

We are seeking information to figure out exactly what has happened with taxpayer money. Now, everybody has heard about Solyndra. We all know how that has run off the rails. It went bankrupt; it wasted taxpayer money. Now we have Fisker, which is a company that received Federal loan guarantees. Right now, it's trying to renegotiate the terms of its initial loan. Guess what, now we find out that they're laying off employees—20 employees and 40 contractors.

Yet, again, another Department of Energy Loan Guarantee Program, under the watch of Secretary Chu, is having difficulty, and Federal taxpayer money is being wasted.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ALF LARSON

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Alf Larson, a Minnesota World War II veteran who survived the infamous Bataan Death March. Alf passed away just last week, on January 30, at the age of 93.

Despite experiencing one of the worst aspects of war, Alf kept his faith in the Lord. During his 41 months in captivity as a prisoner, Alf would read the New Testament and the Book of Psalms, which he kept hidden.

After the war, Alf returned home, got married and then reenlisted in the Air Force in 1948. He left the Air Force 6 years later, and came back to Crystal, Minnesota, and raised a family—his three children. Like most heroes, Alf insisted that he was just a regular guy who was doing his duty, saying, I'm not a hero. I was just doing my job.

Mr. Speaker, last week Minnesota and our Nation lost one of our greatest heroes.

To Alf and all the other veterans who serve our country admirably, I want to say thank you for your incredible sacrifice.

NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS DAY AND THE RELEASE OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN EGYPT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge today the honoring, or the recognition, of National Black HIV/AIDS Day in acknowledging the work that many organizations have done to stop the devastation of HIV/AIDS in certain populations.

I will submit a statement into the record extensively acknowledging the work that has been accomplished; but I rise today to address a very important international issue that appears to be politicized by those running for President in the Republican primary.

First of all, we should all be concerned for Americans who are being

held by ally Egypt, and we should be concerned for the safe passage of those Americans as quickly as possible. Yet it is ridiculous to associate this incident with the taking of hostages in Iran some decades ago. But, of course, where there is foolery, there is opportunity.

I call upon Egyptian Americans to work with this administration to stop the holding of American citizens and to have them released immediately, and I will continue pressing for this as the weeks and days go on.

NATIONAL MARRIAGE WEEK

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

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today begins the observation of National Marriage Week. It is a week that begins today, February 7, and will go through Valentine's Day, February 14, next week. Around the Nation, in fact, indeed around the world, there are those organizations and individuals who will be conducting events around National Marriage Week.

So I think it's all too fitting and proper that we take this hour on the floor of the House of Representatives to recognize the importance of marriage and the importance of homes. Tonight, we will be having a series of speeches that will reflect the importance of marriage and the home, and we will also recognize National Marriage Week.

Mr. Speaker, for the first of those speeches, I would like to recognize my friend, my colleague from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER).

Mr. HARPER. I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of National Marriage Week. What a special time it is for us. I will also say what an inspiration you and your wife are to my wife and myself on the way that you live that marriage.

As we look and see how our society is today and as we see the prevalence of divorce and the breakdown of the family, I think it's very fitting that we talk for a moment about the importance of marriage and what it means in our lives. While it is not attainable for some family situations or some situations, it should always be our goal to keep that family unit together and to hold that bedrock of our society together.

My experience with marriage came from watching my mom and dad. My dad was a gunner in a B-17 in World War II. He came right after World War II to Columbus Air Force Base, which is in Congressman NUNNELEE's district, and met my mother at a dance when she came down from Lackey, Mississippi, outside Aberdeen. From that point forward, my dad decided he would move his allegiance from Oklahoma to the State of Mississippi.

I watched that marriage through my life. While no marriage is always easy or trouble free, they stuck together through thick and thin. I know, for us—my dad, my late father, being a petroleum engineer—we transferred quite often from kindergarten through the 12th grade. I was in 10 different schools in four different States—and we actually spent another summer in a fifth State—but Mississippi was always home. That bond that we had was very special because, as long as Mom and Dad and my brother and I were together, there was that protection, that safety that came from that; and how I watched them as they handled things that came up in their life inspired me.

