

heap that \$1.7 trillion with a T, \$1.7 trillion of additional debt on our party, on our country, on our children, on our people. Bob Rubin, in that column which I referred to, said that that debt would undermine expansion because it would rob the capital markets of money that could be used to build small businesses and to build medium-sized businesses and invest in large businesses to create and keep jobs.

It is feckless because the same people who used to call themselves fiscally responsible—Senator MCCONNELL, Speaker RYAN, Senator HATCH, others whom I could name—have all stood on the floor of the House or in a press conference and said we need to have the debt reduced, and yet they offer a bill that adds \$1.7 trillion to the debt; feckless because the same people who used to call themselves fiscally responsible are now choosing to ignore fiscal sustainability in favor of a short-lived political win.

This is not about policy. It is about politics. It is about appealing to a relatively small group of very, very connected people, but it is our country that will lose.

I told people during that speech that I have been in office for some time. I served in the State senate and now in the House. It takes no courage—no courage—to vote for a tax cut. What takes courage is to pay for what you buy, whether it is national security, which I support, whether it is education, which, if we don't invest in, our country will not be great. It is great in part because we have invested in our education system.

Unless we invest in the health of our people, which is the health of our society, we will not be great, and unless we invest in the security of our people domestically, in law, in order, enforcement, in protection for our people.

It will not be great unless we invest in basic biomedical research to make sure that the diseases that exist now and that may exist in the future can be met with medical cures and palliatives.

We will not be great if we sink our country deeply, deeply, deeply into debt and do not have the courage to say, in this generation, we will pay for what we need and not simply buy and pass the debt along to our children and to our grandchildren, because that is what we are doing in this tax bill.

It is not only an intellectually bankrupt policy, it is an immoral policy that we pursue. As the Senate version takes shape, Mr. Speaker, Republicans who voted grudgingly for the House bill ought to be deeply concerned; and I hope, for the sake of their country, they are good people.

There are good people on both sides of this aisle. There are conscientious people on both sides of this aisle. There are Americans on both sides of this aisle, Americans who have sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of our country and have, as well, sworn to protect the people of this country.

There ought to be deep concern among people of good conscience, con-

cern that it does not meet the very same criteria that Speaker RYAN set forth in laying out what tax reform ought to achieve and what he claimed their House bill achieved. Neither does it adhere to the Speaker's clear promise not to package together separate matters into the same legislation.

Make no mistake, the Senate bill House Republicans will be asked to vote for isn't just a tax hike for the middle class, although that it is. It is also a repeal of a significant component of the Affordable Care Act, which will hurt that same middle class. It may have been difficult for Republicans to cast their votes for vague promises on November 16, but I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, it will be even more difficult to do so for a legislative product that puts their constituents, those the Speaker talked about struggling just to get by, people who, if they have a \$500 debt, are not sure they can pay it, it will affect those folks and put them in even greater danger should the Senate bill make it back to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to reject this bill. I urge my colleagues in the House to look deeply into their souls and not at their polls and reflect upon what they are doing to their country by perpetuating the fiscally irresponsible policies of borrowing, of borrowing, of borrowing and not having the courage to pay this generation's bills now and not pass them along to our children and to our grandchildren.

Every Member of this House and of the Senate, Mr. Speaker, ought to look themselves in the mirror and say: When I gave those speeches, when I referenced that to the press, was I being honest? Am I following a policy today that is consistent with that assertion? I think they will come to the inexorable answer: No. If I vote for this tax bill, I am not.

Therefore, I hope that all of us will reject this partisan piece of legislation that vastly increases our debt, increases the taxes on middle class workers, threatens Social Security with a \$25 billion cut, and threatens our economy.

Let us have the courage to serve our people honestly and take the tough vote and then come together in a bipartisan fashion and do what we showed we could do in 1986: pass a bipartisan bill that, yes, makes our corporations competitive internationally and, yes, gives the bulk of the tax cuts to those who the Speaker referred to as struggling. They are the ones who need relief, and we could do that in a bipartisan fashion, and we can pay for it.

David Camp showed us the way. I didn't agree with all of his bill, but he showed the courage—a Republican from Michigan who was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee—and put up a bill on tax reform that was paid for. The Republicans were in charge of this House and they dismissed it out of hand, too tough.

