tribes. To have a government that's centralized right now means corruption. Let us do that regionally, and give us back weapons so we can defend ourselves against the Taliban who is already moving.

And in answer to this administration's wonderful gestures of kindness and we'll release your murderers, we had them kill SEAL Team 6, a big number of our people. And that wasn't enough. In September, they killed one of the warlords just as a handful of us were about to go have a meeting with them again.

The message is clear: The Taliban have learned nothing. There's only one thing they understand—that's force. And it's like career criminals that I dealt with as a judge. If you want to be protected, you've got to put them where they can't hurt you anymore. There are murderers that have been put where they can't hurt us anymore, and this administration is now talking about releasing them.

So we have a twofold front of problems. One is the economy, where the Wall Street executives that contribute four-to-one to Democrats over Republicans, contributed four-to-one to the Obama campaign over the McCain campaign. They've been enriched and engorged with TARP money. It's time to end TARP.

It's time to allow workers to have a break. It's time that the Senate quit playing games and acknowledge that a full year of certainty is a whole lot better than 2 months. Appoint the conferees; send them to confer. It's how things get worked out. It's the way that procedurally things were meant to happen so it can be above board.

The rules require that they must be open sessions of the conference committee. That's the way you resolve things, under regular order. It needs to be done that way. I know the Senate would like to do closed-door meetings and give away programs behind closed doors, but it's time to do this thing the way the President promised 4 years ago that he would if he were President—make it open; make it clear. The American people will see who's negotiating for whom. That will help America.

And I know, in closing, for my comments, that with the Christmas season, though there are so many who want to end the ability to say Merry Christmas, they want to end the ability to do much of anything that really is acknowledging our roots, I think it's important to look where we came from. So I would close with this message from Ronald Reagan.

He basically reiterates things that have been said back to the time of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln:

The themes of Christmas and of coming home for the holidays have long been intertwined in song and story. There is a profound irony and lesson in this because Christmas celebrates the coming of a Savior Who was born without a home.

There was no room at the inn for the Holy Family. Weary of travel, a young Mary close to childbirth and her carpenter husband Joseph found but the rude shelter of a stable. There was born the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace—an event on which all history would turn. Jesus would again be without a home, and more than once. On the flight to Egypt and during His public ministry, when He said, ''The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head.''

From His very infancy on, our Redeemer was reminding us that from then on we would never lack a home in Him. Like the shepherds to whom the angel of the Lord appeared on the first Christmas Day, we could always say, ''Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.'' As we come home with gladness to family and friends this Christmas, let us also remember our neighbors who cannot go home themselves.

Our compassion and concern this Christmas and all year long will mean much to the hospitalized, the homeless, the convalescent, the orphaned—and will surely lead us on our way to the joy and peace of Bethlehem and the Christ Child Who bids us come. For it is only in finding and living the eternal meaning of the Nativity that we can be truly happy, truly at peace, truly home. Merry Christmas, and God bless you!

Ronald Reagan, December 19, 1988, his last Christmas message as President.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who don't want people to mention the word ''Christmas,'' and there's an easy solution. For those who don't want to mention Christmas, don't want to observe Christmas, then if they take the holiday, just agree to give back the money, because the money earned on a holiday shouldn't be taken for those who don't think it should be a holiday. That's easy enough.

But in the spirit of Christmas and the things we know about government—those of us who believe what's in the Bible—we have an obligation to protect people, as the government, as pointed out in Romans 13. It coincides with providing for the common defense. It's time to do that, to make sure Americans are safe, that they're provided with a defense so they can take care of the poor, the needy, the orphaned, the widows. They can help their fellow man. That's our job as a government. Our job as individuals is to have that same spirit of assisting and helping and being servants.

We're elected to be servants in this body. We're not elected and charged with taking from some people and giving to our favorite charitable cause. We're to do that with our own money, not with people's money that may have some other better charity they prefer to give it to.

