the good people of Iran in changing their dictator, but the world should be prepared for nuclear mischief by that tyrant.

And that's just the way it is.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, Wednesday, the 1st of February, begins Black History Month; and on that day I introduced a proposal to have a Congressional Gold Medal issued to civil rights workers—not to each one individually, but collectively.

Black History Month celebrates the history of African Americans in our Nation, and a Gold Medal for civil rights workers is so appropriate because the people who fought for civil rights had to fight their own government to get the rights that were embedded in the Constitution for others, which specifically said that they were three-fifths people and that slavery should exist in this country, and the Jim Crow laws that were passed and approved by this Congress and by the State legislatures continued that for another hundred years.

So the people like JOHN LEWIS and ROBERT FILNER, who serve in this House, the people who engaged in the sit-ins and the marches, that challenged our system and showed it to be wrong and forced it to change itself, not just Dr. King but the Julian Bonds and the farmers and the Ennises and the Belafontes, they deserve recognition. They should be recognized by this Congress for what they did because they took a wrong in America and they righted it, and they continued to serve and make this country greater for all people based on the principles of the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, which don't really fulfill their destinies without the efforts of the civil rights workers who've made the work of Jefferson and our Founding Fathers true.

JOBS BILL

(Mr. DENHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to talk about a jobs bill that just passed out of the Rules Committee and will be on the House floor next week. H.R. 1734 is a bill that will address all of our civilian properties across the Nation, things we don't need, identifying property that can be redeveloped.

Let me just give you one example of something that is happening right here in the District of Columbia. The Old Post Office, which will be redeveloped, keeping it in its historic fashion, will create 150 jobs just in the construction phase of redevelopment and another 150 ongoing jobs.

If you want to be able to get the Republicans and Democrats to come together on a jobs bill, here is a fantastic opportunity, one that will bring in billions of dollars of new revenue from the sale of properties, will cut waste and get rid of a lot of the expense that we have in ongoing properties every year and, ultimately, get Americans back to work. It is truly a bipartisan proposal, something I'm looking forward to seeing on the floor next week.

□ 1230

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN OR IN RELATION TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112–84)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency, unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13396 of February 7, 2006, with respect to the situation in or in relation to Côte d'Ivoire is to continue in effect beyond February 7, 2012.

The situation in or in relation to Côte d'Ivoire, which has been addressed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004, and subsequent resolutions, has resulted in the massacre of large numbers of civilians, widespread human rights abuses, significant political violence and unrest, and fatal attacks against international peacekeeping forces. Since the inauguration of President Alassane Ouattara in May 2011, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and its people have made significant advances in the promotion of democratic, social, and economic development. Although considerable progress has been made, the situation in or in relation to Côte d'Ivoire continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures under Executive Order 13396 of February 7, 2006, Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 3, 2012.*

PRESIDENT'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, well, this has been a good day legislatively in the United States House of Representatives, and there are a lot of good things to be said about what's happened today.

Yesterday, there was a wonderful event; it's called the President's Prayer Breakfast here in Washington, and the President was gracious enough—and I'm not being sarcastic. He was gracious enough to once again extend his presence with the First Lady, who is also extremely gracious and represents us well as the Nation's First Lady. It was a marvelous breakfast held north of the Capitol.

There were so many moving, touching things that were said and done, from having an 11-year-old girl that sings like an angel, bless us, and also having an amazing speaker, the author of a book ''Amazing Grace,'' the William Wilberforce story, as well as ''Bonhoeffer'' from Germany. He was funny, he was inspirational, he was touching.

One of the things that's been such a blessing over the 7 years I've been in Congress has been on Thursday mornings, 8 o'clock to 9 o'clock, Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle come together for an hour of sharing breakfast, sharing our Christian faith, listening to prayer requests, praying, singing hymns of faith, and hearing on an alternating basis from Republican and Democrat.

I know people hear what goes on on the floor and assume that Members on one side of the aisle must absolutely hate Members of the other side of the aisle. Actually, there are many of us that get along quite well other than talking about politics. And that's why we protect that hour. We don't talk about politics during that time because those that gather together have something in common, our Christian faith, as well as a heart, wanting to do what's best for this country to ensure that we pass on a better country than we received as stewards.