Mr. Speaker, let's do the right thing. Let's reject this bill.

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

□ 2015

#### ISSUES OF THE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we had a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. Anybody who was in America, in the United States, has a lot to be thankful for. People are counting on us across the country to make sure we don't mess the country up because we have done a great deal of damage from Washington, much of it done by bureaucrats.

But the only way they can do it is when Congress relegates and delegates obligations that we should have to bureaucrats, especially unaccountable bureaucrats like those at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

It is time to get power back to where there is accountability. And there is a better chance of having accountability right here in Congress than there is in some agency, some bureau that thumbs its nose at the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and says: We are above the Constitution. We are above everything else in the country. We do what we want to, and nobody can say otherwise.

Well, they are finding out at the CFPB that that is not the case. Everybody in America has some accountability somewhere.

It makes me smile to hear friends from across the aisle talking about running up a deficit because I remember that talk in 2006, and we were properly excoriated on the Republican side of the aisle for running up a deficit of around \$160 billion more than we brought in. We were castigated. We were beat up in all kinds of ways, and Democrats were right.

Who would have ever dreamed that the people who were belittling Republicans for allowing a \$160 billion deficit would soon be so very proud since they had the majority in the House, the Senate, the Presidency, just a couple of short years later, they would have a \$1.5 trillion to \$1.6 trillion deficit?

We would be treated to the first 4 and the first 8 years in our Nation's history under a President during which the economy never grew up to 3 percent. It never grew up to 3 percent. It did not, the whole time the Democrats had the majority in the House and the Senate, those 4 years they had the majority in the House and Senate.

That time when they had the House, the Senate, and the White House, they managed to run up the debt higher than anyone has ever come close to before. But the good news for those who have forgotten that the talk of \$160 billion deficit being so outrageous before

they ran up a \$1.5 trillion to \$1.6 trillion deficit, those who don't remember those days can be reminded of those now as we begin to hear the rhetoric about the current proposed appropriation.

We passed all 12 appropriations here in the House. We did our work. It is time the Senate did their work. Now we are being told: Oh, well, you have got to get over all that stuff you did. All of that hard work, all the cuts to Planned Parenthood, all the things you did standing on principle down there in the House, you have got to forget about that because we don't work like that down in the Senate. We are just going to be lucky to fund the projects we are interested in. We have no interest in taking up the hard work that the House of Representatives did.

But it is time the Senate tried that. I think if they will look into the appropriation bills the House passed, they will find out we actually did some very good, solid, amazing work.

For some reason, before we ensure that the Second Amendment applies everywhere across the country that the Constitution meant for it to apply, we are going to take up a background check bill tomorrow. The abbreviation is NICS, which gathers information on people's backgrounds who want to buy a gun. Despite all of the inaccurate information that is often touted about the lack of background checks, of how you can order online or at gun shows, these kind of things, there are background checks when you order online.

It is really unfair to the gun stores who didn't actually make the sale, but anybody who orders a gun online still has to have the background check, and they still have to go in and pick it up at a store and meet the requirements of the law and the background check.

We have heard many times about how the background checks have prevented 3 million Americans who should not have guns from getting guns, but that is not true nor accurate. Apparently, the last year that the Obama administration decided to bless us with actual information about background checks, they reported that about 73,000 Americans were prevented from getting a gun on the first check under the law as it exists. There are five different checks. And because the first check does not take all of the information that someone buying a gun has to fill out, not the date of birth, not Social Security number, not any of the information that is replete on the document being filled out, none of that is used.

They take a phonetic—well, the pronunciation of the name and use the phonetic pronunciation to do a background check. That is why they have so many millions of hits since this has been going on is because if someone's name just sounds a bit like somebody else's, it comes up as a hit and an initial denial.

But then at each stage, each one of those five checks, more and more are found to not be the person who should

be prevented from having a gun. In the last year—we have data—I was talking to John Lott about this earlier this afternoon, but in 2010, there were 73,000 denials, approximately, of the ability to buy a gun.

As they went through each of those five checks, they found out that so many actually were not the person who should have been blocked from buying a gun. When the Obama administration got down to the bare facts, they found that out of about 73,000 initial denials, there were only 42 cases that were referred to be prosecuted for potential prosecution.