We need to get the economy going. We need to bring down the cost of energy. That would be a great Christmas present. And since we know that the market and the energy industry adjust to announcements, how about a great announcement from our President: We're not going to let murderers go free, so you don't have to worry, you'll be safe. We're going to take the battle to those who want to murder us. We are not going to negotiate further with terrorists who want to kill us. We're going to make sure that we quit bailing out our friends, our cronies. We're going to make sure that those who know better what to do with their own money have the opportunity to do that. We're going to give some security and some confidence for the following year because here's what we're going to do. And we're going to work together.

And it would be wonderful if the President would say: You know what? I demanded the Congress pass a bill that had not even come out when I started criticizing them for not passing it.

□ 1720

Then I started criticizing them for not passing a bill I'd forgotten to ask a Democrat to file for me. So I'm not going to do that anymore. I want to work with Congress. I want to get this country back on track. So instead of traveling around the country demeaning Congress for not passing bills that were not filed, I'm going to work with Congress.

And I hope that will be our President's New Year's resolution. Don't release murderers, and deal honestly and openly with the American people and with Congress.

We can get some things worked out. I've just been talking to Democratic friends today about things that we agree on. We can do that and give the American people a present.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to engage in personalities toward the Senate or its Members.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for the balance of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time this afternoon. It's been a big day, freshmen in this body coming up on the end of our very first year. In fact, all of us here, here with my colleague from Wisconsin, all of us here, freshmen, finishing up our first year, and it's a big day.

And I've got to tell you, I feel good about the quality of the work product that's going on today. I feel good about the fact that there are serious issues before this body, and we have said, let's slow down and make sure we get it right because families have their futures on the line.

I'd like to ask my friend from Wisconsin how he's seen this day go.

Mr. DUFFY. I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia yielding. I think it's important to note as we have listened to a debate that went on all day today that there really is no difference within this House whether we should

extend the payroll tax holiday or not. Both Republicans and Democrats alike have come together and said we want to have that tax break for middle class Americans extended.

But if you were listening to the debate, you might be confused by that because we so often heard on the other side of the aisle that they don't believe that the Republican side wants to extend it. And so I want to take a moment and just talk about what I think is happening here with regard to this debate in the House.

I mean, let's not make a mistake. We have introduced legislation that is going to extend the payroll tax holiday for 1 year. And what that means is, $1,000 in a tax reduction for middle class Americans throughout the country and in my district, central and northern Wisconsin, $1,000 for them as well.

Across the aisle, a proposal has been made that started its process in the Senate, where we would do a 2-month extension, a 60-day extension, which means the proposal is they would offer middle class Americans $170 in tax reduction. So we've proposed $1,000 of tax reduction, and the Democrats have proposed $170 in tax reduction.

And I think as the American people look at this debate, they'd say, well, my goodness, I want to go for the $1,000 deduction, not the $170. And so as we dive in a little more, we hear a lot about partisanship and a lot of differences between the two Chambers.

And a lot of folks are saying, we can't get this done. Let's adjourn for Christmas, and let's come back at the end of January and through February and see if we can resolve this very important issue. And I would say when we get back next year, there will be 5, maybe 6 weeks to work on this. But this won't be the only issue on the table. We're dealing with budgets and jobs bills. The docket, the calendar, is full of issues that we have to address in this House.

But for the next 10 days we have nothing on the agenda. The calendar is clear. Let's get the House and the Senate to come together and address this one very important issue, to extend the payroll tax holiday and let's do it for a year.

We have disagreements. But for 10 days we can talk about those disagreements and find solutions that don't work for parties, that don't work for Chambers, but solutions that work for the American people.

If the Democrats in the Senate are steadfast in their request that it only be 60 days, I'll go for 60 days, but I just can't imagine that the American people believe that we're going to get a better resolution in 60 days than we can in the next 10 days.