For the first time in American history, surveys now indicate perhaps 70 percent or more of the American adults believe that we will pass on to our children a country with less opportunity, and our children will have it less well than we have it right now. I'm determined to do everything I can to try to keep that from happening.

But politics doesn't really get into the Thursday morning prayer breakfast where we have our little gathering. It doesn't get into our prayer time where voluntarily Members of Congress come together the first night votes are back. Republicans, Democrats, express personal needs for prayer, and we join hearts and minds together in prayer for

those things of need, as well as those things that we prayed for that result in a rejoicing.

So those kinds of things go on, and I'm very sincere in being grateful to the President for continuing the tradition of appearing at the Presidential prayer breakfast. It is quite meaningful. There are people from over a hundred different countries, and I've talked to so many from so many different countries. I've developed good friends in other countries that they have started prayer breakfasts among their legislators and leaders, and it's wonderful to see that kind of thing going on.

Unfortunately, yesterday, one thing got entered into the prayer breakfast that we, I think, would be better off avoiding, and that is in such a breakfast having someone stand up and basically make it sound as though the programs I'm for are based on Christianity, the inference being, if you oppose me on this, apparently you're not a good Christian.

There's an article that Breeanne Howe posted, yesterday, Thursday, and she starts off with a quote from C.S. Lewis, one of my favorite authors, and the President started with a quote from one of my favorite authors, and the quote is: Christianity has not and does not profess to have a detailed political program. It's meant for all men at all times, and the particular program which suited one place or time would not suit another.

Her article says: This morning, in the middle of his National Prayer Breakfast speech, President Obama delighted those of us who love irony by quoting C.S. Lewis. It was an interesting moment in a speech that put forth the notion that taxing the wealthy is right along in line with the teachings of Jesus.

She says, I mean, Jesus did hang out with tax collectors, right? The idea that government welfare is somehow the fulfillment of Jesus' teaching on charity is a common misconception that many people make, Christians included; and it's the main reason that liberals believe conservatives are Christian hypocrites. Perhaps if the President visited church more often than only during campaign seasons, he might not be so confused.

See, not only do we spend time praising God in church; we also gain insight from pastors who've surely spent more time in the word of God than we have.

And let me insert parenthetically here, I don't hold the failure to attend church against any President because when you look at it, when a President comes to church, if they go to a graduation, they change the whole complexion. They force everyone else there to go through metal detectors and all of this just so one man can come and worship.

So at times it may even be admirable not to go to church and force people to do that. So I don't have a problem with that, although the article goes on and points out other difficulties.

It says: While Obama may have been correct in saying that government mandated shared responsibility, it is equal to the Islamic belief that those of us who've been blessed have an obligation to use those blessings to help others. She says he's incorrect to group in Jesus' teachings ''for unto whom much is given, much shall be required;'' that is, aside from the fact that Jesus was discussing requirements from God, not the government, he was actually teaching his disciples that they were stewards of God's gift of revelation.

□ 1240

The requirement was to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. It's the crux of Christianity that Obama seems to miss. Jesus came because we were imperfect. We could never fulfill all the requirements that the pharisees loved to lord over the people. Jesus' coming ended the rule of law and began the acceptance that our only way to God was through him. Yes, Jesus very much emphasized the importance of giving to the poor but as a reaction and joy to what we'd been given, not because of a law. Giving out of obligation, she points out, is not truly giving; it's merely following the rules. Just ask anyone who's ever written a check to pay their taxes. I doubt you'll find them excited.

Ms. Howe goes on and says the Bible also teaches that everything we have, including money, belongs to God. We're called to be good stewards with his money. The government is the epitome of mismanaging money. If you truly want to help the poor, you should probably seek out charities, but that would require a bit of work on the part of a giver, and a great many find it easier to just let the government run every aspect of their lives.

So it is that welfare money ends up spitting out of strip club ATMs, and those same people who paid their charity to the government wonder why government hasn't solved this issue. Perhaps they should ask the 27 Democrats who voted against stopping welfare checks from being used at strip clubs, casinos, and liquor stores.

