that flows from the First Lady is about cutting 1.5 trillion calories from the diets of young people, because I guess that you run them across the scales and do an average and do the calculus that 3,550 extra calories over what you are burning amounts to a pound. Then they can do the math and figure out, if they can reduce 1.5 trillion calories from all the right places, these kids are going to lose weight in all the right places. It doesn't work that way.

How are you going to do this? I asked them.

They said, Well, you know, we're going to reduce the number of calories in a bag of Doritos, for example.

How do you do that?

Take a couple of chips out.

Okay. What do we think a kid is going to do if he's hungry and there are a couple of less chips in a bag of Doritos? He eats two bags.

Then they said, Well, we've got the power bars that have 150 calories. We're going to reduce them down to 90. That way, these kids aren't going to gain weight. They're going to lose weight because they're eating fewer calories in a power bar.

So, if you pick up a power bar and you're hungry, you're eating that because you want the energy, and your appetite calls for it. If there are only 90 calories in there, I will suggest that these kids are going to eat two power bars and consume 180 calories rather than settle for 90 when, before, they were getting 150 out of that previous power bar.

Kids are obese for two reasons. They have voracious appetites, and they don't exercise enough. It's that simple.

The former Secretary of Defense came out and said that 30 percent our youth that are overweight is a national security risk because they are too overweight. They don't quality for the military service, and we, therefore, can't recruit enough volunteers from the universe of people that are left that have a waistline that fits the standards for our military.

Now, I would suggest that being obese does not destroy one's skeleton or muscular tissue or nervous tissue; it's just extra weight to carry around. And if it's a national security issue, then let's extend basic training, and they can just stay there and do exercises and eat the diet in the mess hall until they make weight.

This is not a national security issue, and I am constantly hearing these arguments about national security. One of them is, well, national security is fresh fruits and vegetables, and if we don't have fresh tomatoes it is a national security issue. So, therefore, we must have cheap labor to pick the tomatoes. Never mind that tomatoes have been bred now to be picked by machine.

I ask the question, Mr. Speaker: How long did the Eskimos get along without any fresh fruits or vegetables?

They have lived for centuries on the high protein of the animal meat that they can harvest up along the Arctic Circle, but they don't have carrots or broccoli or lettuce or tomatoes or pears or apples or peaches. None of that grows up there in the Arctic Circle. They are carnivores. They have gotten along really well eating a meat diet, because the nutrients are in there, and they are concentrated. It's not a national security issue not to have guacamole even though it's a profitable thing to raise the avocados.

We get way out of balance here in this Congress and overemphasize things with all kinds of hyperbole, which brings me back around to where we need to go as a Nation, Mr. Speaker. We need to go down this path of a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. The President doesn't want to balance the budget or he would have offered one.

And the President wants to scare seniors. He did that on purpose. That's the statement that he made a couple of days ago when he said, if we hit the end of the debt ceiling limit, he can't guarantee that military pensions or Social Security would be paid on time. That was a calculated statement. It was calculated to scare the group of people who is the easiest to scare. That's our seniors.

The reason they are is because they have worked their whole lifetimes to get into the position that they are in, and most of them are on a fixed income. That fixed income might be a pension plan, other savings, Social Security or a rent check or an investment of some kind. But when the Federal Government interferes with that and starts to send a message that they can't count on any component of it, yes, they get concerned, rightfully concerned.

This system that we have, entitlements, cannot hold together if we continue down the same path we are on. We have about 40 million people that qualify for Medicare today. In 10 more years, it will be about 70 million people as the baby boomers come on line.

It isn't just that non-defense discretionary spending in this Congress is growing too fast. We can't solve the problem if we shut down the non-defense discretionary spending or if we ratchet it backwards. We must address entitlement. We also must guarantee to the seniors: You have organized your lives around Medicare—in fact, Social Security. We need to protect them and their interests. They are deserving of that. They may be getting greater benefits than they ever paid in, but they still have to be able to count on this Congress keeping its word.

Meanwhile, as a government that's spending itself into oblivion, however big a Nation we are, there is no one to back us up. We don't get to go to the European Union and ask for a loan to bail us out. We don't even get to go to the Chinese or the Saudis to ask for a loan to bail us out. We are the last stopgap in Western civilization, the free enterprise world.