If I recall correctly, the Obama administration only prosecuted about a fourth of what the Bush administration prosecuted. So out of the 42—and I don't mean 42,000 out of 73,000, I mean 42.0 out of 73,000—the Obama administration only decided to get 13 convictions.

Mr. Speaker, there were 73,000 initial denials. It tells you the system doesn't work very well at all. It doesn't make sense that we would have a system that would use all of the information that somebody provides to look for hits of somebody who should not be able to buy a gun. Use the date of birth. Use the Social Security number. Use the information there to check to see if someone is ineligible to buy a gun.

Then we can get serious about better gun enforcement, especially since we now have a Department of Justice—except for the special prosecutor that is interested in just them, just us kind of justice—except for that special prosecutor's group, we do have a Department of Justice that truly is interested in doing justice.

So when it comes to background checks, yes, we will continue to have them, but I hope we make some needed changes in the law, and I also hope that we are able to pass a bill this week out of committee, get it to the floor, pass it out of here, and hopefully the Senate will do their job on it. But that would allow reciprocity for people who are allowed to carry a gun in one jurisdiction to be able to carry that gun across the country. It is something we are working on.

Mr. Speaker, I was so greatly encouraged seeing an article about Poland. Those people have always been such an independent-minded people, even though they have been yanked to and fro. Whether it is Russia, Prussia, Germany, they have had a difficult time—Austria. They have had a tough time. But they have always been independent-minded. As President Reagan and as the former Polish Pope noted, and as President Trump has noted, Poland, generally speaking, understands what people who go through the 12-step program understand. There is a higher power.

But by the grace of God, we would not have this incredible little experiment in self-government. We would never have lasted as long as we have. There are miracles where the divine

hand of God truly stepped in during the Revolutionary War, during the early days as a nation when we could have, and probably should have, fallen, one after another. As the Founders would say, divine providence protected this little experiment, and it is in trouble right now.

There are so many people who have been taught across the country that America is an embarrassment and owes the world an apology.

□ 2030

Bill Ayers and all of those who were hippies—not all of them, but so many of them who were hippies—found that, as terrorists like Bill Ayers was, they didn't get the results they were seeking by blowing up things or people. They got a lot more done by moving into universities, becoming tenured professors, and teaching future teachers an improper history and an inaccurate history of these United States so that now we have, we are told, half the people coming out of college thinking socialism would be a better way of living.

They don't understand. They have never thought it through. They don't look at what has really happened because they haven't been taught true history. They don't understand. They don't know that every time socialism—progressivism if you would rather call it that as so many in this body do—always failed and always will fail to the end of the age as long as there is jealousy, greed, avarice, and even common sense.

As I have mentioned here on the floor, the Russian farmer who said, "I make the same number of rubles here in the shade, if I am in the shade here or if I am out there in the sun, so I am in the shade," that explained why socialism does not, will not, and cannot ever work. It always fails.

The only way you can have it is where people share across from those according to their ability to those according to their need. What a lie. It didn't come from those according to their ability. Once socialism sets in, so does malaise. There is no incentive to work harder and harder except if you can get politically entrenched sufficiently, then those in political power. As a Russian college student told me back when I was a college student over there in the Soviet Union: In America, you can advance yourself by making more money and working harder. Here in the Soviet Union, we can only advance ourselves by stepping on others and trying to get political power by stepping on others.

This is a better system, even with all its flaws. Churchill said that capitalism is the worst form of government except for all the others. But it allows people to succeed or fail as they are driven to do. It is called freedom. We have had it. We have been losing it.

When the Democratic House and majority set up the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, they set up an

agency, a bureau, that didn't have to answer to Congress. They could violate the Constitution's Fourth Amendment and Fifth Amendment. They didn't care. They are all powerful. In fact, they are so full of themselves that they think no one can hold them accountable and they can do whatever they want. They don't need money from Congress. They get it from the Federal Reserve. They are a perpetual bureau that is not answerable to the President, to the Congress—not to anybody. They are finding out today that is not the case, but they sure thought it was.