Another highlight in Obama's speech, Ms. Howe points out, was his proud proclamation that his administration has partnered with Catholic charities to help those in poverty. She says: I wonder if these charities are among the ones begging the Obama administration, to no avail, to change the recent Obama edict requiring them to cover both birth control costs in their health care even though it's against their religious beliefs to do so. Really, slapping them across the face would take less time and probably hurt less.

So I again applaud the President for appearing yesterday, and hope that in the future Presidents can avoid references that their agenda is based on Christ's teachings, which would clearly indicate belief that those of us who oppose some aspect of governmental taking and governmental running everything in our lives, that we're the ones who are being non-Christian or being hypocrites, because the fact is, you know, though Jesus did say render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, he also indicated, as his relationship with Zacchaeus would show, that you're supposed to be responsible as members of the government.

Zacchaeus was so excited about having Jesus come that apparently it showed in his life and his exuberance. And not only did his life completely change from having met Jesus, he actually, after Jesus came into his life, decided the appropriate thing for him as a governmental tax collector would be to cut taxes. Not only did he cut taxes, he actually gave a 4 to 1 rebate to those from whom he'd taken too much. So if our government is looking for an example to follow, perhaps doing what Zacchaeus did after he met Jesus would be a good way to go.

Government is supposed to be responsible. Those of us in government do have an obligation as stewards of this country to provide for the common defense and make sure that their own internal financial policies do not bring this Nation down, that we're stewards of this great country so that young people, some of them here, will have a country even better, with more freedoms and more opportunities. And every generation up until now has done that and provided the next generation with more opportunities than they had.

We have a lot of work to do. The reason that I feel so good about today is after 7 years of pushing a bill, a concept, that seems a surprise to Americans when they hear that we haven't dealt with this before, but it is stopping the automatic increases in every Federal department's budget every year. It began in 1974.

Now, I was going about my life. I served in the military for 4 years, practiced law for a number of years, was a judge for a number of years. And I was listening to Rush Limbaugh one day at lunch, and he was talking about the zero baseline budget. And as I listened, I was a person who was shocked. What? Our Federal Government can't balance its budget, and yet it has automatic increases every year in its budgets? That's a no-brainer—just stop the automatic increases. At that time, the Republicans were in the majority. Even though there was a Democratic President, Newt Gingrich and others here showed that if you are persistent and you send the President a balanced budget, he may veto it once, he may veto it twice, but you keep sending him back a balanced budget, eventually you may even get Bill Clinton to sign it because he sees the will of the American people is behind the Congress, not behind a President who's going to keep vetoing a balanced budget. So they finally got a balanced budget signed into law. And they balanced the budget. But they never eliminated the automatic increases.

One of the things that got me to thinking about—probably the main

thing that first started me to thinking about running for Congress was the need to change legislation through which this country since the sixties has provided incentives financially to prevent people from reaching their full potential. So that if a young girl gets bored with high school and she drops out of school and has a baby, instead of having financial incentives—because we know, having the gift of history behind us, we know that if she finishes high school, she will make more during her lifetime than those who don't finish high school. The statistics are so clear. So why wouldn't we want to give her incentives? Despite the hardship of trying to finish school with a child, give her incentives, help her get through high school so she can start reaching her God-given potential. Don't give her incentives to stay out of school and keep having child after child.

I had one woman who had had 15 children, didn't even know where they were, but she had been getting 15 checks. Our government gave her incentives to do that.

Now, it's one thing when people choose a way of life that keeps them from reaching their potential, but it's quite another when we as a Federal Government put in place incentives to keep them from reaching the potential that they have.

And one of the things that hurts so much during a downturn economy for any individual is when they have lost their job and they're used to working because there is fulfillment in working.

Even those of us who believe the Bible's account that there was an Adam and Eve know that before there was a fall from grace when things were perfect, they had a job, and it was to tend the garden. Each individual has the same responsibility. Maybe you're renting. Maybe you're living on somebody else's property. But wherever we are, we have a responsibility to tend that garden. And there's some fulfillment that's innate in mankind that if you have a job and you accomplish things, you have fulfillment, you have self-worth. From that you begin to notice, wow, as C.S. Lewis did, the man the President quoted.