Remember, there are a lot of entities outside that would like to see this country go down, tumble, collapse to some degree. We don't have friends all around the world. So we are the ones who have to hold the line. We don't get to go back for a backup of any kind. The Greeks could at least look to the European Union, and what did the European Union say? We will loan you some money to bridge you through this problem, but you have got to cut your spending to our satisfaction before we will loan the money.

□ 1430

Now we have a President that says he can't guarantee that military pensions are going to be paid or that Social Security is going to be paid because he wants to use that as leverage to try to get a debt-ceiling increase by making the least amount of concessions. And he would like to make no concessions. That's the scenario that we're in.

So I've introduced today, along with MICHELE BACHMANN and LOUIE GOHMERT with a growing number of cosponsors, an act called the PROMISES Act. What it does is it requires that our military be paid first and on time, every time, no exceptions, no hesitation. Whether it is a spending gap that is a result of the expiration of a continuing resolution or whether we hit the debt ceiling, the revenues in the United States Treasury—and there will be plenty there for this under all circumstances that we can envision—go first to pay the military.

They are our number one line of defense. Their lives are on the line. They should never have to wonder in a foxhole or on a ship or in the air and their families near the barracks or at home should never have to wonder whether that paycheck is going to be electronically transferred into their bank account on time every time. That's our guarantee with the PROMISES Act.

The military should never be used as a pawn in a political discussion here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The second thing is we need to take care of the full faith and credit of the United States Government. That means we have to pay the interest on the necessary principal on our debt. We can do that with incoming revenue. And those who say we can't are wrong, and I don't care what their title is. We have $200 billion in anticipated revenue per month. It takes $11 billion to pay our military, and it takes $20 billion to service our debt. That's $31 billion out of a $200 billion average revenue stream. That turns out to be—and I know, Mr. Speaker, you have calculated this in your head—15.2 percent of the overall spending of the revenue stream per month—15.2 percent.

That means pay the military first, service our debt second, guarantee the full faith and credit of the United States of America, and there's still plenty of money in that funding stream left over to pay Social Security, pay Medicare, go on down the line and pay military pensions—keep faith with those who have stood on the line for America—and keep faith with our senior citizens. And it takes the leverage out of the hands of the President. That's what the PROMISES Act is about.

And some will say, well, no, you can't. The money is not there. Tell me where that money is, then, the $200 billion a month—$11 billion to pay our military, $20 billion to service our debt, and it costs $58 billion per month for Social Security, and for Medicare it is $43 billion per month. We can even add defense on there, and we're getting up to the limit. I mean all defense, not just the military pay.

So, as you can see, Mr. Speaker, we have lots of options. I want to take the options off the table for the President. I don't want him to be scaring our seniors. I want that guarantee to be there, but I go just far enough in the PROMISES Act that we take care of the absolutely necessaries, and I'm open to the discussion on how we might add other priorities behind them. First priority: pay our troops first. Second priority: pay the interest and the principal to service the national debt.

And as we move forward with this, the brinksmanship gets more and more intense. And as the President of the United States is looking to try to get us to crack, we need to understand that decisions will be made on August 2. The President alone holds the most power to decide who gets paid and who does not. I saw a presentation this morning that proposed that unemployment benefits get paid, but our military not get paid. Now if that's something that's going to be proposed out of the White House and not just a hypothetical scenario, I think everybody in this country knows about the inequity of that. We would pay people not to work but not pay the people to put their lives on the line for us? But that's an option open to the President today. That threat is already out there drifting through the stratosphere—I should say cyberspace—in discussions, serious discussions about our priorities.

This Congress can pass priorities; and absent statutory language that requires the executive branch to pay our bills in a priority order, he has the discretion to pay them in any order, or

maybe just let them go in no order and see what happens out of a grab bag. He could sit in the Oval Office and toss a coin or throw darts at a dart board and decide who gets paid and who doesn't right now.

I'm calling upon this Congress to pass the PROMISES Act or pass another priority ''pay the bills'' act so that we keep faith with our military, we keep faith with our international creditors, and we keep faith with our senior citizens.

Furthermore, when I hear the language that says ''pay the military first and pay the national debt second,'' that means pay the Chinese first when you're servicing the national debt. If we borrowed the money from the Chinese, we have to pay the money back to the Chinese, unless they sell our debt to somebody else. That's the facts. And if we didn't intend to pay them back, we shouldn't have borrowed the money in the first place.