When I was a felony judge, if the government wanted someone's bank records, they had to either get that person's permission or they had to come to a judge like me; and with either live or affidavit testimony sworn under oath, they had to prove that a crime was probably committed, that this particular person probably committed the crime, and that these bank records were needed because of the probable cause that existed from the evidence. I would consider the evidence and then decide if probable cause existed. If it did, I would sign the warrant, and the government only then could get the bank records.

Not so with the CFPB. They are in the protection racket. It is right there in their name, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. It is a protection racket like the mob used to be in. They got their money from the Federal Reserve, and they are here to protect us all.

So they gather up people's banking records and debit and credit card activities. Why? Because they are there to protect us from greedy, evil banks.

Some have said: Wait a minute, though. How about you just leave my privacy alone, and if a bank messes me around, then I will come tell you? You don't need to get all of my private records.

But since the CFPB has the unmitigated gall and arrogance to think they are totally unaccountable, they don't care what the Constitution says or what some court says. They don't need a warrant. They get whatever records they want to. Why? Because they are in the protection racket, out to protect us. You do what they say or they ruin you.

What a racket, not accountable to anybody. That has got to change. The President is doing what he can to change that. Thank God and thank President Trump, both. We have got a chance of reining in an unconstitutionally acting body. Fortunately, there is at least one judge who recognized that, and hopefully there will be more.

Those in Poland are amazing. As I continue to meet people who have lived in areas like Poland under the Soviet boot or who were alive during the ravages of World War II, those people here in the United States seem to understand more what is at stake right now than most any natural-born American. They know what it is like not to have

freedom. They know what it is like to have a government watch every move and tell you what you can or you cannot do and sometimes punish on a whim just to keep citizens terrified of the totalitarian government, a totalitarian government that has to exist in order for socialism, communism, and progressivism to exist.

In fact, when I was in college, I was doing research and saw back in the days, I believe it was around 1960, '61, in that time, that the Premier of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev, understood that, under the idea of communism or progressivism, everyone would share and share alike; and the ultimate form of that progressivism or communism or socialism would be, when there was no need for government, everyone just shared and shared alike from those according to their ability, according to their need. Everyone shared.

Of course, in the Soviet Union in 1960, '61, under Premier Khrushchev, it was indeed a very totalitarian country, not as bad as it had been under Stalin, but those millions and millions of Ukrainians who lost their lives when Stalin saw to their starvation, those who lost loved ones during that period of starvation at the hands of Stalin, they understand what freedom is and what it isn't. They understand the only way a progressive or communist or socialist can exist is you have got to have that totalitarian government forcing or taking money or goods away from those who earn them and work for them—created them—and giving them to those who did not.

So Khrushchev realized that, in the ultimate form of communism and progressivism, there is no government. So he appointed a committee or commission to study the issue and figure out how we eventually achieve that perfect state where there is no government and everyone is sharing and sharing alike. How do we get to that place?

They were always big on having 5-year plans in the former Soviet Union, so he thought perhaps this commission, this group of learned people, could set up the plan for how they could move forward each year until there was that state of perfection, there was no government, but just people sharing and working, working together, sharing together, sharing with those who had not and could not.

But as I learned from studying, Khrushchev eventually had to disband the commission. They realized there is no way you ever reach that perfect state of progressivism or socialism or communism. You can't ever achieve that in this world. There will always have to be a totalitarian government that has taken away people's freedom and tells them what they are allowed to do. That has been the direction of this government for years now: Let's lure people in to total dependence on the government, and then we get to tell them where they will live and what they will do.

Do you think that is a stretch? Look at what happened when the Democratic

House and Senate voted to take over all college loans. That is a lot of power. When the Federal Government takes over all college loans, it enables the Federal Government to get into an area of governance that the Soviet Union did. The friends I came to know that summer I was there, the government told them whether they were going to be allowed to go to college. They told them what they would study in college. They told them where they were going to go work when they finish college. They told them what they were going to do in that place that the government directed them to go.

Heck, there were 15 states in the former Soviet Union. You couldn't even cross the states without having a visa to go between the states. I was shocked by that.

But if you are going to have progressivism or socialism or communism, the share-and-share-alike mentality, spreading the wealth—as our former President liked to say: If you are going to take from the sweat of someone else's brow and give it to someone who did not earn it, you are going to have to have a totalitarian government.