C.S. Lewis noted in his book, ''The Case For Christianity,'' incorporated in the book ''Mere Christianity,'' he talks about how he enjoyed as a professor at Oxford goading Christians. How can there be a good God or a just God when there's so much injustice in the world? Eventually, he got around to realizing that if there were not some standard, unwavering, unequivocal standard of absolute right and wrong in the universe, then how would he know that there was injustice in the world?

□ 1250

In the same manner in which a person who is blind from birth sees nothing but blackness, how could they ever know that there was light and color and beauty with their own eyes? They can't see it.

Lewis explains that he began to realize there has to be something out there, there has to be some entity that has set up justice so I would know right from wrong, I would know injustice from justice.

Yet here we are in the United States Government as Members of Congress, and too often we begin to think not only should we provide for the common defense, not only should we ensure that this government doesn't go broke in providing for the common defense, but we have those who think we should tell everybody how they have to live as a judge in Texas did.

A student may voluntarily want to get up; she is given the right to stand up and give a valedictory address. It may be from her heart, and she wants to thank God; but if she mentions the word ''God,'' ''invocation,'' ''benediction,'' ''join in prayer,'' ''bow our heads''—he had a whole list of things—then he will send her to jail because he is going to tell people what they can and cannot say.

During the revolution, one of the most quoted comments that is usually attributed to Voltaire is: ''I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.''

It is one of the reasons I was willing to take a scholarship from the United States Army at Texas A&M. It is because I looked forward to 4 years of service and being a part of our Nation's defense, to defend those rights that people are supposed to have—to practice religion, to believe as their heart leads them.

Coming to Congress was quite eye opening. In January of 2005, when I was sworn in, I was surprised with this issue of automatic increases in our Federal appropriation for every Department in the Federal Government automatically increasing. If anyone said let's slow down this rate of increase, then they were portrayed as wanting to hurt people or make draconian cuts when all they were doing was slowing the rate of automatic increase. There were no cuts.

As we have been going through these last 3 years, 4 years of recession, unlike any other recession in our Nation's history because the things that should have gone on have not gone on—I know most of us on this side of the aisle agree it is because the President has hijacked the economy with trillions of dollars in giveaway programs, including to groups like Solyndra. We keep hearing about those more and more. There are more and more hundreds of millions, billions of dollars given to folks because they are pursuing some project that will never make money, but it is something the President wants to promote.

It makes no sense not to stop the automatic increases. I brought it up back in my first Congress as a freshman: Why haven't we stopped the automatic increases in every Department's budget? Make them come in and show us that it is justified to increase their budget. Don't give them an automatic increase and then only require them to come forward if they want an increase in the increase. Make them come in and justify the increase.

We are going to give our Nation's youth a bankrupted country, for Heaven's sake. Let's at least give them the chance to take over a country where they have freedom from government intrusion into their personal lives and where they have a government that is not bankrupt. We are already saddling them with 10, 20, 30, 40, $50,000 of debt before they ever arrive in this world. For Heaven's sake, we should be more responsible than that.

What could have been an easier piece of low-hanging fruit to get us on the right track towards being responsible than to say every Federal Department, You come in and justify an increase in your budget, because otherwise you're not getting one; we're just starting where you were last year?

This should have been a no-brainer. It should have been an easy thing to do. I have been here for 7 years and it has not been done. Two of those years we were in the majority, 2005 and 2006. For a year now, we have been back in the majority.

I think most people who follow what happens in Congress know that I have not always been a big supporter of some of the things that our leadership has done. Since I believe in calling things as they are when our leadership has not stood firm and stood for what is right and stood for what we got elected to do, I owe an obligation to Speaker BOEHNER to say thank you. 2005 and 2006 when we were in the majority, neither the budget chairman nor the Speaker were interested in eliminating the automatic increases in every Federal Department's budget.

Speaker JOHN BOEHNER assured me last summer that we would get this done. But he said since he is not the Budget Committee chairman, that will be up to Chairman PAUL RYAN to get that done. Well, lucky me, because PAUL RYAN, it turns out, back before I ever got to Congress, had, with our good friend JEB HENSARLING, been pushing an end to the automatic increases in every Federal Department's budget.