Then in that last move that we had from the State of California back to Mississippi, I wound up in a high school in the 10th grade with a great friend of mine whose conduct and behavior indirectly led me to accept Jesus Christ as my savior at the end of my 10th grade year. He got me going to his church, and it was there that I spotted this beautiful young lady; but I had to wait until she broke up with this boyfriend, and then I moved in for the kill.

□ 1700

So I started dating my wife Sidney when she was 15 and I was 17. We dated 5½ years before we got married. We would have gotten married sooner but we were afraid to stay by ourselves, so we had to wait just a little while. But we've now been married 32 years. And I can tell you that I can't imagine not being married to Sidney.

As I look and we talk about National Marriage Week, and you look at the joys and the troubles that you go through in life—and for us, part of that was having a son with special needs. Our son Livingston has Fragile X Syndrome, and the difficulty of going through that with him is something I could have never done without that bond of marriage and that strength that came not only from the Lord but from my relationship with my wife. We've been blessed with our son Livingston, what a wonderful son, and our daughter Maggie. And having that family together and them having us together, I think, helps us as we build our society and we move forward.

I want to commend the gentleman from Mississippi for having this event today where we can come and speak on that. And I want you to know that I'm a very smart husband too because I'm giving this speech, wearing the tie that my wife gave me for Valentine's Day last year. So hopefully that will score points.

But I want to say, as we look at this, let's try to encourage people that are going through difficulties in their marriage to stay together, to keep that family together. And this is something that we can build on that will benefit our society.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mr. HARPER.

Now I would like to call on my friend Mr. LAMBORN, the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for putting this time together. And I rise today in support of National Marriage Week.

In so many ways, from so many sources, marriage is under attack in America. When we consider the many social problems facing our country right now, the erosion of marriage and family is at the core of many of them. Scholar Michael Novak once famously referred to the family as the "original Department of Health, Education, and Welfare" because of its role in providing for the needs of all its members and, particularly, the next generation.

Study after study has shown the tremendous advantages for children and society as a whole when there is a sustained presence of mothers and fathers in the home. Families in which mothers and fathers strive to nurture their children together have advantages over every other family form that has been studied to date.

Today we are seeing that marriage is increasingly in trouble in America. High rates of divorce, nonmarital childbearing, and single parenthood were once problems primarily concentrated in poor communities. Now the American retreat from marriage is moving into the heart of the social order, the middle class. There is a widening gulf between the middle class, where a sharp decline in marriage is at work, and the most educated and affluent Americans, where marriage indicators are either stable or are even improving.

As unwed childbearing continues to climb, risking continued social breakdown and increased government dependency, national leaders should be encouraging stable family formation, not redefining marriage. I call upon Congress to recognize the intrinsic good that results to all of society when husbands and wives strive to uphold their marriage vows and raise children in loving and stable homes.

I again want to thank the gentleman from Mississippi for putting this time together on such an important issue.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mr. LAMBORN.

Mr. Speaker, I now recognize the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD).

Mr. LANKFORD. I thank the gentleman for hosting this time.

This is a conversation at the end of the day, after all the votes are over on the House floor and all the hustle and bustle and everything, and we get a chance just to shut down and be able to talk about issues like this week being National Marriage Week. Just for a moment, to be able to pause on an area that we really do agree on, as a Congress, and so many people can gather around to celebrate marriage, what marriage has meant in our own families, and what it means in our Nation.

Twenty years ago this May, I watched my bride walk in with her wedding dress, and I could never begin

to explain the emotion of that. It's a moment I will never forget, seeing her smile and thinking, For the rest of my life, I'm going to get to spend it with that lady.

Love is an amazing thing. But marriage is not just love. It is commitment. It is the foundation of our culture. It is the very essence of what we call family. For me, as a follower of Jesus Christ, I also understand that marriage is one of the few things to survive the fall of man. Marriage existed in the Garden of Eden, and it still exists today.

I fully appreciate and understand the dynamics of single parenting—growing up in a single-parent home myself, I watched my mom dedicate her life to myself and my brother, and how hard she worked. But I can tell you, from her perspective and from no person I have ever met, have they picked up a newborn child and looked into that newborn's face and said, I hope this child grows, gets great grades, goes to a good college, gets married, and then gets divorced. No one does that because, as a culture, we understand the value of marriage. It's intrinsic within us that we get it, and we honor that. We see an elderly couple in the park and see them smiling at each other, and we wonder about how many decades they've spent together. And we honor them, as a culture, because they have strived for so many years and have been committed for so many years to each other. It is to be honored. And it's a good thing for us to stop for just a moment in the hustle of this day to honor marriage again.