When the Federal Government here in the United States took over all college loans, it put itself in a position of being able to say: Okay. We know, historically, what the Soviet Union did, and we like that kind of power, so here is what we are going to do.

□ 2045

You do this job or that job or go to this place and we will start forgiving that huge amount of debt you owe for your college loans that we are in charge of. That is power.

When the Federal Government takes over flood insurance, it gives the Federal Government the power to tell people where they can or can't live. Thank goodness we finally were allowed to reform the flood insurance. That is why—probably, the biggest reason—some of us didn't vote for the second swath of money for the disasters this fall.

There were no reforms that we were promised that would be there, like for the lady who said she had to rebuild her home in the same place 21 different times. There were so many homes the Federal Government has paid for since we took over flood insurance because, apparently, you had to build where your home flooded, even though you wanted to move elsewhere so your home wouldn't flood again. If you wanted the money, you had to rebuild right there.

That is what one lady was explaining. She didn't want to still be there, but she couldn't sell her lot with a destroyed, flooded home on it for enough money to build anywhere else. So she had to keep rebuilding where her home kept flooding.

We needed a reform so people could move and we wouldn't have to keep paying for people's homes over and over again in the same place. If they want to pay for private insurance and

live in the same place, fine. The Federal Government shouldn't be forcing people to build in the same place and keep them there as financial prisoners.

At least in the House, we finally passed some reforms recently. That was a good thing, and I am grateful we did.

Through all of these decades, for the last 100 years, the people of Poland understood what freedom is and they understood when they didn't have it.

I can recall back in the seventies being on a train coming—I believe it was—from Gradna, on the border between Poland and the Soviet Union, coming across Poland, which was considered to be one of the satellite nations over Soviet domination.

An American made the mistake of saying in the presence of a Polish gentleman: This land looks just the way it had for the last couple of days.

The man became outraged. He said: No, no. In the Soviet Union there are huge farms and you can't tell what is cultivated and what isn't because they are not farmed very well. You look out here at the farms in Poland and they are much smaller because we own our own farms and work our own farms.

He got very upset. I thought it was kind of a beautiful thing, how proud he was of his country, and the difference between a progressive or socialist-style government that rewards sluggishness. He pointed there in Poland to a place where their hard work actually showed.

We keep heading in the direction of the countries that have failed as they have tried this progressivism that always fails. It doesn't make sense to keep trying it. It never works. It didn't work in the New Testament. It didn't work for the pilgrims. It will work in Heaven, in a perfect world, in paradise, with no jealousy and everyone pulling the same direction, loving, caring. But in this world, it will not ever work.

In Poland—I was reading yesterday—their government leaders have come to the conclusion that life was better when they followed a Biblical example and had 1 day of the week where people rested and they were with their families. They went to church and they worshipped God. They found that is not a bad idea.

Now there are people in Poland in leadership positions who are saying: We have had 7-day workweeks, but families have suffered significantly. Maybe we should look back at that Biblical example of having 1 day of rest, 1 day together to worship; a day to be with family, a day to rest, and to love each other.

It seems like sometimes we get moving so fast that we forget the best things in life. It looks like that is what some of the Polish leaders are now saying.

They have also made clear to the EU that, just as President Trump has here, as leaders of a nation, a leader owes to that nation the protection that they were elected or hired to provide and

survive. Survival is supposed to be what the leaders are ensuring. Flourishing.

As a result of the policies we have seen change in the last 11 months, we now have had 2 months—1 month was a record for the last 8 years—but now we have had 2 months, as I understand it, where growth has gone over 3.4 percent in the economy. We can keep that up and continue to grow. We are going to have plenty of money to pay this country's bills.

In fact, the only way we will ever get out from under the massive debt we are about to leave and impart to our children and grandchildren is if we grow the economy sufficiently to grow our way out of that indebtedness.

I believe the Laffer Curve is true. It is a truth economically. If you tax up to a certain point, then at some point, the more you tax, the more you overburden the work, and there gets to be less and the economy is brought down, you end up yielding less as a percentage of what you were bringing in.

As Arthur Laffer explained to President Reagan and his aids, if the goal is to maximize Federal revenue, you want to hit that percentage of tax that encourages work and growth to the greatest extent, and then you will bring even more money in.