But if we're concerned about servicing 100 percent of our debt because the Chinese hold $1 trillion of it, they hold less than 10 percent of our debt. So when we put $10 out to service our debt, one of those $10, less than one of those $10 goes to the Chinese. Half of those dollars go to Americans that hold U.S. debt, and some of that goes to the Saudis and, of course, other countries around the world. But this isn't ''pay the Chinese first.'' This is keep faith—keep the full faith and credit of the United States Government first and keep faith with our military. We owe them more than we owe even our creditors.

I went through some of these things during the eighties, the farm crisis years of the eighties. That added clarity to it. Three thousand banks were closed during that decade in the United States. A good number of banks around my neighborhood, including my bank, was closed. And I remember when it happened. It was April 26, 1985, Friday afternoon, 3 o'clock, when the FDIC showed up at my bank, put a red tag, a red sheet notice on the door, taped it on there, and two highway patrolmen stood at attention on either side of that door to guard the bank. And at that instant, they froze every single account, including mine. I had payroll to meet, and my customers' accounts were frozen along with mine. We had to go to a barter system to keep the business running right in the middle of corn planting in Iowa. You could not have picked a worse date or time than they did on that Friday afternoon.

But, Mr. Speaker, I learned what was important. The first thing we did was go to a barter system. And I loaded and hauled hay to the auction to turn that into cash so I could pay my employees. They were first. I fed myself last. I paid the interest second and the necessary principal third. I kept full faith and credit with my creditors.

But the first thing that—the people that were on the line every day making the business run were like our troops are today. Without them, everything stops and you live in fear; you don't have anything going. Pay them first, those people on the front line first; pay the interest second, keep your credit; pay the necessary principal third. And then you can look around and maybe make some tough decisions and options. That's where this country is today.

I do believe we must balance this budget, and I believe we must pass a constitutional amendment for a balanced budget. And I believe the American people will support such an endeavor. And if we don't have the votes to pass a constitutional amendment to balance the budget among the States, then the people in America will rise up and elect their State representatives and their State senators to go to their statehouses and ratify the constitutional amendment to balance the budget.

The American people want this. This is a national movement. Some of this is coming out of the Tea Party; the constitutional conservatives with a cause are activated. They stood up against ObamaCare, and they'll stand up to balance this budget, and they will still stand up against ObamaCare.

And let me add to this, Mr. Speaker, that for this Congress to think about going down a path that would offer a balanced budget to the States in exchange for, let's say, some cuts in spending, increasing the debt ceiling by $2.4 trillion and cutting our spending as a percentage of GDP, ratcheting it down to 19.99 percent, which is short of the constitutional amendment's cap, for this Congress to do this but still allow what we will know as $105.5 billion to go forward to implement and enforce ObamaCare is irresponsible.

There are $23.6 billion sitting there right now automatically appropriated for these times, this year, for Kathleen Sebelius and others to implement ObamaCare while the President delays the case that should be expedited before the Supreme Court that I believe will find ObamaCare to be unconstitutional. It's already been rejected by the American people by margins of 60 percent or better. There are 87 freshmen in this House of Representatives, all of whom ran on repeal of ObamaCare and all of whom voted to repeal ObamaCare. Every Republican in the House of Representatives voted to repeal ObamaCare, and every Republican in the United States Senate voted to repeal ObamaCare.

And it's unconstitutional in my view in four different areas of the Constitution, and the Supreme Court will eventually rule when the President can no longer delay the actions of the Supreme Court. And he is believing that he can implement components of this and that we won't want to let it go if the Court finds it unconstitutional.

□ 1440

He is believing that since there is no severability clause in ObamaCare, that somehow the Supreme Court will look at it, maybe find a component of it unconstitutional, but decide at their option not to throw it all out and recognize a nonexistent severability clause. And that would be, a severability clause says if any part is found unconstitutional, then the other parts are still retained. If it is missing that clause, if any part is found unconstitutional, then all parts are then not retained and essentially repealed.

The language that I have introduced, the language that MICHELE BACHMANN introduced, and others, CONNIE MACK comes to mind, with all Republicans voting for it, is this. It is 40 words to repeal ObamaCare and it ends with these words: ''as if it had never been enacted.'' That is the language we must put on a President's desk who will sign it.