As I look across my district, everyone in my district, they worked today. They work tomorrow. They work the next day. They don't take the week off before Christmas and after Christmas. They work that whole week between Christmas and New Year's. They don't take that off. Why should this House? Why should the Senate?

Let's come back and get this work done for the American people. They deserve it. And it has a real impact. People are concerned about how they're going to put food on the table for their kids, how they're going to pay the mortgage. And $1,000 in the year makes a big difference for a lot of people in my district. And to think that the offer is we're going to give you 2 months at $170, that doesn't cut the mustard for them. They want long-term certainty at least for a year. Give them that break for a year.

I have another concern. We proposed the Keystone pipeline. I know the President has talked about job creation. We've talked about job creation. We've disagreed on how we do it. The President and others will say the government needs to spend money to create jobs and economic growth.

We say, well, listen, it comes from the private sector. Here we have a great example with the Keystone pipeline where it's private sector money that's going to create 20,000 new jobs, direct new jobs in America if that pipeline goes forward. There's going to be 100,000 indirect jobs, real, good-paying jobs for hardworking Americans. And the President is saying he doesn't want to do it.

I say, listen, Mr. President. We can't wait. The American people cannot wait. Let's come together and say, you know what, 20,000 people, 100,000 hardworking Americans can get a good paying job if you'll sign on to this legislation.

Not only that, we're going to take our energy from Canada, people who actually like us instead of countries in the Middle East. Let's get our energy, let's get our oil from our friendly neighbor to the north instead of those who are not so friendly in other parts of the world.

Another key component of this extension is Boiler MACT. This is an EPA regulation that came out that is going to increase the boiler standards that are used in American manufacturing, costing hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars for our manufacturers to increase their boiler standards.

In my district, just 2 weeks ago, we had one of our energy companies indicate that they're going to lay off 74 people; and they made it very clear. In their press release they said one of the issues that's causing us to lay off these 74 people is Boiler MACT, the EPA.

Let's take that away. Let's make sure that our energy and our manufacturers have the ability to compete, not State to State, but in a new global environment, China, India, Mexico, Vietnam. We have to be able to compete with those countries.

And if we implement this Boiler MACT regulation, we're going to shut down American manufacturing. In my district it's paper. This regulation will cause Wisconsin paper to be crushed because right now they're under immense competition from foreign competitors; but not only that, they are in a very tough industry as people move to computers and iPads, and there's less paper being used.

So I believe that these parties, I believe that these Chambers have to come together in the next 10 days, and we have to find a solution that's going to work for the American people, that is going to extend this payroll tax holiday, that's going to give them certainty, so as they start the next year and as they start it with hope and a thought of opportunity, they know what they're going to get in regard to the payroll tax holiday that's going to come from this House.

I would encourage all of my colleagues to come together during this season where we're all supposed to get along, we're all supposed to think about the meaning of Christmas, reach a hand out across the aisle to our friends who don't always agree with us, but who can come together on this issue and say, America, we're going to stand together as the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate and pass a bill that's going to give you certainty for 1 year, giving you a tax break to the tune of $1,000.

With that, I appreciate my good friend offering me the time.

□ 1730

Mr. WOODALL. I thank my friend.

I hope folks were paying close attention. What you have are two members of the freshman class on the floor right now, Mr. Speaker, and what you heard from my freshman colleague was, when can we come together? What you heard from my freshman colleague was, ''I don't want to do it if it's about party. I don't want to do it if it's about Chamber pride. I want to do it because it's the right thing for the American people.'' Is that what you're reading, Mr. Speaker, in the newspaper, about what this freshman class is doing? Is that what you're reading in the newspaper about what this Congress is doing? Because having sat here now for one year, I can tell you that's what is going on here today.

Republicans are in the majority, Mr. Speaker. With the power of your gavel, you could demand that the House bill be the only bill that anybody considers, that it's our way or the highway. Who cares what the Senate has to say. We're in the majority. We're doing it our way. You could do that, Mr. Speaker.

