We’re told that 70 percent of Americans, adults, believe that their children will not have as much opportunity and freedom as they’ve had. That’s why I ran for Congress. That should not happen. We can change that. But I’m mystified when I think about the supercommittee in 2007 that was followed by additional record spending in 2008, under the guidance of Speaker PELOSI and Leader REID, because we know all spending originates in Congress. This is where budgets are passed. It’s where appropriations are passed. If money is appropriated, it has to be appropriated from here.

In 2007, 2008, I never heard anybody, Democrat or Republican, complain that those budgets didn’t spend enough money, each year going beyond what we had spent the year before. And so, then to have a new President come in in 2009, and with Speaker PELOSI and Leader REID still at the reins, jump up spending an extra trillion dollars, and then come before Congress and the country and say, look, you’re just going to have to raise taxes to get up to where this extra trillion dollars is that I’ve already spent. Why couldn’t we just say, boom, in 2007 or 2008, we spent too little money being spent. Let’s go back to the Pelosi-Reid budget that was so much more than the Republican budgets of 2005 and 2006. We’ll go back to that. It means we drop $1 trillion in spending. Boom, there you go. We didn’t need a supercommittee. There you are.

Another easy solution that isn’t talked about enough, but this House voted to cut our own legislative budget 5 percent last year and 6.4 percent the year we’re in. That amount of money, though significant to most of us, is a drop in the bucket when you look at the overall Federal budget. And the way that that should be used to make a difference is for this House, since we’ve been blessed with our own energy, we ought to use it. We were able to restrain their spending, get control of their financial destinies, and we got another 200 years of the greatest Nation in history. The other is possible. They could cut back and say: Wow, they had about 60 years, 65 years of uncontrolled spending. It grew and grew and grew. And the people that were in government then did something that don’t allow them to do when they get to that point, when nearly 50 percent are getting more back than they are paying in. They were able to restrain their spending, get control of their financial destiny, and we got another 200 years of the greatest Nation in history.

The other is possible. They could look back and say: Wow, the United States followed the tried-and-true path of the dustbin of history. They spent money they had. People found that they could get Congress to vote them money out of the Treasury. And once again, that socialist concept failed, and the Nation failed. The Nation that provided for that brief time of Camelot, a time of hope, relative peace. We filed toward more personal freedom, was lost because of financial irresponsibility. People have heard me so many times quote Ben Franklin. But it’s easy to see from Proverbs, it’s easy to see from speeches of people like Ben Franklin, our real problem—anytime we spend more money than we have with complete and utter disregard, gross negligent disregard, even intentional disregard for the future of our children and one day their children, complete disregard, we want to spend it on ourselves now.

It’s time to tell Greece, to tell everyone, let’s hold hands and do this together, not jump over the cliff by spending good money after bad. Let’s do it by not spending money we don’t have. And there’s no way a country would not be upgraded when S&P and the world see, these people are really serious about not spending more than they have coming in.

This is a brave country. They know how to make commitments. And that would get us back to having true freedom and not having the American citizens have to come begging to Congress, Please, please, throw us more morsels. Instead, Congress would be a body that inspired greatness and inspired potential again and wouldn’t lure young women into the rut of having children out of wedlock because they’re bored with high school. It would, instead, give them incentives and encouragement: Reach your potential; finish high school; go to college.

Let’s have incentives not to stay out of work. Let’s have incentives to get back to work. Let’s have incentives to sell our products around the world. You do that by decreasing the tariff that we have put on our American-made goods by every American company. That would help get us on the road back to financial independence.

One other thing: When you have been blessed as the greatest country in the world when it comes to having your own energy, you ought to use it. We have it. We’ve been blessed with it. It’s time to use it. And I would humbly suggest that this President get out of the way, stop preventing us from using our own energy, and allow us to become an independent and great Nation again.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 6, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representa-
tives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representa-
tives, the Clerk received the following mes-
sage from the Secretary of the Senate on De-
cember 6, 2011 at 2:04 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 384.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.
much, Madam Speaker. We are very pleased to join my colleagues this evening, including John Garamendi of California, to talk a little bit about the standoff that appears to be happening in discussions between the Senate and the House and the seeming irresolvable issue of whether or not average American families are going to be able to maintain a tax benefit on their payroll tax deduction relating to Social Security contributions for the average family, which is about $1,000 a year; or whether that money is going to be taken away from them and, instead, tax breaks given to multi-millionaires and billionaires in our country.

It appears that the Republican Party is quite averse to having everybody in this country pay their fair share; so I just want to go on record as saying, at this point in our economic recovery, nothing could be more important than keeping that tax benefit in the hands and pockets of America’s families. They’re the ones who actually take those dollars every month and buy essentials, not extravagant purchases. They make their car payments if they’re fortunate enough to have cars; they buy enough food for their families; they buy clothing; my golly, during the holiday season, they might even be able to buy a little bit extra—something special—for their holiday dinners; and they pay down some of the debt their kids have in trying to pay for their college or after-high school training bills.