In the meantime, to spend $23.6 billion to implement an unconstitutional piece of legislation that is 2,600 pages long, that kind of money in a period that must be a period of austerity is an absolute waste. We know it is a waste. If we are at this point where we are going to cut down spending, we have to do it by cutting off the $2.6 trillion of outlays that are ObamaCare; and $23.6 billion of that is sitting now in the hands mostly of Kathleen Sebelius, and they are seeking to send the roots of ObamaCare into our lives and expand the dependency in us so we decide we can't get along without ObamaCare.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEST). The gentleman has 13 minutes remaining.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this ObamaCare of $23.6 billion that is sitting there being implemented, and with Kathleen Sebelius, with the discretion to spend that and send the roots down and expand the dependency class, here is an example. One of those example is this. They advertised that we needed to do ObamaCare because we had so many people who had preexisting conditions, and they would be refused for insurance. So when they were refused, they didn't have any way to get health insurance and that it was a human tragedy.

So these huge numbers of people who were uninsurable would be brought into the fold of the new ObamaCare under the preexisting conditions language that already is law. But a month or so ago, they discovered that in spite of how hard they tried to recruit people with preexisting conditions, and I remind you, we have 306 million people in America. And of those 306 million people, the numbers were supposed to be large, impressive, maybe not astronomical, of those who had preexisting conditions and could not buy insurance.

And what they found, they could find only 18,000 people, in spite of them advertising preexisting insurance. All across this land, 18,000 people only who had signed up for the preexisting conditions component, 18,000. Divide that

out across the States. Put 50 into that 18,000 and see what kind of a problem that is. It's a small number when you divide it by the 50 States. And the States could manage those kinds of numbers after you distribute it by population. For example, the majority of the States, including Iowa, have a high-risk pool that we subsidize with tax dollars to buy the premiums down so people with preexisting conditions can buy a policy. I encourage that. I think that is a good, responsible thing to do.

But Obama's preexisting policy only had 18,000 people after a year of effort trying to get people to sign up. So Kathleen Sebelius took what she considers to be latitude within the law and decided to buy the premiums down another 40 percent, pay another 40 percent of the premiums out of this pot of money that she has that is automatically appropriated to her to a total tune of $105.5 billion, and they still couldn't find enough people to make it look like there was a reason to have preexisting conditions policy in the Federal code, and so they removed the condition that you have a preexisting condition.

Now we have an insurance policy for people that want to signed up with the Federal Government that may or may not have an illness. They may not have been sick a day in their lives. They don't even need to make the case that they have been turned down for insurance by a single company in America. They just have to sign up, and they'll put them on the policy and they'll buy the premium down by at least 40 percent. This is what government is doing. And they are seeking to expand Medicaid and collapse Medicare into Medicaid.

We saw what they were trying to do under Bill Clinton's era where—and they started this SCHIP, which now is CHIP, Children's Health Insurance Program, and ObamaCare kind of does that in. But it was expanded within the States. It started out to be 200 percent of poverty. If you're at 200 percent of poverty or less, we'll help pay the health insurance premiums for your children. Those are low-cost premiums, by the way. Kids don't have a lot of problems. And on the upper end of this, Bill Clinton wanted to lower the Medicare eligibility age to 55, if you remember.

So if you can insure kids up to the age of 26, which ObamaCare does, and you can lower the Medicare eligibility age to 55, now you've only got that little window in there of 24 years, the most productive years of a person's life, presumably, and often is the case, that the government is stepping in requiring that you stay on or mandating that you be able to stay on your parents' health insurance until age 26. You can get elected to Congress when you're 25, come down here and swear in, still on your mommy and daddy's health insurance and come over on the government plan right away. That's what that means. I wanted my kids to grow up.

But if we are going to insure kids through SCHIP or CHIP or a Federal mandate up to age 26 and pay those premiums out of tax dollars, and then lower the Medicare eligibility age, as Clinton wanted to do, and it is impossible in this environment today, down to 55, it is only a 24-year window. Then they would add to those at the lower end and lower the upper end age until they got it to collapse altogether. In the meantime, collapse Medicare into Medicaid, you have the formula for socialized medicine. That would be the great bleed of most everybody on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they want socialized medicine. JOHN CONYERS back in 1981 introduced a socialized medicine policy that forbade anyone from doing health care services on a fee-for-service. They had to be on the salary of the national health care system.

The Federal Government would hire and presumably fire everybody that worked in health care, and no one could charge a fee for it, and no one could be paid a fee-for-service. They would have to be working for the government within the health care system.

We know what happens when government takes things over. I ask the American people how is the service in the place when you go into government offices. It is about the same as it is where you go in where somebody has a monopoly. I'm not picking on government workers. Government, often by definition, has a monopoly. If you don't have competition, you don't have to be nice.