But that's not the advice and counsel that my colleague from Wisconsin gives. The advice and counsel that my colleague from Wisconsin gives is, we've done the very best we can in this Chamber. Work product that we're proud of. And now it's time, since the Senate has passed a very different work product, candidly a work product that I am not proud of, a very different work product, that we now come together, the House product and the Senate product, and try to agree on a final product that can pass both Houses.

This is a process as old as this institution. Thomas Jefferson, when writing the rules for this institution, Mr. Speaker, wrote of the conference committee process and how that is the tool for resolving differences between the bodies.

Now, why are there differences today, Mr. Speaker? Well, there are differences today because these are important issues that we're talking about. This isn't some renaming of a post office. I'm not trying to denigrate the importance of a good name on a post office. But I put that lower on the priority list.

This is about Medicare beneficiaries being able to find doctors. This is about whether or not unemployment checks continue to go out the door. This is about payroll tax cuts for every single working American family. This is about jobs. Not just folks who don't have them, but folks who are looking for them and how we can help them to find them in the future.

Boiler MACT that my friend from Wisconsin mentioned is a job-growing proposal. The XL pipeline. A job-growing proposal. That's what we had in the House-passed legislation, Mr. Speaker. You know, we had not just unemployment benefits, not just payroll tax breaks, but also real proposals and reforms to grow this economy once again. Those are absent from the Senate proposal.

Now, I'm not attributing any bad motives to our friends in the Senate for producing a proposal that didn't have any job-creating structure to it. But I simply point out that is the proposal they produced, and now we need to come together and talk about it, and candidly, I think we're going to win that one. I think if our friends in the Senate weren't so hurried to get out of town, Mr. Speaker, that they would have produced a more thoughtful piece of legislation that would have included the job-growing provisions that we include.

We now have the opportunity to come together and do that.

Let me just talk about why it is the Senate proposal is so concerning to me and my constituents, Mr. Speaker.

This is what ABC News said. ''Holiday passed by Senate, pushed by President, cannot be implemented properly, experts say.''

I don't think that surprises any of the job creators in this country, Mr. Speaker. If you're one of those folks who has to fill out government paperwork quarter after quarter after quarter, then yeah, you're probably thinking don't change the rules on me 10 days before the start of the new quarter. And if you do, don't change them back in the middle of the next quarter. Cannot be implemented, experts say.

But the question is, Mr. Speaker, why would we even try to produce a short-term solution when we have it within the ability of this Chamber and the one next door and down at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to produce a long-term solution that serves the hardworking taxpayers in this country. We can do better, and we owe it to the American people to do better.

From the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council: The confusion that the 2-month extension would impose on employers or their payroll providers will inevitably divert resources away from productive activities. Indeed, the uncertainty regarding what happens next following the 2-month expiration date will serve as additional fuel to currently low business confidence levels.

This is what the business community, the employer community, the job-creator community, is saying about the so-called Senate solution. And in fairness, even the Senate, Mr. Speaker, is not standing by their solution. They're saying let's just do it for 2 months and then we'll come up with something better. As my colleague from Wisconsin said, The time to come up with something better is now.

From the National Roofing Contractors Association, talking about the Senate proposal: This would impose an undue burden on employers in the form of logistical difficulties and costs.

I appreciate my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle and their commitment to helping the unemployed through a check from the government. Unemployment insurance is a longtime facet of the American economy, something that folks pay into at least for those first 26 weeks that businesses pay into. But in the name of providing checks from the government, what we're saying is you're going to get fewer checks from employers. Logistical difficulties and costs in creating new jobs, which I continue to say, Mr. Speaker, is the focus of this Congress, has been, and has made me proud.

From the Associated Builders and Contractors: This sort of temporary fix underscores Congress' uneven ad hoc approach toward the economy. Who disagrees with that, Mr. Speaker? How many times have you had a constituent back home, how many times have you heard from one of our freshmen colleagues who said the reason I ran for Congress is because the guys in Congress are doing more harm than good.