The trouble is, like in Ireland, when they dropped their corporate tax rate so low—apparently, in the eighties, tax rates were dropped—revenue starts flowing in better and better and Congress started spending. They did the same thing in Ireland. Record revenue comes in, even bigger record spending took place. We can't be doing that.

There is an article here today in The Washington Times by Dave Boyer: "Pence, commemorating Israel's birth, says Trump 'actively' seeks to move U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem."

We have had Presidents saying for years that they would move the embassy to the true capital of Israel. It has been the capital of Israel since King David moved it there about 3,000 years ago.

I know that there are some that are very upset and say: No, no, you cannot move the Israeli capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Well, Jerusalem is the capital. But perhaps a compromise might be that, since we know when King David became ruler over all of Israel, he first went to Hebron—I have been there a few times. I have stood there at what is strongly believed to be the tomb of King David's father, Jesse. They think they found the small synagogue he created. It looks like that is what it was.

Hebron is where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all buried. In fact, Abraham made a big deal. He wanted to pay for the land where he and his family would be buried so that there would never be any question that it was their land where they were buried.

The town of Hebron is where King David first went and ruled over Israel for 7 years and 6 months. After 7½

years, he then moved the capital to Jerusalem. So I would be fine if we wanted to compromise and say: Okay, you need time to get used to the idea, then let's move the capital from Tel Aviv to Hebron and make that the capital of Israel for 7½ years, like King David did.

Then, following King David's example, after 7½ years with Hebron as the capital, move it to Jerusalem. That would give people time to get used to the idea.

I do want to make a comment. The Senate—at least some, but not all Senators—is dragging its feet on getting something passed in the way of tax reform. I was totally shocked to hear that some Senators were saying they wanted to have the corporate tax rate cut, put off, for a year. That seems crazy.

As someone who has been to China and met with different CEOs and asking, "Why did you move all these manufacturing jobs from America to China," I thought the answer would be labor unions, it would be over regulation.

Well, those were all problems for them, they said. But I loved hearing repeatedly corporate leaders saying: Our best quality control, our best workers were in America.

I loved hearing that. They seemed sincere. The reason we moved to China is because of the corporate tax rate being about half of what it is in China as compared to what it is in the United States.

They said: So we have saved so much money by more than cutting our tax rate in half.

What a corporate tax is, as Steve Moore said, which is such a great way to explain what it is: We like to say we are making the greedy corporations pay.

No. Actually, you are making their customers and clients pay.

If a corporation does not, whether it is subchapter S or a C corporation, pass those taxes on to their customers, their clients, they can't stay in business. So it is a part of the price of their goods and services.

I have advocated doing away with it. You will have so much more people working, so many more people making so much more money. The income taxes from the individuals will make up for it. It will be a beautiful thing. It is not a zero sum game. Everybody can do better and better and better.

□ 2100

It would be a beautiful thing to see the economy expand like that, and it could. We could get those jobs back. But a corporate tax, the corporate tax here in America is the highest tariff any nation puts on its own goods or services, anything made in corporate America. It is a tariff on our own goods.

Why do we do that? We could be so much more competitive around the world if the government didn't put this burden on corporations.

I was hoping that President Trump's figure of 15 percent that undercuts the Chinese at least a little bit would be even more incentive to bring back manufacturing jobs to America, because any nation, any powerful nation that does not produce what they need in a time of war—because there will always be wars—is not going to remain a powerful nation beyond the next war.

We need to be producing steel and rubber and all the things we need. We need to produce them right here in the United States. There is no reason we can't, but we drive those jobs away because of the corporate income tax.

President Trump had the right idea, 15 percent. He compromised, so it is at 20 percent. Thank goodness he didn't let them work him up any beyond that, but there are some in the Senate trying to work beyond that—huge mistake.

This economy can explode. It is already the top 3 percent, and it can keep climbing. Dr. Laffer tells me that after the final part of the 30 percent tax cut kicked in, in 1983, they hit over 7 percent growth in the economy. That is just unheard of.

There were people saying, in the Obama administration, you know, we will probably never ever hit 3 percent again. It may just be an impossibility. No, it is not. You get rid of the corporate tax or at least get it down to where we are not putting such an enormous tariff on our own goods and services, and that economy can grow like that again, and we can get our manufacturing jobs back.