I learned that in the auto—what do I call it—the vehicle registration department in the county courthouse the first time I went in to register a vehicle at about age 16. I learned that. They had the market cornered. They didn't have to be nice. They could open the door when they wanted to and close the door when they wanted to. There was no motive for them to try to provide better service for me or anyone else. However long the line was, we stood in it. Anybody in Washington, D.C. who goes down to the vehicle parking department here in Washington, D.C., you will find the same thing.

When my wife goes down to get her annual $10 ticket so we can park our car for a short period of time on the streets of Washington, D.C., invariably it is a 4-hour process. And I have had to send my chief of staff and a driver down there through a 4-hour process just to get a $10 permit because they have got an attitude. Their attitude is we don't have to service anybody; we have the market cornered. That's the attitude. Go down there and go buy a parking permit if you think ObamaCare and a national health care act are good for you, Mr. Speaker, or anyone else.

I don't want to see monopolies; I want to see competition. And ObamaCare eliminates competition, and it prescribes a product that the American people have to buy for the first time in history, a product, a government-approved, or if they had their way, a government-created health insurance policy that a person has to buy unless you are of low enough means-tested income that they are going to pay the premium for you.

□ 1450

This has never happened in the history of America, how one lower court could come to a conclusion that the individual mandate is constitutional. It is appalling to me that a judge could sit on a bench and come to a conclusion like that—or a panel of judges, a majority of a panel of judges—and it was 2–1, I believe, on a three-judge panel.

Think of this, Mr. Speaker: think of when you get your paycheck. Let's just say you've got—let's keep it reasonable—$500 take-home pay for a week's paycheck. If your health insurance premium is $100 a week and if the government says you must buy a health insurance policy that is of a value that costs you $100 a week, what they have done is confiscated—confiscated—20 percent of your paycheck, of your take-home payroll, your after-tax dollars, and it is after-tax dollars.

Let's just say the government decides you need to buy a General Motors or a Chrysler because we have a vested interest in that and that you can't drive a clunker—we're going to outlaw those, so we have to buy a new car every 10 years or have one that's within 10 years of new. They could prescribe that with the same standards that they prescribe ObamaCare on us. Let's say that car payment takes another $100 a week. Now you've got $200 of the $500 that is swallowed up by the government. That's 40 percent of your take-home pay commandeered by Uncle Sam.

Then they decide that the appliance companies aren't making enough money and that you need to buy certain appliances—and I can go through this a little faster. They might decide you have to buy this diet food I talked about a little bit earlier. They might put a tax on the non-diet pop. Then pretty soon your paycheck is swallowed up. Your whole $500 is gone because the government has told you how to spend every single dollar.

If the government can commandeer a single dollar out of your paycheck that they direct you to spend on a product that's produced by government or approved by government, then they can commandeer the second dollar and the third dollar and 99 cents out of every dollar and 100 cents out of every dollar. That's what we're faced with.

That's the biggest reason why ObamaCare is unconstitutional, Mr. Speaker.

The American people are not adequately outraged. We have a character among us. We've got a history that the

product of the will of the people emerges out of the House and the Senate and goes to the President's desk for his signature or a veto and an attempt to override a veto. That happens once in a while. That's supposed to be the voice of the American people, and we expect it because of the structure of this republican form of government.

I want to emphasize the Constitution guarantees us not a democracy. The Constitution guarantees us a republican form of government.

That means representative.

That means we don't go out there and take the temperature of the public and do a poll and decide it's the will of the people today, so let's race in that direction. We have an obligation to listen to the people and understand what they want and have a very sensitive antenna to pick up on the will of the American people.

It doesn't end there, Mr. Speaker; it starts there.

Our job is to be full-time paying attention to all the facts and the figures and all of the components and to be making the best decisions possible because we are representatives here in a republican form of government. This Republic is not a democracy. It isn't two coyotes and a sheep taking a vote on what's for dinner.

We have liberty. We have American liberty.

We have rights that come from God that are guaranteed to us in the Constitution.

Now, I believe that God moved the Founding Fathers around like men on a chessboard to shape this Nation, and I believe that for a lot of reasons. One of them is I can't go back on this Monday morning of 2011 and redraw the course of history and even imagine that I could come up with a result that would be half of what has been produced by this great gift of liberty and freedom—freedom of speech, religion, and the press. All the people who came here to exercise their religious liberty, their free enterprise liberty, their property rights, to be protected from double jeopardy, and to have a jury of their peers and face their accusers, a lot of that comes from Roman law.