And let me just say, as a government as well, marriage is a big deal to us because there's a direct correlation: The weaker our families are, the more government has to stand up and provide services. The stronger our families are, the less there is a need for government. You'll see it in law enforcement. You'll see it in social services. You'll see it in food stamps. On and on and on, the stronger our families are, the less government we need. And as our families collapse, we have an acceleration of government to try to fill in the gaps. It is this uniting aspect of our culture—white, black, Latino, Asian, American Indian, every race, faith. Family is the key, and marriage is the essence of that.

A quick story. A few weeks ago at the Martin Luther Day festivities in Oklahoma City, Paco Balderrama, who works the gang unit within Oklahoma City's police department—he is a fantastic officer with a terrific reputation in our community—stood up, and he began to talk about marriage and about families. And he made a statement. He said, of all the gang arrests that they do and of all the gang interventions that they do in Oklahoma City, he said, 1 percent of the gang members that I pick up come from married, intact families, 1 percent. The more our families fall apart, the more government has to rise up.

In intact families, you have a lower use of drug use in those kids, of crime in those kids, of poverty, and passing on poverty to the next generation. They have safer homes with less abuse. They have less risk of early sexual activity, all because they have come from a family that is married and committed to each other. We should maintain that in our Federal policies, that in every way possible, we support marriage, not discourage marriage.

A great example of that is the marriage penalty that's in SSI right now. If you are on disability insurance and you are single, you get one payment. But if you are married, it's much lower. If you are single, you can have one amount, and you can have one amount of assets, but if you are married, it's less. So it basically is a disincentive for a person on SSI to be married.

I have personally interacted with people in Oklahoma City that have been living together for years. And when I asked them about it, and said, Why don't you get married? Why don't you settle this commitment? His response to me was, I can't afford to do that. I'll lose part of my SSI benefits.

We, as a government, should do everything we can to make sure there are no marriage penalties in any of our social service programs because the best thing that can be done to pull families out of poverty is a stable, strong home. And when there's a stable, strong marriage, that will build up families. And the more we step in as a government and say, I know your family's falling apart, but we're just going to subsidize you. In fact, we'll subsidize you to a level that you don't have to get married. In fact, we discourage you from getting married. It's absurd on its face.

The cultural thing that pulls us all together—every race, every religion—is the marriage being the center of that home. And for every family that I have ever talked with, their hope for their children is that they get married, and they stay married.

□ 1710

It is still a core foundation of our culture. Many marriages have fallen apart, but we should as a Nation stand beside marriage. It's a great week. It is always a great week to celebrate National Marriage Week.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to participate in National Marriage Week, along with my bride of 30 years, Tori. In fact, it was February 13, 1980, that she and I went out for the first time. And on that night I found a friend, a friend that would be a life partner. A couple of years later we were married.

Now the purpose of National Marriage Week, as has been articulated here on the House floor tonight, is to recognize the benefits and the stability that strong marriages bring to society. Now, it's purpose is not to belittle those who have never been married. Neither is it's purpose to make those

who may have previously been married feel like their value to America is somehow not important. I recognize to-night there are thousands of single parents struggling. They're struggling every day to make ends meet. They're trying to balance two tough full-time jobs—jobs being the sole breadwinner and provider to a family, and the full-time job of being a parent. But it's also important that we not forget to recognize the importance of strong marriages in our society.

The home is the fundamental unit of society. The home is the system whereby values are transmitted from one generation to the next. Studies have shown that children raised in intact, married homes are more likely to attend college. They're physically and emotionally healthier. They're less likely to be physically or sexually abused. They're less likely to use drugs or alcohol. They're less likely to be involved in a teenage pregnancy. The home was the first institution established on Earth. In fact, it's older than the institutions of religion, of government, of education. The home is the only institution we have on Earth that is exactly the same as it was before sin entered the Earth.

And today, we stand on the foundations of the homes created by our ancestors. And a strong America in the next century begins with strong homes today. Strong homes begin with strong marriages. I have known this to be true in my own life. While their story is not unique, in fact it's a story that is replicated throughout America.