I'll say it again. Associated Builders and Contractors of the Senate solution: This sort of temporary fix underscores Congress' uneven ad hoc approach toward the economy and causes more harm than good for America's job creators.

Mr. Speaker, have you heard my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle asking why it was so important for us to go to conference with the Senate to try to improve that Senate proposal? Have you heard speaker after speaker on the Democratic side of the aisle come to the floor and say, ''Why won't you just pass it? Why won't you just do what the Senate in its wisdom has suggested?''

Let me repeat the answer for you, Mr. Speaker. Referring to the Senate solution: This sort of temporary fix underscores Congress' uneven, ad hoc approach towards the economy and causes more harm than good for America's job creators.

I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, there were times during the debate today, I thought my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle were trying to shame me into voting a different direction. Shame on me for believing what I believe.

Mr. Speaker, I say shame on me for not standing up for my constituents if I didn't stand up today. Shame on me for not standing up against a proposal that causes more harm than good for American job creators. This isn't a game. This isn't some sort of political academic exercise. This is about families. This is about our economy. This is about the future of our Republic. And the decisions we make here have consequences.

Rush through it, Mr. Speaker? Put it off for 2 months because we'll come up with something better later, when that short-term fix causes more harm than good for America's job creators.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just the business community that has these concerns, and it ought to tell you something about the debate that's going on here today.

From the President of the United States, Mr. Speaker: It would be inexcusable for Congress not to further extend this middle class tax cut for the rest of the year. The President knows. He has been pushing it all year. It was his idea last December. The President knows that a 1-year extension provides more certainty, more dependability. And he's asked Congress to do that.

Now, what does that tell you, Mr. Speaker? All of this talk down here today about partisan divides and games. What does it tell you when a hardcore conservative from Georgia is holding up a quote from a hardcore Democrat from Chicago about what we ought to do to move this country forward? What does it tell you, Mr. Speaker, when on both ends of the spectrum, we're feeling the same thing—that it would be inexcusable for Congress not to further extend this middle class tax cut?

□ 1740

Folks say, Oh, you can't. There's not enough time.

Folks, there are 10 days. We just finished the National Defense Authorization Act, Mr. Speaker—the biggest defense bill that this Congress will produce.

And guess what we did?

We did the same thing Thomas Jefferson suggested, the same thing that has been going on in this Congress for 200 years. We had disagreements with the Senate. We passed a House bill; they passed a Senate bill; and we went to conference. Then in 7 days, Mr. Speaker, they reconciled the largest defense bill we'll move in this Congress. They brought together the two

differences. They brought something to the House floor and the Senate floor for consideration, and we got it done.

It is inexcusable not to extend this.

From House Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI:

House Democrats will return to Washington to take up this legislation without delay, and we will keep up the fight to extend these provisions for a full year.

Now, in fairness to the minority leader, she is not talking about pushing the yearlong provision that this House passed. What she's talking about is producing the short-term solution and then calling everybody back to then come back and get it right later. Yet at the end of the day, we all agree that a year is the right length of time and that 60 days is not the right length of time. Everybody agrees it's a bad length of time. They're just doing it instead of zero. They're saying 60 is better than zero.

Folks, why do we have to have zero? Why can't we have 360? We can. We don't have to have 60 as the Senate proposed. We can have 360 as the House proposed, and that's why we moved today to go to conference.

From House Minority Whip STENY HOYER:

I'm disappointed that Senate Republicans would not agree to a longer term extension of critical policies.

He's talking about this so-called ''bipartisan agreement'' from the Senate.

I'm disappointed that Senate Republicans would not agree to a longer term extension of critical policies.

I'm going to team up with the minority whip. Again, one end of the spectrum—my end of the spectrum—two opposite ends of the spectrum. I agree with STENY HOYER in that I am disappointed that we did not see a longer term extension of critical policies come out of the Senate.