Yet even in a Republican majority, before I got to Congress, that bill did not get passed. The automatic increases continued even as people in the United States were struggling. Nobody else has an automatic increase in their family budget every year.

I have discussed this with Chairman PAUL RYAN. He has struggled with this over the years while he was not chairman of the Budget Committee. We should do more oversight over Federal Departments. How are you spending your money? But because we are required to have a budget every year, then the whole year seems to be taken up with getting that budget done and dealing with those budget issues.

He has a solution for that, and that is another bill that I understand will be

forthcoming from the Budget Committee to go to a biennial, a 2-year budget. We will do a budget that will cover 2 years, and that will allow Congress to have hearings and do better oversight.

Before, when Departments wanted an increase in the increase, they had to come up and lobby people on the Hill, say, We need this; we need more money than the automatic increase, and there really wouldn't be time to do proper investigation to see exactly how they were spending their money. A 2-year budget that Chairman RYAN has indicated he would like to see, that would allow them to do the proper oversight.

There are some in the motion to recommit by the Democrats, some of those budgets that I can promise you will be part of some of those programs that virtually every Republican will want to increase. The better way to move forward is to have a budget, no automatic increases, and then have oversight.

□ 1300

Then those Departments, where there will be some part of the Department where we'll want to see an increase, let's look at the areas that need decreasing. Well, when there's an automatic increase every year, then you don't have the opportunity to really go back and visit that; you're worried about doing the budget for the next year.

So I applaud the House for passing the zero-baseline budget bill; and I am very grateful to our leadership, to PAUL RYAN, and the freshman class that has come through that wanted to see this happen.

I filed this bill in each of the four Congresses I've been in. It really takes someone in a committee of jurisdiction shepherding that through. So my language was incorporated into a bill that our freshman Representative WOODALL put together. As a member of the Budget Committee, he did an excellent job of marshaling that through, handling things here on the floor, and even dealing with the debates.

I think it's important to note we've had friends across the aisle stand up and argue against passage of a zero-baseline budget yesterday and today. One of the more articulate people in the House is CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, and when we disagree, I still admire his ability to put words together in such an adept fashion. I have his exact words in his argument against passage of a bill that ends the automatic increases every year. My friend across the aisle, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, said: ''This bill, when you pass it, doesn't save one penny.'' He goes on to talk about how we can cut them if we really want to cut them, but he goes on and he says: ''So, again, this bill doesn't save a penny.'' He finishes his comments in saying: ''But this bill doesn't mandate any kind of cutting of that nature.''

So I was interested when our colleague across the aisle, Representative DELAURO, came to the floor because she stated, in arguing against the zero-baseline budget, she said: ''At its heart, this bill is a back-door attempt to enact the same radical cuts the majority attempted last year and to further reduce the spending caps agreed to in the last August Budget Control Act.''

She said: ''By eliminating inflation from our official budget considerations, this bill represents a freeze on all discretionary programs that over time would become a devastating cut to critical programs.'' She said: ''Within 10 years, all discretionary programs would see their funding slashed by as much as 20 percent,'' and she references this dangerous cut.

So we have one of our very able colleagues across the aisle saying this doesn't save one penny, and another colleague across the aisle standing up and saying this represents radical cuts. Well, what it should do and what it does do is eliminate the automatic increases that no family in America, no business in America has. All of the surveys indicate Federal employees are being paid better than the private sector. Why shouldn't we take a better, closer look in each Congress as to which Department needs increase and which needs decrease, and what parts of each Department should be lowered and which should be raised. That is the responsible thing to do.

I think Chairman RYAN's proposal to a 2-year budget, though I had never thought about it before talking with him—2-year budgets are what we have in Texas so that you have some planning and you have something to count on. I think it also indicates for this country what we see over and over, the private sector says if you could give us some continuity where we know the same laws will be utilized for at least some period of time, then we've got something to count on and we'll invest our capital.

Whether they're Democrat or Republican business folks, or like on Wall Street where they're four-to-one Democrat over Republican, they still get it; and they will see, gee, we've got some continuity here so that we shouldn't be afraid to invest capital and get the economy going. But as the old saying goes, capital is a coward; it goes to areas where it feels safest and it never feels safe when things are constantly in flux. This way there will be more continuity, and we'll know more of what to expect.