The reasonable Western Civilization culture that lets us analyze our problems is part of who we are. They landed on a continent with unlimited natural resources at the dawn of the industrial revolution and settled it from sea to shining sea in a blink of a historical eye.

That's America.

We are a vigorous people.

We've got the vigor of every donor civilization on the planet. And now they want to impose ObamaCare on us? They want to raise the debt ceiling by $2.4 trillion or $4 trillion and ask us to go further and deeper into debt and put that on our grandchildren and children not yet born?

My youngest granddaughter, Reagan Ann King, entered this world with $44,000 that she owed Uncle Sam. That has got to stop, Mr. Speaker.

I yield back the balance of my time.

CONGRESS: DON'T TREAD ON DC

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEST). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On any given day, if the American people listen to the speakers on the floor of the House of Representatives, they will come to the conclusion that many Members sure do hate government. At the very least, they certainly don't want the Federal Government involved in the lives of the American people in any way. Well, I've come to the floor not to give a lecture, but to offer an explanation because the American people are probably puzzled at something they recently saw.

They saw the residents of the Nation's Capital embarking on what I must tell you is a new phase of an old struggle: to preserve the right to local self-government—a battle residents won almost 40 years ago.

You would think that the speakers on the floor who hate government would be very quick to say what is also true about themselves. They like local government. They don't want the Federal Government involved with local government or certainly interfering with local government. Yet the very same speakers are the prime movers of interference with the local government of the District of Columbia.

So the residents of your Nation's Capital have embarked on a new phase of their struggle. I'm not talking about the storied fight for voting rights and statehood, because many Americans now know that this is the only jurisdiction in the United States whose residents pay Federal income taxes, go to war—have fought in every war since the Nation was created—but don't have full voting rights in the Congress.

No, I'm not talking about that because, unfortunately, today, the city is forced to fight simply to maintain local government—the local rights that are unquestioned everywhere in the United States except by some on the floor of this House.

After Republicans took control of the House in January, their obsession with the DC government became so fierce that the mayor and members of the city council—almost the entire legislative and executive branches—were arrested for sitting down in the streets in front of the Capitol in an act of civil disobedience. The world, at that time, was focused on people in the streets of the Middle East, who were demanding freedom, but was riveted by civil disobedience in the U.S. capital city, which included the highest officials of our own local government.

The sit-down occurred after the city was caught in a Federal Government dispute over cuts in the Federal budget, which had nothing to do with the city. The city government barely avoided being shut down, although the city's local funds were no part of the fight, but the Congress would not even allow the city to spend its own local funds to keep the city open.

That is the very essence of autocracy.

Congress still holds onto the antiquated practice of approving the city's locally raised budget, a budget that the Congress did not put one red cent in—$4 billion raised by the residents of the District of Columbia.

□ 1500

And House Republicans repeatedly refused my amendments to let the District government stay open by spending its own local funds. House Republicans have long rationalized such irrational treatment of the residents of the Nation's capital, but holding the District hostage in a Federal shutdown fight was a new nadir.

Republicans finally succeeded in getting hefty budget cuts in the 2011 appropriations bill, but still refused to seal the deal until their demands to take some of the District's home rule were met. They insisted on two riders. One prohibited the District from using its own local funds for abortion services for low-income women—which is done in 17 red and blue States because it's a matter of local money and local law. And they imposed private school vouchers on the city because that was the pet project of another Republican, Speaker JOHN BOEHNER. Mind you that this city has almost half of its children going to public charter schools. It's about the last city in the world that you would impose an alternative school system on since it has already grown its own home-rule alternative.

The bold autocratic insistence of these anti-home-rule provisions, as well as the near shutdown of the city government, finally led to an equally bold response from the city. You have to imagine that only the most provocative actions could have led the mayor of a great city and other elected officials to be escorted away in handcuffs.

House Republicans have devoted their first months in power to slicing away at the city's local home rule. They took control of the House on the promise of jobs, but have yet to introduce a jobs bill. From the first day of the 112th Congress, the House Republican majority has been preoccupied—mesmerized—with the internal affairs of a city whose local government, like many other jurisdictions, differs with them on some matters. This is America, get used to it. With heartbreaking audacity, they began by withdrawing the District's vote on the House floor in the Committee of the Whole. And this vote was only granted by rule—which is why they could withdraw it—but it had been approved by the Federal courts. Thus, Republicans in this House have withdrawn a legitimate vote of American citizens who pay