But it's not too late. Oh, Mr. Speaker, that's what folks have been saying all day—oh, it's too late. It's too late. It is not too late. These policies do not expire until January 1, and the only thing standing between us and a conference committee to work out these differences is the will to make it happen.

Do you know how painful it has been all day, Mr. Speaker, to have folks stand up speaker, after speaker, after speaker, talking about how it can't be done? You didn't run for Congress, Mr. Speaker, because it couldn't be done. I didn't run for Congress because it couldn't be done. I ran for Congress because they weren't getting it done, and it's time to get it done the right way.

But, Mr. Speaker, we've been here 1 year. We have 10 days to get it right for the American people. We can and we should. Now, what are we talking about?

You can't see this chart, Mr. Speaker, and it might not even show up in the cameras back in folks' offices, but I want to go through it because it talks about why this is so important. Again, this isn't an academic exercise. This is a country we're talking about.

Folks have been saying all day long, Oh, why don't you just pass the Senate bill? Why don't you just move that 60-day extension? Why don't we just come back and do it later?

Mr. Speaker, I hope you haven't had to put anything on your credit card during this Christmas season, but I've got a lot of friends and family who have. Money is tight. Here in the Christmas season, if you opened up your credit card account on the day that Jesus Christ was born and if you put $500 on that credit card and if you put $500 on it again the next day and the next day and the next day and the next day, 7 days a week, Mr. Speaker, from the day that Jesus Christ was born until today, you would have to continue to put $500 a day on that credit card every day, 7 days a week, for another 700 years to put on your credit card the kind of debt that the Senate bill puts on America's children's credit card next year alone.

Hear that.

Just do it. Just do it. We'll come back later and fix it. Just do it, they say.

This isn't something small we're talking about, Mr. Speaker; $30 billion on the credit card of America's children is what this bill did. Now, it raised taxes even more than that. It put the burden on the home mortgage industry; it put it on the construction industry, an industry that we desperately need to reinvigorate this country. It took it out of Fannie and Freddie, a group that we absolutely need to continue to build, but we need to put that money in the trust fund to make sure that they can pay their bills when it happens.

But it's not a small decision. That's also not the only difference, Mr. Speaker. Let me just make a comparison for you.

''Protecting seniors' access to their doctors.''

That's talking about this giant Medicare cut that is looming out there on January 1, and everyone is looking for a solution to it. It's a cut, Mr. Speaker, that was passed in 1997. Neither Democrats nor Republicans have had the good sense to fix it for 15 years, but at least we're trying this year in the House-passed bill to fix it for 2 years, a 2-year fix to provide certainty to America's seniors.

In the House bill, in protecting seniors' access to their doctors, it's a 24-month solution. In the Senate bill, it's 2 months.

Don't worry, seniors. That's my mom and my dad. They just went on Medicare. Don't worry. Just let us go home and take some vacation time. Let's come back and listen to the state of the Union. Then miraculously all of our problems will be solved, and we'll be able to agree on something.

Mr. Speaker, we have the ability to agree on something today, and it's important that we do. It's 2 months in the Senate bill. It's 24 months in the House bill. It's the right thing to do.

''Federal unemployment benefits extension.''

There is a lot of controversy about Federal unemployment benefits. The first 26 weeks are actually paid for through unemployment taxes. The rest of this extension generally now is coming out of Federal general revenues, general taxpayer dollars. So there is a real oversight responsibility in determining how we deal with that.

In the House bill, we say, Let's deal with it. Let's create more jobs. Let's make some reforms to help people get off unemployment and find working paychecks that they can receive. It's a 13-month extension. From our friends in the Senate, it's 2 months, Mr. Speaker.

We heard speaker, after speaker, after speaker, after speaker come to the well of the House on the Democratic side of the aisle, wanting to know why Republicans aren't working hard for America's unemployed. They asked that question, Mr. Speaker, while bringing a 2-month extension. Republicans brought 13. By Republicans, I mean it was a bipartisan House-passed bill, Mr. Speaker, going through regular order.