Last year, CBO—and that's the Congressional Budget Office. It has rather interesting rules. I think when you look at the history of CBO's projections of the costs of things and how revenue would go, it makes it pretty clear. If we were in the private sector, we would have gotten rid of CBO a long time ago and gotten somebody that is far more accurate at projections.

I know that CBO previously, when NANCY PELOSI was Speaker, HARRY REID is head of the Senate, they were pushing the ObamaCare bill. It was scored, and CBO scored it over $1 trillion. Then the Director got called over to the White House for a little woodshedding, although Director Elmendorf has told me he wasn't woodshedded, that he just had a nice conversation with the President. But after whatever you want to call it, his visit to the White House, he went back and cut off a quarter of a trillion dollars from their estimate basically and said, well, it's more like around $800 billion is the projected cost.

Well, some of us weren't terribly surprised after it passed that CBO then came back and said, even though the President said it would cost less than $1 trillion and we had projected it would cost more than $1 trillion, and then the President asked us to lower it and we took a new look and we lowered it to around $800 billion, now that it has passed—after the President promised everybody it would cost less than $1 trillion—now it's passed and we look at it and you know what, it's really over $1 trillion that it will cost us.

So if we want to keep faith in CBO and really figure out how much we can trust them, then maybe that is a good indication, that any projection from CBO should be looked at with a factor of plus or minus 25 percent. They give us a projection, but they may be off by 25 percent too low, they may be off 25 percent too high. So really you have about a 50 percent chance of the CBO just really missing their mark.

If we were in the private sector trying to balance budgets, unless you get government bailouts, you wouldn't allow anything to get money, your hard-earned money, that doesn't come closer than a plus or minus 25 percent rate of failure. A plus or minus 25 percent margin of error for any government entity should require us to get rid of it and figure out new rules for scoring bills and develop an entity, even if it's in the private sector where they do a far better job—certain people, some are terrible and that's why they go broke, but some are quite good and a whole lot better than a 25 percent plus or minus margin of error.

Now, some have said, well, this is going nowhere in the Senate. We've cut out the automatic increase in the House; but as everybody knows, it's got to pass the Senate, and then you've got to get the President to sign it. Well, this is an election year. It's amazing sometimes what people will do in an election year, because they know the people expect it, that they might not do in a non-election year. We're told there may be 20 or so Senate seats that could possibly go either way.

So I would hope that as my friends at FreedomWorks, Heritage Action, other places, as they start putting the heat on the Senate to be responsible—no more automatic increases in every Department's budget, by golly. You need to take a look at those budgets before you increase it one penny, see if it needs to be cut, see if it needs to be increased.

□ 1310

That pressure starts being brought to bear on the Senate. I would hope that the Republican leader would make clear in writing to the majority leader, HARRY REID, that we have at least 47 people ready to vote on this bill; and then the pressure goes on the Democrats who are in tough election cycles. Well, are you going to be supporting these automatic increases? And are you going to stand with HARRY REID and prevent this from coming to the floor of the Senate to make us more responsible as a government and force us to look at each Department and determine whether they needed an increase or not? Or are you just going to go along with the same old automatic extra spending every year, like no other American can do?

I have that hope that springs eternal in the human breast, and I hope I keep it until the day I die. But I believe we have a real opportunity to get it through the Senate, to have at least 60 Senators do the responsible thing in a bipartisan way, follow the lead of the House, which couldn't have been done without all these wonderful fresh faces, like Representative WOODALL. Follow the lead of the freshmen who have now, for the first time in all these years, said, you know what, no more automatic increases.

I think it's a harbinger of good things to come. I'm greatly encouraged as we start—at least early in this year—with such a great bill. And I don't know how long the wonderful people of east Texas, who I love with all my heart, and I want to live around all of my life—I don't know how long they'll allow me the honor of representing them here. But I think there is also a message here. It may take 7 years to keep pounding on an issue. But when it's the right thing to do, when people are struggling across America to pay their bills and they've had no automatic increases—in fact, I've talked to people and they indicate—they're Democrats—and they say, Please help us. We're having such a tough time. We've just been cut in our pay. So could you cut us a little slack from Washington?