Next week, there's a couple in Tupelo, Mississippi, who will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary. They married as children in 1957. She was 17. He was an old man of 19. If their compatibility had been put into one of the matchmaking computer programs that's available today and all of their data had been input, those computers I'm convinced would have spit out a three-word message: Are you kidding?

He had lived all of his 19 years of life on a small and poor farm in Pontotoc County, Mississippi. He had rarely traveled from the place of his birth. On the other hand, she was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She lived there until her family was transferred to Mississippi as she was to begin the 11th grade. The summer after she graduated from high school, they met. She canceled her plans to attend college because she had met what would be her life partner. While their backgrounds had very little in common, their families shared two very important values: a strong faith in God and a commitment to the family unit.

Their first night together, they got down on their knees and they committed their marriage to God, and they committed themselves to each other. Over the ensuing 55 years, they've shared many good days: the birth or adoption of seven children; her graduation from college, an event that had been delayed by almost two decades;

his becoming very successful in the life insurance business, including becoming the president of one of the State's largest and most successful life insurance companies; the birth of 14 grandchildren; seeing all seven of their children given the opportunity to attain a college education.

But just like in so many families, every day has not been a bright one. Trying to raise children while building a sales territory, there were a lot of times when there was not a lot of money left at the end of a long month.

They've held hospitalized children, some hospitalized with routine childhood illnesses, others with life-threatening conditions, and they've had long nights in the hospital not knowing if that child would make it to see the morning.

They've had to console a grieving daughter as she was consoling a son, a grieving daughter who was far too young to be a widow. They leaned on each other as he was terminated from the company that he'd built. He was the casualty of a corporate merger.

Through the good days as well as the bad, the commitment they made to God, the commitment they made to each other, has endured. While the word "retirement" is not in their vocabulary, they are beginning their eighth decade on Earth, and they are beginning it each day with each other.

Their seven children are scattered from Knoxville to San Antonio, and each are contributing members of their communities. One of them lives in Mississippi, but works part-time in Washington, D.C., and tonight he's proud to stand on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and on behalf of their children, their grandchildren, and their great grandchildren, say thank you. Thank you for your commitment to each other, because your commitment to each other, your commitment to your family will not be measured by years, but rather, it will be measured by generations.

This story is not unique. In fact, it's representative of the millions of stories told by millions of families that have made America great. But as we stand here tonight, we need to be mindful that because of the value that strong marriages bring to society, the policies of government should support strong marriages and not oppose them.

□ 1720

All too often, whether it's in tax policy, housing policy, or the policy of Federal benefits, the policies of government are stacked against families. If we truly believe that families are the foundation of a strong America, we need to make the policies of government support and enhance those families.

Mr. Speaker, let me now recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you.

I appreciate my friend, Mr. NUNNELEE's, effort in recognizing the

role that America has had in fostering the greatest building block any society has ever known—marriage, plain and simple. I was blessed to have had two parents that loved each other, loved each other enough to fuss at each other when they didn't feel like the other was doing the right thing. But, as Mr. LANKFORD from Oklahoma pointed out, it's not all about love. It's also about commitment. And as anybody who has studied sociology and really wants to be honest about the history of the world knows, the greatest societies in the history of the world have had as their building block the marriage between a man and a woman.

Now, my wife was blessed to have been born and raised by a couple who loved her as her natural parents and loved each other, and the commitment was always there. Her dad passed away a few years ago, and her mother is still alive and blesses us. My dad remarried a year after my mother died in 1991, and they've been a blessing to both of us and to our children.

It was certainly a great blessing to me when I met Kathy, when I was in law school and she was an undergrad at Baylor. And somebody again this weekend said, Your wife is so cute; I had no idea. And I have to explain to people that's because she met me and married me while I had hair. I realize I couldn't get somebody cute nowadays if Kathy and I weren't together. But back then, I had hair, and I know it's hard to believe, but I actually looked okay when I had hair. But, anyway, she's stuck with me for 33½ years now, and we have been truly enriched to have three wonderful daughters.

I've learned so much about the nature of God by being a father. I learned a little more by being a judge, but marriage just has been truly the enhancement, beyond my faith in Christ, the number two thing in my life as far as the blessings that I have received.