I think it’s really amazing to me that in the richest and most powerful country in the world that we continue to have this tremendous friction here in the Congress to do something that is so reasonable—that is just so eminently reasonable—and would contribute to economic growth. We know that consumer spending is the most powerful instrument to help lift this economy out of its doldrums. We see the automotive industry recover, this industry that the Obama administration and certain Members of this Congress worked so hard to fight for the recovery of; and we got more signs of that today in Ohio with a wonderful announcement by Ford that it is moving its truck line from Mexico back up to Avon Lake, Ohio, and that it’s making over a $128 million investment there. We see car sales increasing, and that’s because people have sometime income.

So why at this point in our history would you want to allow those who have the most not to pay their fair share and take away $1,000 a year, on average, from middle class families who would spend those dollars in helping to propel economic growth? I can guarantee you that at firms that I represent, like Chrysler, Jeep, Fiat, that the Wrangler, that the Cherokee, that the Liberty are selling very well and that General Motors’ Cruze vehicle, which is largely a northern Ohio-made car, is selling like hotcakes because people are able to make those monthly payments. So that particular part of the discussion here in Washington makes a lot of sense.

Why in the world would you want to penalize middle class families because you want to just take care of the top 1 percent? It simply isn’t fair. It simply isn’t fair. It would seem to me, in the holiday spirit, that the tax-writing committees of both Chambers should get together and figure out a solution that is fair to all families. It’s pretty clear to me what that is, and it’s pretty clear to me that it’s at all-time highs and with those who run these corporations and sit on their boards that they have been doing quite well, thank you, and it’s time for them to do something for the Republic. It’s not the Who is going to miss an eighth home or a seventh yacht? But the average family is having trouble meeting its credit card debt, paying its children’s bills, having enough, as prices go up, to pay for food on the table, and taking care of elderly relatives sometimes who need extra medications.

So I would urge those in both Chambers who are on these budget and tax-writing committees to spend the time that’s necessary and not burden the American people with unnecessary delay. Instead, give the economy the boost that it needs by maintaining the middle class payroll tax cut and by making those in the top 1 percent pay their fair share.

Many, many years ago, they paid a lot more percentage-wise than they do today, and we had lots of job creation in this country. It simply eludes me why those at the very top of the income scale, who have taken most of the benefit of growth in the last 20 years and who are doing so well, are so averse to helping our country and to making sure that everyone has a chance to prosper because, when everyone prospers, so does the top 1 percent. That’s where this consumer spending injection from the middle class payroll tax cut plays such a significant role in the economy.

Now, as we buy for the holiday season, nothing could be more important than buying made in the USA goods. Why is that important? It’s important because, when you see that label, “made in the USA,” you know that those dollars flow back to that company and to those workers and that you actually help build wealth in this country.

Last weekend, when we were doing some shopping for the holidays, we went in one store. I kept looking at labels, and it was China, China, China; and I’d put them back on the shelf. It was actually staggering what percentage of those goods—a majority of the goods on the shelves—were actually made somewhere else. I made a point of going to a craft fair in our region and was able to buy several Christmas gifts that were handmade. I felt really good about that because I knew that those were people who had taken their artistic abilities and that they had created table lamps and other items. There was jewelry that was handmade. I knew the profits would benefit those families and that they would go to the communities that they came from. It shouldn’t be so hard to find “made in the USA” goods on the shelves of our major retailers.

So I would just urge our citizens— and I know sometimes it’s hard—as you’re doing your holiday shopping to really try to look for that label “made in the USA” and to do so in your community. Find small businesses and find products in your community that are made here so that those dollars recirculate over and over and over again and so they help to build the real wealth of our Nation that made America great.

I would urge you to look at candy-makers in your region, at those who are making cookies, at those who are small entrepreneurs of different kinds, making scarves. I was able to go to one place in our region and see several items for this holiday season. That’s a local artist who has her own shop and makes her own goods right there. She exports out of that shop, and I know that that’s going to help our region grow. So we can do a lot in our own lives and in the way that we spend the precious dollars to really help job creation in our regions, in our country, at a time when we really need it.

I see that some of our other colleagues have joined us on the floor. I want to thank Congressman Paul Tonko of the great State of New York for joining us this evening. He is such an outstanding and really relentless voice on job creation and economic recovery in our country.

Mr. Tonko. I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio. Thank you very much for kicking us off on a wonderful hour of discussion as to a plan to revitalize our economy and to grow the opportunities for our working families across this country.

President Obama has ushered forward a wonderful package called the American Jobs Act that will enable us as an American society to respond to the crisis for jobs and to the crisis for economic recovery, all of which are incredibly valuable to the future of this country.

We need to invest. I believe, in a way that allows us to provide the tools that are essential for a modern-day economy and modern-day manufacturing.