''Number of long-term unemployed allowed to start collecting Federal benefits after February.''

It's the long-term unemployed, the folks who have been looking, but who can't find work. We heard today about how unemployment numbers are dropping. We know that they're dropping because people are just quitting, and they're no longer looking. The Obama economy has so discouraged the American workforce that they just quit looking. Yet there are still some long-term unemployed folks out there. Not some—lots.

How many of them get helped under the House bill? Four million. How many get helped under the Senate bill? Zero.

Is it worth fighting about, Mr. Speaker? Is it worth standing up and being counted when the solution that this House has proposed under regular order speaks to the needs of 4 million long-term unemployed Americans and when the Senate bill speaks to zero?

''Payroll tax cut extension.''

This is an extra 2 percent. Ordinarily, folks are paying about 6 percent in payroll taxes out of their paychecks. This is cutting that down to about four. It's a 2 percent reduction in the Social Security contributions of every American worker. Every American worker takes home 2 percent more in his paycheck.

The House-passed solution is a 12-month extension of that 2 percent. The Senate-passed solution is 2 months.

How many speakers have we heard today who have talked to us about how families are hurting? Member, after Member, after Member, after Member has come to the floor with stories of those they know from their constituencies who are hurting in this Obama economy.

A 2-month extension was the best the Senate could do, and 12 months is what we got out of the House. We can do better and we will do better, Mr. Speaker, in conference.

□ 1750

What's that payroll tax cut worth, Mr. Speaker, for a worker earning about $50,000 a year? In the House-passed bill, it is worth $1,000. That is real money in the pockets of a $50,000-a-year worker. What does the Senate-passed bill do to help American families? $167.

Take us back, Mr. Speaker, to when I told you if you put $500 on the credit card of your child and you started that credit card account on the day Jesus Christ was born, and you ran up that card $500 a day every day from the day Jesus was born through today, and you would have to continue to do it 7 days a week for another 700 years to run up a $30 billion credit card bill. That's what the Senate does to America in the name of a 2-month extension to put $167 in someone's pocket.

Is $167 important to the American family? Sure, it is, Mr. Speaker. Every dollar counts. Every nickel counts in today's economy. But don't tell me that you are empathetic with the plight of middle class hardworking Americans and tell me your solution is to find $167 for them that you are borrowing from their children. Mr. Speaker, $1,000 is the first step in the right direction that the House-passed solution contains. It's worth fighting for.

Reforming unemployment to focus on reemployment. Mr. Speaker, do you have any constituents that say to you that what they would rather have is an unemployment check instead of a paycheck? Because I don't. I don't. Folks in the Seventh Congressional District of Georgia want paychecks. Now, some of them have to accept unemployment checks while they're out there looking to feed their family, but they want a paycheck.

So in the spirit of solving the real problems—not just putting a Band-Aid on it, but solving the real problems, the House-passed bill focuses on reemployment. What does the Senate bill do? Nothing.

Regulatory reforms to protect American jobs. Mr. Speaker, you heard my colleague from Wisconsin who said, Businesses are closing, laying people off because of Boiler MACT, this EPA regulation. You have heard it from our friends from Arkansas, Mr. Speaker, who say that the folks in the pipe manufacturing business there in Arkansas are laying off jobs because of the delay in approving the XL pipeline. This is not about unemployment checks alone. It is about unemployment checks for those who can't find jobs, and jobs for those folks who are looking.

What happens in the House-passed bill? Regulatory reforms to protect American jobs, yes. What happens in the Senate bill? Nothing. Tell me, Mr. Speaker, are these things worth fighting for? Are these things worth spending a few extra days between now and the end of the year to get right? President Obama says ''yes.'' A conservative House freshman from Georgia says ''yes.'' From extreme to extreme, folks are saying ''yes.'' Mark my words, Mr. Speaker, HARRY REID is going to say ''yes'' too and bring the Senate back to get the American people's business done.