When we look at the laws regarding marriage, we know there's a great deal going on. The court, as I understand it, today struck down a law that said marriage is between a man and a woman. It's interesting that there are some courts in America where the judges have become so wise in their own eyes that they know better than nature or nature's God.

It was interesting seeing what happened in Iowa a year and a half ago, after an Iowa Supreme Court unanimously—well, they held en banc. Having been a chief justice of a court of appeals, sometimes that means that nobody wanted to be out there signing the decision by themselves so that perhaps behind the scenes they may have said, Hey, look I helped you on that by making that a full decision en banc and so help me out here by all agreeing to this. Well, three of them came up for an up-or-down vote, and for the first time in Iowa's history, the voters in Iowa voted to terminate the time as judge of three of the nine judges—or seven. Three of them were up, and they were terminated.

One of the things that I found interesting as I went on a bus trip across Iowa—I loved the Iowa folks. All I had to do was pull out the decision written by the Iowa court and read in that decision how those judges in Iowa had become so wise in their own eyes that they said that even though the State of Iowa raised as one of their issues that there was biological evidence that supported a marriage being between a man and a woman, that they, the Supreme Court, so wise beyond nature, so wise beyond nature's God, they could not find any evidence whatsoever to support the notion of marriage being between a man and a woman. Iowa voters would often start laughing, and some would just gasp in shock that people that had so many years of education, at least 18, 19, 20 years of education, had studied and looked at the evidence and could not find any indication that nature or biology supported marriage between a man and a woman. Well, nature seemed to like the idea of an egg and a sperm coming together because of procreation. Apparently, they thought the sperm had far better use some other way biologically combining it with something else. But the voters of Iowa came back and said, Do you know what? If you're not smart enough to figure out actual plumbing, as my friend STEVE KING explained it, then perhaps we need new judges, and that's what they did.

Now, it is the Bible, the biblical statement that the two shall become one flesh, and the two become one. It's amazing. In fact, I wrote a song for my wedding in which I pointed out that we would use 10 senses from henceforth instead of five. And you do. You learn from the senses of your mate. You grow together.

A good example of this growth is there was a prosecutor who prosecuted in my court when I was a judge, and he had had a couple, both the man and the woman, the man and wife were on the same jury panel from which the jury of 12 was to be drawn; and he was asking the husband, sir, the laws of Texas require that you cannot be on a jury unless you can independently vote your own conscience. So I have to ask you, sir, you're under oath, will you be able, if you were on a jury with your wife, to vote your own conscience? And the man said, Yes, of course, I can vote my own conscience. I'll ask my wife what's my conscience and then I'll vote it. It won't be a problem.

We two usually grow to become one, as the Bible points out.

It broke my heart to hear testimony on sentencing of a gang leader in Tyler who had been convicted of murder who was being harassed about his gang membership. He had heard all the testimony about his gang, and he pointed out, Look, you keep saying all these bad things about gangs, but let me tell you, my mother was never around. I never knew my father. The gang—my gang is the only family I've ever known. They're my family. You're

trash-mouthing my family. They cared about me. They supported me. We cared about each other. And it led to murder. It led to all kinds of crimes.

□ 1730

There's a reason that the most important building block of a stable society is a marriage between a man and a woman.

I was in the Soviet Union as an exchange student in 1973 visiting a day care before anybody even heard of day care really in the United States. In Mount Pleasant, Texas, we had Momma Stark. And if my mother had to go somewhere when we were little bitty—when we were old enough to go to school, then mother went back to teaching; but before then, she'd drop us off at Momma Stark's. She'd take care of us. We didn't know it was called day care at the time.

At the time I went to the Soviet Union as an exchange student, I was appalled. It was actually shocking to the conscience to see a place where the government had dictated what every child should know about relationships, about the lack of religion—because they preached atheism. They taught the children what the government believed they should know about everything.

We were told that it was so important that each child be taught only what was permissible to the government that if it were ever learned that a parent was teaching or telling a child anything at home that was not in accordance with the teachings and dictates of the government, that the child was then removed from the home and the parents were not allowed to have any contact with what was deemed to be an asset of the government and nothing to do with the home. That was because in that society—before it failed, as it always would—they believed marriage was not that important. It was the government that was the be-all, end-all. It was the government that would teach and would raise the children, and they were only loaning them to parents until such time as they did something the government didn't like and then they took them away. It was not normally any type of sexual abuse. The worst offense, it seemed to be from what I heard from people I talked to there, was if you taught something that was not in keeping with what the government taught.