We owe it to those people to quit spending so much so they can have even a little more of their budget. And I would think, as the President has talked about, people paying their fair share, we should take him at his word and ram through a flat tax that says, if you're rich, you pay more because you're making more. And a flat tax does that. And if you are poor, you're not making as much as others, you pay less.

And in the discussion with Steve Forbes, who ran for President on the idea of a flat tax, talking to Steve last week, I was asking him about some of the nuances of his plan. But he said under his flat tax proposal, if you were a family of four, he provided a $46,000 exemption. So if you make less than that as a family of four, you don't pay any tax. So it's kind of hard to say that you're going after the poor in American society.

A flat tax would eliminate the games. It would allow everyone to pay according to what they receive. That way, to whom much is given, more would be required, as the President quoted yesterday. And for those who are given less, less is required. That would be the way to go.

Let's cut the automatic expenditures. Let's be more responsible as a Congress in supervising those things. As the Oversight Committee, oversight hearings progress, move forward, we'll show responsibility in doing that; and the American people will be the beneficiary. And I hope and pray that within the next few years, the polls and surveys will turn around that will show the American public we can get this thing back under control so that it can go on for another 200 years. We can do that. And then we'll see the surveys turn around so they don't say 70 percent of American adults don't think we're going to leave our children as good a country as we got it.

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

OBAMACARE

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

Mr. HARRIS. May I inquire of the Chair how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 16 minutes remaining.

Mr. HARRIS. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas who spoke so eloquently about the condition of the country and the condition it's left in. I want to remind the American people that one of the obstacles we still have to overcome is that we have a health care plan that was passed out of the last Congress that isn't in full effect yet, but we're starting to feel the problems with it.

What I'm referring to is, of course, what everyone else calls the ObamaCare legislation, passed 2½ years ago now, not fully implemented until after this next election, but influencing Americans in their daily lives. Now, the majority of Americans don't agree with the plan. A majority of Americans don't want the plan, but we still have it.

Interestingly, about a third of Americans think we don't have it anymore, that when the House passed their repeal last year in January—one of the very first actions we took in the new House—they thought we were done with it, that America could wash its hands of it. But, in fact, the repeal bill was sent to the Senate where, as many other bills coming out of the House last year, it suffered the same fate. It sits in the Senate without the Senate taking action to do what the American people want, which is to repeal ObamaCare.

America understands that that bill has many, many problems, some of which we'll talk about in the next few minutes, just to remind Americans this is still there. It's still causing problems.

The gentleman from Texas spoke about the problems with our economy. As I go through the district I represent, I talk to businessmen and -women every week; and they tell me the same thing: they're worried about the economy. They're worried about government regulation. They're worried about health care insurance for their employees because they're worried about what the effect of ObamaCare is. And as this shows, 74 percent of American businesses surveyed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce say: The recent health care law—that's ObamaCare—makes it harder for their businesses to hire more employees.

The bottom line is they don't know what the rules are. The rules are changing. As we know, 1,700 businesses and unions have to get waivers from that bill in order to keep their health care going this year. And of course those waivers will disappear in a year, and businesses don't know what's going to happen once those waivers expire.

A real life example: a furniture business owner in the Fifth District of Texas, this is what he said: I could start two companies and hire multiple people; but based on this administration and the lack of facts with ObamaCare, I will continue to sit and wait.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, America knows that you can't possibly make another empty government promise to ensure 14 million additional Americans while you are going to save money, increase access, and increase quality. Americans have figured this out a long time ago. You can't get all those things. And they know and they suspect what's going to happen is what will happen: the quality will go down, and the amount of money spent on other health care programs by the government will go down.

What's the other major health care program paid for by the government? Medicare. The ObamaCare bill takes $500 billion out of Medicare over the next 10 years. Most worrisome is how it takes that $500 billion out of Medicare. It sets up what's called the Independent Payment Advisory Board. Now, every American ought to be familiar with those terms because this is what's going to control your health care when you get old or your parent gets old or a loved one you know enters Medicare.

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These 15 bureaucrats, chosen by the President, not accountable to anyone, with no appeal of their decision, will decide what gets covered and what doesn't get covered in Medicare when the government runs short of money.