A pay freeze for Members of Congress and Federal workers. Mr. Speaker, I don't mind telling you that I think I work pretty hard. I try to give folks an honest day's work for an honest day's dollar. But do you think I can go home to a town hall meeting and look somebody in the eye and tell you that I'm doing such a good job, I deserve a raise? I'm just telling you how the Senate is going to run up your credit card bill by $30 billion on your children. I'm telling you how the House can't find enough votes to persuade the Senate to come to the table.

Am I doing my best? You'd better believe it. Am I going to quit trying? No, I'm not. Am I going to accept a pay raise while American families are hurting? No, I am not. In the House-passed bill, a pay freeze for Members of Congress and Federal workers, yes. In the Senate-passed bill, no. I'll leave you with that bit of irony, Mr. Speaker. We're here begging our colleagues in the Senate to come back and work. The House freezes salaries for Members of Congress. The Senate said, We'll sort that out when we come back from vacation in February.

I thank the Speaker for the time.

THE REPUBLICAN AGENDA

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of a commercial that has been in heavy rotation lately. It's a Christmas commercial, Santa Claus with a backache and a pain remedy being offered to him after he climbs down the chimney. Y'all are probably familiar with that. The first shot is Santa trying to work at his headquarters up in the North Pole putting gifts together; and he's just got a bad backache, has probably got a headache too. And his elves are kind of looking at him concerned as he works dutifully on a job that only he can do.

Then they show him as he trudges across a roof about to go down the chimney, and he's holding his back. And then when he gets down the chimney, they show him standing over by the Christmas tree. The homeowner is kind of watching from a different room, and he sees Santa struggling with this backache. So he then goes to get some pain medicine. And while Santa is presumably unpacking the gifts and putting them under the tree and everything, then he turns around, and there is a glass of water and pain medicine right there for Santa. Then all of a sudden, the music becomes lively, and Santa perks up and goes on about his business.

That kind of reminds me of the headache that the citizens, the middle class have had over the last year, a headache and a backache; but there's nobody there to offer them any pain medication. Instead, this Tea Party-controlled House Republican Party looks at them and just laughs. And then they leave. After getting as much as they can out of those middle class citizens, they leave. They don't even offer a drink or pain medication. They just leave. That's what we've done today. Not in the spirit of Christmas, not in the spirit of Chanukah, not in the spirit of mankind; but in the spirit of the Koch brothers.

And ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to talk to you a little bit about the Koch brothers, who you've heard me talk about before. The Koch brothers are a secretive brother-brother combination, two brothers. They inherited their fortune from their daddy. They earned it the hard way. And they have turned their daddy's business—once he passed on, they've continued this business and built it into something like a $100 billion-a-year company. And they are billionaires. Both of the brothers are multi-billionaires, multi-multi-billionaires. They've got a lot of money. A lot of their business is involved with energy-related concerns.

□ 1800

In fact, they own refineries, oil refineries. They own terminals where that oil is brought to for processing. Those trucks and pipelines, they are all involved in the energy business. They stood to get quite a bit of a return on their investment in the 2010 elections wherein, through their organization, Americans for Prosperity, they financed what is called the Tea Party, which is supposed to be a grassroots group but, actually, it is a corporate-driven animal, and the financing for that animal comes from the Koch brothers and their Americans for Prosperity organization.

They spent about $45 million in the 2010 election just running negative ads against Democrats. They spent that money without having to account for whom their contributors were. So we don't know who the contributors are to those secret organizations that were unleashed to taint people's opinions about their Representatives and candidates for office.

And as a result of this Tea Party ruse that was perpetrated on the people, the Koch brothers ended up in control of Congress using the Tea Party as a front or as a costume, if you will, taking many justifiably angry American citizens down a deceptive path—Americans who are not happy with the shift in the income disparity in this country. They call them the Tea Partiers, the Tea