I thanked God that I lived in a country where my parents could teach me things that were true and things that were right, and not some government that would be wishy-washy and changed depending on who was in charge of the government, not some government that would perhaps take away the rights that were an endowment from our Creator. It was the parents that would train and teach out of love.

Then you find out, as I have over the years, our government, ever since I got

back from the Soviet Union, year after year has moved as if it's an adversary of marriage. Yet as my colleagues before me who've pointed out, the studies Mr. NUNNELEE has pointed out, of course we have some of our greatest citizens come from single-parent homes. But if you want to play the odds, the odds are that a child is more appropriately adjusted if they come from a two-parent home, a loving mother and father playing two different roles.

And yet we find out, gee, for decades now there has been instituted what's called a marriage penalty, so that if a wife and a husband are married and they are both working, then they are going to pay extra in taxes. The message being, subconsciously, our government thinks you're better off not married, just live together.

As Mr. LANKFORD pointed out, with Social Security, we do the same thing. You talk to elderly people who would love to be married because they believe in marriage from a religious standpoint and a doctrinal standpoint, and yet if they get married, they lose government benefits, indication that the government thinks it's better to live together rather than be married.

Not only that, but we have seen it over and over since the mid-sixties, a Congress who simply wanted to help. When a deadbeat father wouldn't help with the financial raising of his children, Congress said, You know what? Let's help these single moms that are trying to make it. Let's give them a check any time they have a child out of wedlock. After over four decades, we've gotten what we paid for, where between 40 and 50 percent of all children born are being born to a single mom, despite the evidence that more children are better adjusted if they have a mother and father in a well-adjusted home.

So, I get to Congress as a result of my wife, Kathy, being a full partner. She taught for awhile. She has her master's in business administration, in accounting. She taught for awhile while I was running, but we saw, if this is really what we believed was appropriate for our marriage, for our lives, to try to get this country back on track, it was going to take a partnership. So she left teaching and came on board and was a full-time campaigner with me as my partner. We could hit two places at the same time. And I was never shocked to hear that people loved Kathy more than they loved me and they would just as soon have her over me. So that went on.

We cashed out every asset we had except our home. I practiced a little law when I could and made a few bucks, but at the same time we cashed out every asset, paying higher penalties, so we could live on that. I didn't see it was a big risk because I knew if I didn't get elected, I could go back and make more money than I ever would in Congress. I've done it before; I could do it again. But at the same time, this is what we believed we were supposed to do.

We were allowed to continue that partnership after I got elected because you can't avoid having a campaign office because you've got to keep raising money. It's part of getting reelected. You've got to keep campaigning basically for the whole 2-year period between each election. So we kept my wife on for the same thing she had been making at teaching.

After 2 years of a true partnership—I mean, we were true partners. I was fighting the battles here in Washington and she was taking care of things in our district, going to all events that I couldn't attend, as my partner. And then when Speaker PELOSI took the gavel, our friends across the aisle determined that we wouldn't allow things like that because there were some people who, in a corrupt manner, had overpaid family members to do nothing.

So, the message went back clearly that my wife could no longer be my partner and take care of the campaign issues. I could no longer pay her the same thing she got as a teacher, that she had to go back. And since we had cashed in all our assets, and since I did not want my children to be coming out of college completely encumbered with massive debt from loans, and since the money that we had tried to save for college had been expended, we still needed her to work. We've still got college loans to be paid even now. But she's no longer my partner as far as this enterprise because this Congress said, under Speaker PELOSI, we don't want wives working as the campaign partner of a Member of Congress. So it seems like, over and over, the message keeps coming back that Congress wants to be an enemy of marriage.

Then we get the President's Jobs Act last fall. And although the President said he was going after millionaires and billionaires, if you looked at the pages that concerned the increased taxes, the President revealed his true heart, and that was that he considered you to be a millionaire or a billionaire—and obviously you're not—if you make \$125,000 a year, because under the President's Jobs Act, if you make \$125,000 a year, you're going to get popped not merely with an alternative minimum tax, you're going to get popped with an extra tax on top of that.