An article here, Todd Starnes—he and I were both honored recently with an award that people like Tom Landry, Cal Thomas, and others have received for being Christians and speaking up for our faith, our beliefs. Todd Starnes, today, has this story: "Thank you, Mr. Trump, for bringing 'Merry Christmas' back to the White House," and I certainly echo those feelings.

It is amazing, this story from Maxim Lott, FOX News: "Media twist tax plan studies to claim it hammers middle class."

I have been hearing people here on this floor talking about how the tax proposal that we passed here in the House was going to hammer the middle class. Actually, the corporate tax cut alone will get the economy going so strong everybody is going to benefit. But I wish we had just had an across-the-board flat tax created: you make more, you pay more; you make less, you pay less. That is where I wanted to go. That is true reform.

But politics being what it is, because the Republican leadership did not want to have to fight a battle that, "Oh, we're just helping the rich," the highest tax rate is the only one we didn't change. The idea was, well, if the only tax rate we don't bring down is the 39.6 percent tax rate that the richest Americans have to pay, then the Democrats won't be beating us up. They won't be able to beat us up for raising taxes on

the poor and middle class to help the rich.

Well, they were wrong. Despite the fact that there will be more people now under the Republican tax plan that has passed here in the House—the Senate will just adopt it—there will be more people who will not be paying taxes. I kind of wish all of us, every American, had a little skin in the game. If they are making money, then they pay something. That is where a flat tax comes in. If you just make \$10, you only pay \$1. If you make \$100, you pay \$10. If you make \$1 million, you pay \$100,000. That is fair.

But anyway, we passed our bill. It gives a tax break to the poorest Americans. It is going to help the economy grow, but we have got to get it done. I am hoping and literally praying that the Senate keeps their elimination of the individual mandate from ObamaCare so that people have the freedom to get policies that are best for them and not something forced on them by the government.

And, yes, we know there will be unfair media that will do nothing but complain about millions who no longer have health insurance. Well, I can tell you, there are millions who are paying taxes now to the government because they can't afford an insurance policy that won't ever pay them because the deductible is too high, and they don't want to keep paying our income tax because they can't afford the ObamaCare policies.

There are people who are paying for ObamaCare policies where the deductibles are so high, they will never get any benefit. Yes, there is apparently a segment, a small minority who—maybe as much as 20, 25 percent—who, like in the Soviet Union, are getting their money from where somebody else has earned it, having that money pay for their insurance, some of that coming from people who can't even afford their own insurance. So they are paying higher income tax so this other group of Americans take their money from those working poor and pay for their insurance. What is fair about that?

Forcing the working poor in America to pay higher income tax or pay for policies where they will never get anything back because the deductible is too high; also, that some people who will vote Democrat will get their insurance for free, that is not the way America became the greatest Nation that it was and can be again.

And, yes, North Korea fired an ICBM today in the last 24 hours, and I am very grateful to President Trump for taking it seriously. I am so glad he is there. I am glad we don't have the same people who gave North Korea the ability to have nuclear bombs during the Clinton administration.

How foolish was it to basically say: Oh, look, North Korea, we will give you what you need to make nuclear weapons if you will just agree not to ever use those materials for nuclear weap-

ons. And, of course, the North Korean leader said: Sure, you do all that, all I got to do is sign. Sure, you give me all I need for nuclear weapons, I will sign saying I will never create nuclear weapons. And what do they do? They make nuclear weapons because that is what they do. That is what those leaders do. The people of North Korea deserve better. And Iran is the same way. They can't be trusted.

So we need a firm leader who understands enough is enough, and I am glad President Trump is that leader.

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

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. LUCAS (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and November 29 on account of personal business in Oklahoma.

Mr. STIVERS (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today through November 30 on account of his duties with the Ohio National Guard.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, November 29, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. GOWDY: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Supplemental report on H.R. 4182. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to modify probationary periods with respect to positions within the competitive service and the Senior Executive Service, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-415 Pt. 2).

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 3312. A bill to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-423). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 3758. A bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-424). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 1645. A bill to amend the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to provide a temporary exemption for low-revenue issuers from certain auditor attestation requirements (Rept. 115-425). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.