□ 1740

And that didn't matter if you were married, filing singly, or married filing jointly. Either way, a married person could only claim \$125,000 as income before he got popped with President Obama's extra tax. Not exactly a millionaire or billionaire; but, apparently, the President felt if you are going to have the inappropriate conduct such that you would get married, then you'd have to get taxed more than others.

How do you know that? Because in the President's same section, if you're not married and you are filing, you could claim either a \$200,000 exemption, or a \$250,000 exemption. Therefore, if

you were single and lived together, then you could claim either a \$400,000 or \$500,000 exemption under the President's Jobs Act.

And I was always wondering, and I hope some day the President will make clear, why he had such animus toward marriage between a man and a woman. He seems to be happily married. He seems to have a wonderful wife. Why would he want to penalize others in the country simply because they are married?

I didn't understand it. I still don't understand it. And I'm hoping before this year is up that enough people across America will make their voices heard that, you know what, we've gotten away from it, but the studies keep making it impossible to avoid admitting marriage between a man and a woman is a good thing. It is the building block of a stable society.

And as those who took an oath to uphold our Constitution, in essence, do all we could for this country, we owe it to the country to do what we can for marriage. I do appreciate my friend, Mr. NUNNELEE, so much for taking the whole hour and for giving some of the rest of us a chance to come speak with him with one voice.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mr. GOHMERT.

As we wrap up this hour, recognizing the importance of National Marriage Week, I want to conclude, recognizing, first of all, my own life's partner.

February 13 will mark the day, a little over three decades ago, that I thought I was going out to eat dinner for a blind date. What I was doing was being introduced to a friend, a lifelong friend. As we talked that night, we found out that the things we shared we wanted to share with one another.

And I've learned so much from my now bride of 30 years, Tori, but I think one of the things that I've learned from her that applies to National Marriage Week, I've heard her say, time and time again, love's not a feeling, it's an action. You can't help how you feel about something. You can help how you act.

There's another young family that I'm reminded of as we celebrate National Marriage Week, a young couple that, a little under 6 years ago, I sat at a church, watched their families smile with excitement, watched them exchange promises to one another. And here, in their early years of marriage, they've had words introduced to their vocabulary that they didn't think would be part of their everyday conversation, words like "biopsy," "radiation."

As I talked to that young bride over the Christmas holidays, I told her, I said, you didn't sign up for this, did you? She looked at me and smiled and she said, yes, sir, I did. But I committed for better or for worse, in sickness and in health. I did sign up for this. No, I wouldn't choose it, but I'm here, and I'm committed.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we conclude our recognition of National Marriage

Week, I'm reminded of the observation of old, the observation that God saw it was not good for man to live alone, so God put us in families. I thank God for those families.

I hope and I pray that the policies of this government will continue to support marriages and families so that we can have a strong America.

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

MAKE IT IN AMERICA: MANUFACTURING MATTERS

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to share with those folks that are watching C-SPAN—and hopefully there are many—some of the issues that really confront America today.

We just heard an hour discussion on the fate of the American family, and it comes at that issue from one specific point of view and one specific section of the total problem, and that has to do with the issue of marriage and how we define marriage here in the United States.

But there's also another way to, and other very, very important issues that define the fate of the American family. And I'd like to take that issue up tonight in the context of the economy.

The American family is faced with many, many challenges. One of the most significant challenges is income, jobs. How can the American family make it in America today? What does it take for an American family to make it?

One of the most compelling charts that I've seen over these last several months is this one, which really describes the fate of the American family compared to the fate of the top 1 percent of Americans. We've seen an enormous shift in the income and the wealth in America over the last 30 years, largely because of governmental policies.

This blue line indicates how well the superwealthy are doing. They've seen nearly a 370 percent increase in their annual income. Their wealth would see a similar enormous increase.

Down here on the bottom are the rest of Americans, the other 99 percent. If you took all of this together, you would see that the bottom 50 percent have seen very, very little increase in their annual income; and most of that increase is due to both husbands and wives working simultaneously.

This is the challenge for the American family. How do they make it in America when, in America, we've seen an enormous decline in the great American manufacturing sector, where the middle class really, really succeeded?

And so, tonight, what I'd like to talk about with my colleagues who will